

# Under Fantastic Skies System

This system is being playtested in the [Barony of Valcaryn](#) game.



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## Character Generation

### Select A Character Concept

Work with the GM to come up with a good character concept for the campaign they are running. This can be fairly loose, and then be altered as you develop the character mechanically.

### Select a Character Point Distribution

There are ten possible point distributions to pick from. Pick one that sounds like it fits your character concept.

See [Character Point Distributions](#)

## Select Background Packages

This is technically optional, a player may select their assets freeform if they like. But selecting packages may be evocative, however, and create a backstory for the character in the process. Note that all of the packages are notional, and may be changed, with the player swapping out any assets on the list for any similar sort of asset. Note, too, that backgrounds do not have to be set in some chronological order, many will overlap with each other.

See [Background Packages](#)

## Select Asset Levels

After deciding what assets your character has, from backgrounds or just adding them in, spend the points in each category from the distribution package you've selected buying levels in each Asset.

Here's a scale to show what each level of an asset means:

- 0 - you don't have the thing (not allowed for stats, unless we discuss how that'll effect the character)
- 1 - low, but some. Familiarity for a skill.
- 2 - basic competence.
- 3 - Good
- 4 - Excellent
- 5 - Master
- 6 - Expert (known by others in the field)
- 7 - Renowned (widely)
- 8 - Almost Heroic
- 9 - Heroic
- 10 - Extra-heroic
- 11 + super-human

Note that 10 is not a limit for player characters, they may take more than this level, if they can explain what special circumstances lead to the asset in question being super-human.

## Starting VIM, FATE, and Medals

### VIM

The players and GM should come up with an interesting starting situation based on character passions, and rule that they all start with 10 VIM. If you want a more sedate start, create a less exciting situation, and start with an appropriately lower amount of VIM.

### FATE

Players always start with 10 FATE points, which are used to manipulate character destinies.

(Considering this rule: FATE may be used wherever VIM is used if the character is lucky rather than putting effort into something, but this is an inefficient use of FATE.)

## Medals

Players and the GM begin each session with 2 Medals, which are given by the player or GM to other players to reward them for any reason. Upon receiving a Medal a player increases their FATE by one. Medals may not be accumulated from session to session, you start each session with 2 Medals, so “use them or lose them.”

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## Resolution

Largely inspired by Levi Kornelsen's resolution system Schema along with deck resolution mechanics by Dave Michalak

### Overview

The basic process is as follows:

1. GM asks if Medals are awarded
2. Players involved may accede (they may ask how dangerous the conflict is)
3. If at least one player has not acceded, each that has not draws cards based on assets they can bring to bear, and how they're approaching the conflict and puts them in the resolution deck.
4. The GM places dangers in each player's resolution deck based on how perilous the conflict is.
5. The Pace is set.
6. Cards equal to the Pace are drawn each round, and their effects resolved.
7. Rounds continue to be played as necessary, until no players want to continue to try to achieve their goals.
8. GM asks again if Medals are awarded

### Medals

Medals may be given at any time during play, but the GM should ask players if they want to give any Medals out before a conflict gets going. This is so that the player has a prompt to think about using Medals which can sometimes be forgotten in play, and also because the actions that lead to conflicts are often Medal-worthy. Further, the Medals given become FATE for a character that they can use in the conflict, so it may help the player to get the Medals just before one begins.

### Acceding

A player may decide to simply fail to achieve any goals for the conflict (including avoiding damage) and thus avoid paying any VIM to engage in it. If there are dangers, the player may only accede if they are willing to accept the results of ALL of the dangers that them GM is going to assign to the

deck (simply draw all of the danger cards, and assign all of the repercussions that result). As the player gets no cards for their resolution deck, they may not convert any to cautions, though they still get whatever passive caution cards they would normally get.

If multiple players have their character participating in a conflict, then those acceding may avoid consequences, if at least one player has their character address the conflict, in which case they take on all of the risk from the dangers present. In certain circumstances, one player may interpose themselves in the way of all of the consequences, and take them all by acceding to the conflict's dangers (you don't have to run faster than the bear if somebody turns around and just stands in it's way).

## **Deck Building**

### **Players**

To engage in a conflict by adding benefit cards into the “resolution deck,” the player must play 1 VIM to start. The player whose character is involved builds a deck comprised of one card per asset level that they bring to bear, drawn randomly and secretly from the “benefits deck” and placed into the resolution deck (though see Taking Care below before drawing all of the cards needed). The player may invoke one asset from each category (stats, lifepath, skill, distinctions, and gear) for free. Note that taking Assets that are not all that appropriate will result in the GM adding more danger cards to the deck.

### **Additional Assets**

The player may add cards for additional assets by paying 1 VIM per asset that they want to activate. These are still subject to the rule that assets that are not totally appropriate will result in the GM adding additional danger cards to the resolution deck.

### **Preparation and Aid**

Preparation can be used to gain cards to be added to the resolution deck associated with the resolution for which preparations are being made. Often a contest will be required to gain the cards.

### **Pushing**

A character may attempt to do better by pushing hard to get it done. Add one benefit card to the deck, and one Exhaustion card to the deck.

### **Recklessness**

A character may approach the contest recklessly. They may add up to three benefit cards, and for

each they add, the opposition adds two danger cards.

### **Taking Care**

Players may elect to take any of their cards as Caution cards and set these aside. These are played to cancel Danger deck cards. Note this limits how much the character may be able to produce cards to cement their goals.

Usually a character may only be either reckless OR take care, not both, but if they can explain an approach that contains both, the player may engage both mechanics.

### **Defensive Assets**

The player may give the player additional Caution cards for gear such as armor or other gear that would work defensively in the conflict at hand that has not been invoked to draw benefit cards to the deck. These cards may be taken even if a character is acting recklessly.

### **GM**

The GM adds cards from the "danger deck," the number of which are based on how dangerous the situation is rated in his estimation. Once the GM has added the danger cards to each resolution deck, deck building is complete. Any conditions that the character has that negatively impact the character's ability to perform in the conflict add one danger card to the deck per level of that condition.

### **Fatigue**

Players whose characters have fatigue when a conflict starts will have additional dangers added to the resolution deck, one per fatigue.

A player with no VIM may pay for things normally paid for with VIM by accumulating fatigue instead.

If a player ends a round with more fatigue than the character's constitution score, the character is out of action, and the conflict ends for that character, with all remaining dangers being drawn and played at that point (benefits drawn are simply discarded).

### **Pace**

The pace of a conflict is decided by the GM, but is normally 3, unless the characters involved are all agreeing to go much more cautiously or recklessly than normal, and the situation would allow for this. This determines how many cards will be drawn from the resolution deck each round, though this may vary due to some cards drawn.

If the resolution deck is depleted when drawing, put the discarded cards back into their respective decks, and then draw up a new resolution deck using the same method as the first deck was drawn

up, and continue drawing from the new deck until a number of cards equal to the pace has been drawn for the round. When this happens, the player must play one VIM to have their character continue the conflict (exhaustion sets in).

\*Alternate rule to try: If not enough cards can be drawn, treat this as if an Interrupt card has been drawn.

## **PvP**

If more than one PC is involved in a conflict, they each draw up a deck in the same fashion. The GM will determine the number of Danger cards to add to each deck based not on the quality of the opponents, but on other external factors that make the situation dangerous... it's possible that the GM will add no dangers to reflect that the only danger in the situation comes from the opponents inflicting consequences on each other, or preventing each other from reaching their goals.

## **Resolution**

Once the resolution deck is built, the player then draws a number of cards each round of resolution equal to the pace, and resolves all of the drawn cards. The player and the opposition player should narrate their interpretation of the results of the draw. The player may then proceed to another round, or declare the resolution to be complete.

## **Card Types**

Below are the various cards that are in each of the decks.

### **Benefit Deck Card Types**

The benefit deck includes the following card types.

#### **Boon Card**

Something good happens to the character that is not a result of them gaining position towards a goal. Examples may include the following, but note that if these are the goal, then they are not options for a boon card:

- Effects you are creating last longer
- You make an Impression on an observer
- You note something (often about the opposition or the difficulties being overcome)
- You are doing things faster than expected
- Your actions are subtle, and observers may not be able to discern what you are doing

## Position

The character takes a stride that positions them more favorably towards a goal. Place the card in front of the player to represent this advanced position. Fictional descriptions of multiple position cards can be narrated as the position being advanced further, or an advance being made along an alternate axis. Alternatively, use this card to discard any other position card in play.

## Cement/Position

Change a number of position cards along one axis of advance into a fictional effect. This creates a rating for the character (usually a positive trait or resource) or their opposition (usually a negative condition). May be played as a position card if no position cards are available (turn position side up relative to the player to indicate this). The card may be held and not played, instead waiting for more position cards to be drawn, so that they, too may be cemented with the other drawn cards. To indicate this place the card with the cement side up.

\*Playtest: play either end at player's option? Or only play position when no positions are available?

## Caution

Caution cards are not put into the resolution deck, but are kept in the player's tableau. They can be played before each round as the player decides, and each one played may eliminate one danger card that comes up in that round. Cards that are unused are discarded at the end of the draw.

## Danger Card Types

### Complications

Something bad happens that is not a usual consequence of this sort of conflict.

- Chaos Erupts
- Things are taking longer than expected
- Something (you, your target, or your aim) winds up somewhere other than planned.
- A gear or resource asset you have is broken or lost or used up entirely. If a resource was in use in the conflict as part of the resolution, that is likely the resource lost.
- A new threat appears! Add danger cards to the deck to represent the new danger, and reshuffle.
- Something odd or unpredictable happens, which is a detriment. When relatively wild assets like magic or untested technology are being employed, the strangeness will usually be as a result of the asset behaving outside normal parameters.
- The conflict is getting away from the character, and they are not able to quit it.
- The character becomes somehow helpless, and must address this situation before advancing any other positions.

## **Danger**

The character's position gets more precarious. Describe the worsening position, and place this card in the danger tableau.

## **Consequence/Position**

The character gains one level of a Consequence for each Dangerous Position in play. If the consequence is dangerous in the context of the current conflict, add one danger card to the deck per level of the consequence and reshuffle. Future consequences in the same conflict are likely to exacerbate (add levels to) the original Consequence if drawn in the same conflict. But not if the fiction makes this seem unlikely, in which case a new consequence is generated.

## **Exhaustion**

Immediately play one Vim, or end the conflict on this draw.

## **Interruption**

Something happens to cause the conflict to cease immediately, and it cannot resume until the interruption can be dealt with.

## **Goal Resolution**

### **Mutually Exclusive Goals**

Most of the time the goals of each side are opposing and mutually exclusive (it's not possible for both to happen). In this case, the goals are achieved when one side can create a complication or cement an asset to represent the goal being met. If both sides manage to do this at the same time, then the smaller is subtracted from the larger goal, and the remainder of the larger shows the magnitude of the asset created.

### **Inclusive Goals**

If both sides are able to accomplish their goals, then each gets them if they have accomplished them before the conflict ends. Note that if players have their characters disengage with their goals complete, unless they have also done something to stop the opposition, the opposition will likely achieve their goal in short order.

## Failure

There is no failure card, a character fails to get their goal if the conflict ends before they get the goal (which can be due to an interruption, or the player calling for an end to the conflict).

## Temporary Assets

When position is cemented, it is turned into a temporary asset equal to the level of the position cards cemented. Temporary assets may be cemented into permanent assets with another contest.

## Medals

Once a conflict is over, the GM should (assuming any player has medals to give) prompt players to see if they have any Medals they would like to bestow, perhaps based on fun resolution. This is yet another prompt to ensure that players aren't missing out on opportunities to use Medals.

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