Set Up

Reward Pool

Play starts with each player having the following set of dice in their reward pool (this includes the GM):

- 3d4
- 2d6
- 2d8
- 2d10
- 1d12

During play the number and size of dice in this pool will vary. The number of each type of die can be recorded in any convenient way, using actual dice, or dice of the size in question showing the number of dice in the pool on their faces, or simply recording on paper or the like.

Initial Situation

Play starts in a Tavern that the GM describes (often generated randomly), and this is the only thing we know about the world, that the adventurers have assembled at this appropriate place to discuss a matter before them of great importance that requires their attention.

Barkeep's Questions

Playing the role of the Barkeep at the Tavern, the GM asks the following questions, one per round, in an attempt to discover what it is the PCs are up to:

- First round, before any player has taken their turn, “So, what brings you in here?”
- “Who wants you to do that?”
- “Is somebody in danger? What's at risk?”
- “Why is it that they chose you for this job?”
- “What dangers stand in your way?”
- “Whats the rush to get this done?”
- “What do you all get out of this?”

The GM can ask any but the first question in any order, or change the questions in an attempt to help get the players to establish several facts that must be known before they can leave the tavern.

Leaving the Tavern

The players may not leave the tavern to deal with their quest until they have answered the following questions:

- The overall threat
- Who wants the threat taken care of
- Why the PCs care as a group
- Why the PCs care, individually - note that a player may decide not to reveal his character's personal motive to the other players, and instead let the GM know privately
- What at least two of the known dangers are
- Why things will get worse, if they don't hurry

The GM should record the answers to these on his quest tracking sheet. He keeps on having the barkeep ask leading questions until the players have determined all of the above required facts.

Rounds

The narrations in the Tavern occur over rounds of drinks, during which each PC will get a chance to speak. There is no turn order to this, players just speak back and forth as in any normal conversation. Each round, the player can tell a tale to reveal an ability once (see Telling Tales below), and any number of obstacles may be created. The round ends when each player feels that their character has had their say. Generally players are trying to come up with their goals in response to the Barkeep's questions, so that they can get on with their adventure. Though they may decide to prolong things, too, so that they have more chances to tell tales.

Time is of the Essence

The longer the characters loligag around in the tavern, the more time the opposition has to plan or for the dangers involved to get worse. At the end of the first round in the tavern, the opposition dice increase by one die type, and so on for each round (see Opposition Dice). This continues until the character's leave the tavern to go on their quest.

After the Tavern, play in rounds ceases, but the opposition dice can advance for other reasons.

Character Abilities

What Are Abilities

Abilities can represent a wide variety of things; just about anything that the character might find to be an asset in play.

- Skills
- Talents
- Heritage
- Personality Traits
- Physical Attributes
- Mental Attributes
- Magical Abilities
- Relationships with NPCs

- Special Equipment
- Wealth

Each ability will have a name and a die rating.

Players reveal character abilities by “Telling Tales”…

Telling Tales

A player may, at any time, narrate something about his character's abilities. Perhaps they brag about them, or they can just think a thought regarding them; just so long as we get an idea of what the ability is. This narration must be linked to something in the game world that they create on the spot. When done with the narration, the player announces a name for the ability, and selects another player to judge who assigns a rating to the ability.

Selecting a Judge

The narrating player may select any other player to be judge (including the GM), but may want to consider the dice that player has left to give. If a player doesn't have a high die in their pool, they can't give you one. Players may offer to be judge, even jumping ahead to doing a very fast judging (see below), and stating what die they're offering the player. This can often streamline the process quite a bit. If somebody offers a die, and the player accepts it, then the ability is written on the character sheet as it was stated, and the die of the ability that was assigned is noted.

Judging Narrations

The player selected as judge decides on a rating for the ability in question. This player should score 1 point for each of the following:

- Was the ability suitably narrow in application? If the ability was applicable to a very broad set of circumstances (especially those seem like they can be used all the time), then the narrating player doesn't get this point.
- Did the player create an interesting part of the game world as part of their narration?
- Did the player link their new part of the world to a part that already exists in an interesting way?
- Did the player create an interesting linkage between the character's ability and the part of the world they created?

Based on the points scored, the judge may award the player the following die, or any lower than this die:

Points Scored	Potential Die
1	d6
2	d8
3	d10
4	d12

Lesser dice are often given simply because the ability in question doesn't sound as though it's a really important one, or for several other reasons, all of which are completely at the judge's discretion. And, of course, a judge may only give out the dice that they have in their pool.

Preposterous!

If the judging player finds the narration to be completely preposterous or uninteresting, they may refuse to give a die at all, in which case the player being judged may retract their narration completely… though this is likely rare. Players typically do a reasonable job with narrations. This rule exists just to inform the player that they can't toss garbage into the game and expect to be rewarded for it.

If this happens, the narrating player may refuse to retract their character's statement; but in this case, they don't have proof of the setting details, and they may turn out to be a fabrication, or misunderstanding at the GM's option.

Negotiation

Often the player's narration is OK, but the judge may find part of it to be less interesting than it could be. The judge can offer a lower die, and counter-offer with a higher one to get the narrating player to alter their narration in some way. This power should be used only to make modifications, not take over the player's entire narration and alter it completely. The judge should work with the narrating player to come up with something interesting.

Other players are encouraged to kibbitz and offer suggestions. But in the end, it's up to the narrating player to decide if they want to make any revisions to the narration, and up to the judging player to decide what die they get (if any) as a result.

Be a Good Judge

The reward for being a tough judge is that the world and characters end up more interesting.

The reward for being a fair judge is that other players will treat you fairly as well when it's their turn to be judge.

Don't go too easy or too hard on the other players.

This entire process can be quite informal, with the judge not stopping to enumerate the points they're awarding, but simply leaping to announce the die they think is appropriate. The judge and player can discuss how important the ability is to the player… often the player will be satisfied with a lesser die, saving the big dice for more important things later. Part of being a good judge is moving the process along quickly so that play can proceed with the smallest interruptions possible.

Obstacles

To get more dice into their reward pool, players may wish to create obstacles. An obstacle is something that stands in the way of them achieving their goals. These may be personal goals for individual characters, or they may be the overall goal for the game. The player rates the obstacle by one of the die types, and then adds a die of the same size to their reward pool. The GM records the obstacle and it's rating.

Contradictions

The GM may decide that he'd prefer for something already established as fact by character narration, but not actually verified in play through experience, is incorrect in part or in whole. This is often done to spring surprises on the PCs. When the GM does this, they must award one of the dice in their pool to the player who established the fact, any die he prefers. If the GM is out of dice, this is not an option.

Resolution

Generally works like my other Chronica hacks, including concessions. The player only gets their most pertinent ability die for free in a contest. They also get any momentum dice free, if they're available (see below). There are other ways to get more dice into the pool, however.

Fatiguing Dice

Players can narrate their characters putting in extra effort to achieve their goals, bringing to bear extra abilities, or the same abilities more than once.

Extra Dice

A player can fatigue an ability die to roll it in a contest where it is not the primary ability. This causes the die to temporarily go down by one die type. A d4 goes to a d0 (always rolls a zero if used), and cannot be further fatigued from this point. This lowering of the die takes effect after the conflict round is over (mark the ability with an asterisk to remember to reduce it).

Extra Effort

Further, if a player does not like the result of a die rolled, they can narrate redoubling their efforts in that area, to get a re-roll of a die. This fatigues the die as above, and may be done repeatedly. However, the lowering of the die takes place immediately after using it, so this results in diminishing

returns.

Risking Dice

A player may burn a die at any time to win a contest. The player has to narrate very desperate action, and rolls the die. If the result would have been a failure, the results of the action are narrated in a way that describes how the ability is permanently lost.

Opposition

As mentioned under rounds in the tavern phase rules, the more time left for the bad guys to plot and plan and generally prepare, the more dangerous they become. The reasons for this time sensitivity are set out in the tavern phase of play. The effects are represented by a pool of opposition dice that the GM can use whenever he narrates some way in which the dangers in question have increased due to the delays in question.

Increasing Opposition

The opposition dice pool starts out empty, and goes up any time there is a delay:

- At the end of each round in the tavern
- The party stops to rest (per round of rest)
- The party detours from the most direct path to the goal

The GM gets a d4 for the opposition pool at the end of the first tavern round, or any time something causes a gain in the pool when it's empty. At the end of the next round it becomes a d6. A d8 at the end of the third. And so on until it becomes a d12. If they characters still haven't gotten out of the Tavern when there's a d12 in the pool, then the GM gets another d4 at the end of the round, and this then starts to increase as before, one die size per round.

Decreasing Opposition

Each time the GM uses the Opposition dice, they go down by one die type. He may choose to lower any one die rolled by one type. A d4 reduced is discarded (and a new die may not be gained again until a d12 is obtained, or when starting from nothing).

Momentum

On the other end of things, the quest has a momentum to it which can be interrupted if the characters take too much time doing things unrelated directly to it's success. Morale goes up with success, and then falls when the goal is not in sight. This is represented by a momentum die or dice. Momentum dice can be used by every member of the party at any time.

Increasing Momentum

After facing one danger successfully, this die becomes a d4 that can be used in any roll. After the second, it goes to d6. And so on and so forth, just like opposition dice.

Decreasing Momentum

If any of the following occur, the momentum die goes down by one for each occurrence:

- the party fails a to successfully face a danger (even if they get concessions)
- the party stops to rest (per round of rest)
- the party detours from the most direct path to the goal

Sequels

If and when the matter at hand has been dealt with, the players may decide individually what they want to do from the following three options:

- Play on! - the player keeps their character, and goes back to the Black Boar to invent a new adventure.
- New Blood - the player may have their current character sit out the next adventure at the tavern, and create a new character to continue on. Often new characters can bring with them news of the next problem to be faced.
- Retire - the player may decide to take a break and not play on in the next sequel.

If all players retire, then the game is over until a new batch of adventurous souls appears at the Black Boar.

Notes

Confessional-like mechanic? Players tagging other players?

Other things to throw at the players than just standard dangers? Other than distractions?

How to give setting details impact?

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