

Character Creation Playtest 03/25/17

Determining Initial Values

- King and Queen Abilities should be both a +4 and +3 respectively. This gives them the bonuses they need to separate them from the other Abilities.
- If they remain at +2 and +1, they will more likely turn out worse than the other two Abilities, that are meant to be the neglected ones.
- The maximum an initial starting Ability can be is a 9 (the K and 5 card).
- Values do tend to even out near the end of Character Creation, making this only a small solution to the problem. Something during CC (like lowering stats) might be needed to adjust things further.

Constant small changes like these are going to take up a large portion of testing going forward.

Going Zero, Negative, or Over.

- All instances in the rulebook that require a roll that say “1” or “6” need to say “1 or lower” and “6 or higher”. This will clear up some of the confusion about whether a player can roll lower or higher than what is provided on a table.

Stats Before Class, Fixing Character Death (option a):

- **Abilities might need to be rolled first. If this is done, players would not feel inclined to throw away a character who's stats don't line up with what the character class is meant to be good with.**
- **In this way, players could see their initial stats first, then assign a class to it, discussing amongst themselves what stats go best with what class.**
- **The class chosen would then affect the K and Q card piles, which have been predetermined beforehand.**

This would create a scenario where players would not feel bummed out about their character until at least halfway through CC, when negative effects have begun to cripple them. At this point they would want to kill their character off, but would be warned not to in some way.

Roll to Deathroll, Fixing Character Death (option b):

- Alternatively, if players want to kill a character without penalty they can, but with an added challenge. The Deathroll event would be flip-flopped, then doubled.
- As an example, to **KILL** your character, you would need to roll at least 6 successes on a **-3 Deathroll**.
- Failing to do so earns you one of the other Deathroll outcomes that isn't pure death based on the amount of successes you missed this goal by, punishing the player and making this character even worse than before.
- The other outcomes would be values scaling down from the death goal, both in value and effect. If an outcome has a range in an ordinary deathroll, so too does the new value when attempting to kill your character off in this way.

This is a little goofy of a solution to wrap your head around at first. Create the table for this ASAP and test it. Some additional streamlining is probably required.

Starting Member Death Problem

- After a Starting Member has died, any new character that player makes does not matter if it is killed during CC. The problem occurs after a player realizes that they can go through CC a dozen times, with no consequence, to make the most optimized character possible.
- Players do still run the risk (if option b is chosen) of attempting to kill a bunk character, failing to do so, and then getting a terrible character to play with.

This new punishment rule might be enough to keep players from attempting this. Even if they do attempt this process, I believe the odds are good enough that they eventually can't kill a character off, and then the chain of making new characters is stopped prematurely.

(If a player picks the Pessimistic Transition option, it should explicitly say that if they are trying to get their character killed, they may reduce the the amount of successes required to do so by -1.)

Maimed Options, Expanded Upon:

- Maimed Options like having a lost eye or becoming deaf should have consequences to how that player can attack. For instance, a lost eye needs to explicitly say: "perception related attacks now become much harder to pull off" and so on.
- Maimed Options should also reduce specific abilities by -2.
- Severed Limb reduces Strength by -2 and Deaf reduces Perception by -2 for example.

The difference between reducing an ability by -1 or -2 will be substantial here. Test to find the better of the two penalties.

Ailment Penalties, How do they affect Character Classes:

- We found that depending on the archetype, certain players would not choose one ailment over the other. For example, a Patrician would never pick **mute** because of how difficult it would be to perform their most adapt action, speaking.

Going forward, consider each ailment, perhaps add or take away a few, and determine how any one of the classes might be affected if forced to choose one over the others.

Changing + and - to “Increase by _”:

- Players became confused when they encountered +1 Skill. Instead, instances like this should say “increase skill rating by 1”.

(Creating Characters in a group seems to take some of the pain away from losing one. As a group activity, people aren't as annoyed when they lose time due to a death.)

Upbringing Table Forces a Success of 6 or requires bunk skills:

- During the Upbringing Table, players seemed a little bummed out that there were skill checks for things that is impossible for them to obtain up until that point.
- Adjusting the game, I have allowed players to choose wild skills when they begin CC.
- What this might lead to, is players only ever picking the skills that they know they need to pass certain tests with.

I need to either keep the skills that are required fairly mediocre in nature, slightly punishing the player who prepares themselves for these tests or, remove the requirement for skills altogether.

(I believe that going forward, the bunk skill option is the better of the two.)

(When an event gives +1 to an Ability, it needs to say “+1 Perception Ability” or +2 Mind Abilities.” This will clear up some confusion whether the bonus given is a skill or not.)

(If you roll a 7 but are already Trained in all of your character classes skills, you may become Trained in any other classes skill.)

(There should be no rule that determines that you can't pick two motivators from the same type, as long as it's actually possible to do so.)

Combining Loot:

- The idea of purchasing loot as a group came up and was dismissed because the characters “hadn’t met yet”.
- Not only does this not make sense, but nothing is really stopping someone from buying loot for someone else, and then giving it to them as the game starts.
- For these reasons, players should be able to combine loot during CC.

This could be reenforced during CC that the characters have known each other for a week or so and got prepared as a group together in game, as well as outside of it, as the players are doing.

Finding ways to connect players to each other with a “how did we meet and why did I stay” connection would be a nice touch to finish of CC.

(The amount of loot each Wealth Status provides needs to be closely examined.)

(Gear/Mysteries should denote whether or not they require “both hands” or “spoken word”. Players wouldn’t want to buy something that they find out later they can’t use.)

(All the instances that describe “involving NPCs in dialogue” are terribly worded. Change these and cut them down.)

(Weapons need more detailed descriptions in general. Players need to know how often certain abilities are used when firing a firearm or wing a melee weapon.)

Regions as Setting:

- The idea of picking where your players will be traveling has always been something that needed to worm it’s way into Adventure Creation.
- As long as Regions are not any more powerful than any other Region mechanically, there seems to be no reason not to add them.
- This system would reenforce the game world, getting players involved, and be a strategic choice GMs could make when choosing a setting.

DO NOT proceed with this unless it can be accomplished fairly easily. Spending too much time on this will bog down development to a crawl. (Stray away from Tables if possible.)

Adventure Creation (Ability-Skill Based Objectives):

- A discussion was had about making every single Encounter something that could be solved in one of four ways, connected to each of the Abilities.
- This would help ensure that all the players could get involved with the game and would not have to take a backseat.

- In regards to the GM, this would be represented by them attaching a single skill they have to the encounter, that skill being the easiest of the four ways to complete it. With the likelihood that no one has that skill, attempting to overcome the encounter in another way would be much harder, but still possible.

(When considering Objectives that result in player failure, the Encounters need to be substantial. These moments need to seem like do or die scenarios that could spell death or tragedy for the entire group.)

(An extreme emphasis needs to be put on this game is meant to be fun and it requires an insane amount of trust between it's players and their GM.)

Adventure Creation (Obvious Solutions = Hardest Challenges):

- When considering a challenge during an Encounter, the most obvious way to complete said challenge needs to be the hardest to do. This would be represented by Skill-Prompt ratings (**Villainous Obstacles**).
- For example, a Mastery in Lock-picking creates a vault door that is essentially impenetrable (Due to the GM being a Cutthroat). However, there is still 3 other ways they could potentially break in. These 3 ways are connected to using the 3 other Abilities that are not required for lock-picking (being Intellect, Strength, and Agility).
- In this same example: Strength could be tied to some elite swordsmen that guards the only key, that must be defeated in combat, Agility, to sneak in past the guards while the vault is being opened, or Intellect, to convince one of the keepers to help you break in and split the loot with him that's inside.

The first major problem with this is that players are very likely going to try none of these things and do something the GM had no idea to plan ahead for, breaking things a bit.

When structuring an Adventure:

1. The GM creates issue ahead of time
2. The players create solution to solve issue on the spot
3. The GM places things in the way to that solution as a reaction.

Adventure Creation (Main Incidents-to-Villain Intrusion-to-Random Obstacles):

- **Main Incidents** are random set pieces, goals that must be dealt with by the players. These are key point in an Adventure and are added during the creation process.
- **Villain Intrusion** are specific obstacles, more powerful and difficult to deal with than ordinary ones that are linked to the character that was flipped into the GM villain. These are also established during the creation process.
- **Random Obstacles** are elements that are generated during play that prevent the players from achieving a solution they have come up with to solve the Villain Intrusion. These

elements are not linked to the Character Class or Skill-Prompts, making them far less powerful or difficult, but totally random challenges.

Main Incidents:

1. These types of things will need to be carefully worded. Much like the events of CC, players won't want to experience the same thing twice. These should be vague prompts that the GM can use to introduce major problems of various similar types into their adventures.
2. Incidents should not have any mechanical value. They should simply be a narrative prompt the GM can use to help them write an interesting scenario. The same incident can be either relatively easy or extremely difficult to overcome based on the intrusion that is attached to it. A Mastery Intrusion vs a Trained one, as an example.

Villain Intrusion:

1. How many intrusions can a GM attach to a single Encounter? What exactly constitutes an Encounter? How many Proficient/Mastered intrusions can be added to select Adventures? All of this has to be considered and balanced carefully over the next few tests.
2. Villains should be able to replace their character motivators with a similar table of Villainous Motivators. This will continue to help the GM along with the writing portion of their Adventure Creation and attach them to the villain they control.
3. The villain is confronted in the final act of the last adventure, allowing you to kill/defeat them.
4. Based on the type of Character Class, the villain is represented in different ways. Depending on each class, the GM could be the Incident themselves (a monstrous beast) or just an old man hiding behind an army of goons. A Patrician Villain for example would likely not be a difficult final combat encounter, but a high ranking official or false prophet of some kind.
5. These intrusions need to be considered "the most obvious" or "most direct" way to deal with an obstacle. This is defended by the GM through the addition of one of their skill-prompts.

Random Obstacle:

1. When to trigger and of what categories are available, is two very important factors when it comes to throwing in random obstacles.
2. Ideally, GMs are only meant to add random obstacles to adventures only after players have begun work on how they wish to solve a intrusion. Either the GM can only add so many of these to adventures or, they can only add them in at specific times.
3. The nature of the obstacles will need to be determined as well. It would seem that they cannot be simply an aspect (like a monster or a trap). More literary devices like plot twists and hidden effects will also need to be used to modify existing aspects more often than not.

Going forward:

- An incident list should be developed around narrative prompts relevant to the lore of the game world
- Intrusions and encounters should be fully designed for balancing purposes
- The exact nature of what a random obstacle actually is should be set in stone.

(Lastly, the final system that requires attention is the fail/win states that occur during Adventures. What they are, how they affect players, and what progression looks like will all need to be developed fully before Beta testing can truly begin.)