

# Project CHUPA

Version 0.04

*The generic, modular RPG system with the cinematic feel!*



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## NOTE

Any phrases or characters appearing in **blue type**, show the changes or additions to the core rules between the previous version and the most current version. If you're looking for what's been ripped out – you're on your own.

## CREDITS

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## HISTORY

December 8, 2005 – The initial idea is presented on the forums.

December 11, 2005 – Version 0.02 released to the forums. Includes the basics, Attributes and Skill systems.

December 15, 2005 – Version 0.03. Incorporates Keys and Secrets from *The Shadow of Yesterday*. Added Health Points, and more on Skill Resolution., some reorganizing of content and a Table of Contents.

December 20, 2005 – Version 0.04. Redesign of Skills, incorporating dual detail levels for different systems of game plane.

# *Table of Contents*

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|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Table of Contents.....</b>                 | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>The Basics.....</b>                        | <b>4</b>  |
| The Core Mechanic .....                       | 4         |
| Dice .....                                    | 4         |
| <b>Attribute Scores .....</b>                 | <b>5</b>  |
| Attributes .....                              | 5         |
| Sub-Attributes .....                          | 5         |
| <b>Skill Scores .....</b>                     | <b>6</b>  |
| Skills.....                                   | 7         |
| Skill Groups.....                             | 6         |
| Skill Mastery .....                           | 6         |
| <b>Secrets &amp; Keys.....</b>                | <b>9</b>  |
| Secrets .....                                 | 9         |
| Keys.....                                     | 9         |
| <b>Character Creation .....</b>               | <b>10</b> |
| Purchasing Attributes .....                   | 10        |
| Purchasing Sub-Attributes .....               | 10        |
| Purchasing Skills .....                       | 10        |
| Purchasing Secrets and Keys.....              | 10        |
| Further Advances.....                         | 10        |
| Character Advancement .....                   | 10        |
| <b>Conflicts.....</b>                         | <b>12</b> |
| What is a Conflict? .....                     | 12        |
| Health Points .....                           | 12        |
| Conflict Resolution.....                      | 13        |
| Additional Conflict Resolution Examples ..... | 13        |

# *The Basics*

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## **The Core Mechanic**

Whenever you attempt an action that has some chance of failure, you roll one -- or more -- ten-sided dice (d10). To determine if your character is successful, do this:

- Roll one – or more – d10. If more than one die is used, keep only the single highest value.
- Add any relevant modifiers.
- Compare the result to a target number.

If the result is equal to, or higher than, the target number, your character succeeds. If the result is less than the target number, your character fails.

## **Dice**

When a die roll is necessary, it will be described with an expression such as “3d10k1 + 3,” which means you should “roll 3 ten-sided dice, keep only the single highest value, then add 3.” This would result in a number between 4 and 13. The first number tells you how many dice to roll. The number after the “d” tells you what type of die to use. The number after the “k” tells you how many of the dice results you should keep. For the majority of rolls you will be asked to “keep 1.” Since this is the default result desired, most times the “k1” will be left off. Any number after that represents a value that is to be either added to, or subtracted from, the result of the die roll.

## *Attribute Scores*

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### **Attributes**

Attributes are intended to demonstrate who the character is when they were born and how they have developed both mentally and physically since then. Three Attributes form the core of the system: Physical, Mental, and Social. A fourth Attribute will vary from system to system. In a fantasy setting it might be Magic, which would represent the inherent part of the character that can manipulate magic. In other systems it might be The Fold – the ability to fold space and help propel the ships through the final frontier. In the case that a fourth attribute is used, it should be an attribute inherent to all the characters in the game, even if some characters may never develop that skill. Some systems may not require a fourth Attribute.

**PHYSICAL** - This is a measurement of everything related to your character's physical body. It measures raw muscular strength, agility and coordination, health, and resistance to disease and damage.

**MENTAL** - This is a measurement of everything related to your character's mind. This includes how smart they are, how quickly they can grasp new concepts, and their ability to adapt to new situations. It also measures how much resistance they have to other people's manipulations, pressure, or bullying, as well as their determination and willpower.

**SOCIAL** – This is a measurement of the character's ability to interact in social events. It includes how outgoing they are, how well they can handle criticism, and their ability to lie without being detected, sell snake oil or even interact in diplomatic circles.

**SPIRITUAL** – This fourth Attribute is given as a default value. It is likely to change from game system to game system. It might refer to the character's ability to cast magic, clerical or arcane. It might be a character's ability to use psionic powers. It can be whatever your system and world needs it to be.

Attributes have a maximum value of 10.

### **Sub-Attributes**

Each attribute contains three Sub-Attributes: Power, Finesse, and Resistance. The definitions are intended to provide a complete, yet broad, description of the Attribute.

**POWER** - how much you can affect things, how forcefully. In Physical, this would mean not only raw strength, but also a knowledge of how to swing the fist properly and create the best impact. In Social, it would refer to how much impact you have on those around you, similar to charisma, but also could include things such as intimidation or political influence.

**FINESSE** - how well you can affect things, how careful you are. Under Physical it shows how nimble and agile you are. Under Spiritual it might show how complex you can get when manipulating weaves of magic.

**RESISTANCE** - your ability to resist those effects. Under Physical, it would show your resistance to poisons and colds and general health. In Mental, it could apply to ability to think for yourself and not be influenced by actions around you, or your ability to ward off psionic attacks.

Attribute Definitions have a maximum value of 10.

In some settings, dividing some – or all – of the Attributes into Sub-Attributes may be undesirable. By removing the Sub-Attributes for one of the Attributes, that Attribute's influence can be downplayed. In a setting that has very little combat, for example, you could just have the Physical Attribute with no Sub-Attributes, and all rolls would use the Attribute score, instead of a Sub-Attribute score.

## *Skill Scores*

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### **Skill Groups**

Skills are grouped together into Skill Groups to represent a collection of skills that should improve together. When a character raises the level in a skill, it has the possibility of affecting the other skills within the group and raising the abilities of all the skills by raising the Skill Mastery level.

Groups are designed to make getting into the game quick and easy. They cover broad topics and are perfect all by themselves for one-shot games, conventions, and new players. They can be used either with or without the individual skills in each group. For players and systems that desire a little more complexity and realism, the individual skills are detailed in Skill Descriptions, below.

While system designers and world builders are encouraged to change the names of the groups to fit the settings, the default skill groups are:

**General** – The General Skill Group is a measure of all of the knowledge and abilities that every thinking creature shares. It include how to ride a horse, or drive space cruiser, your ability to win at poker, or woo the lasses with your song and harp. You can also win riches through your swimming or wrestling matches, notice details most would miss in your surroundings, and give great speeches in the halls of Rome. And let’s not forgot intimidating the local judge to your way of seeing things.

**Knowledge** – Every profession has its specialized niches of knowledge. The Knowledge Skill Group is their tome. Inside this Skill Group you’ll find the knowledge of secret societies, the rise and fall of various cultures, how to care for your pets and avoid the wild animals that refuse to be domesticated, as well as the Machiavellian turnings of the legal codes and detailed instructions for the use and operation of the latest technology.

**Survival** – Fighting is inevitable when heroes are involved. The Survival Skill Group encompasses all forms of combat, whether martial arts, swords, guns, lasers or spaceships. It also includes the skills and knowledge necessary to survive in the world’s many inhospitable climates.

**Skullduggery** – The skills of the con artist, street magician and wily rogues are grouped here. Breaking and Entering, cracking safes, sleight of hand, and the knowledge of surviving in the rough and tumble back streets and alleys are all found in the Skullduggery Skill Group.

**Supernormal** – Mighty Wizards, Wiccan priestesses, sharp-eyed Mentalists, and brazen Super-Heroes all share one thing in common: they have abilities most normal people would call supernatural, paranormal, or just plain super. The Supernormal Skill Group is a measure of how much they know about their powers and how they work, as well as their ability to sense other supernormals, and manipulate their powers.

Skill Groups have a maximum score of 10.

### **Mastery Levels**

As a character gets better at a Skill Group, their chance at success naturally raises. In the game, that means you get extra dice to roll, keeping the single highest die roll. Characters start with a Skill Group score of zero. This Mastery Level is called Novice, and the player gets 1d10 to roll for Skill Group Checks. Every third Advancement in the Skill Group, the Mastery Level raises to the next level. The Mastery Levels and the required Skill Group Score is shown in the Mastery Levels table.

| Mastery Level | Required Score | Dice Rolled | Description  |
|---------------|----------------|-------------|--|
| Novice        | 0              | 1d10        | This is where the character starts play. It is the everyday man trying to do everyday things.  |
| Apprentice    | 3              | 2d10        | An Apprentice has enough skills that he is capable of performing those skills better than the Novice, but can still fail miserably.  |
| Journeyman    | 6              | 3d10        | The Journeyman will reach success more often than the Apprentice and is quite a bit more successful than the Novice. His skills are becoming a natural part of him. While rare, failures are still possible. |
| Master        | 9              | 4d10        | The Master has become one with his skills. He knows them like he was born with them, and can wield them with superb success. Only in very rare occasions will the Master fail.                               |

Skill Group Mastery is expensive, as only time and practice can bring a character to the point where their skills are a natural extension of themselves. It costs 5 Advancements to raise the Skill Group by 1 point. If individual Skills are being used, refer to **Mastery Levels And Skills**, below.

## Skills

Skills further define the abilities of the individual Skill Groups. They define the learned abilities of a character, and provide a measure of how well the character can brawl, drive a car, bake a cake or cliff dive. Unlike many other systems, Skills in Project CHUPA are meant to be general categories, not specific traits. For example, combat skills might be Melee, which shows how well the character can use hand-to-hand combat weapons, such as knives, staffs, bottles and chairs. There are not separate skills for each weapon.

There is no set limit on the number of skills that are allowed in a group, though smaller groups with broad skills are preferred. The default skills are detailed in **Skill Descriptions**, below.

Skills have a maximum value of 10.

## Mastery Levels And Skills

When individual Skills are being used in the game, the rules for advancing the Skill Group Mastery Levels is slightly different. Since Skill Groups have sets of related skills, it is natural that a synergy kicks into effect as you learn more Skills within that Skill Group. The more you improve your Skills in the Skullduggery Skill Group, the more contact you have with the other Skills in that group, and the easier it is to perform any of them. The same synergy affects all Skill Groups.

To raise Skill Group Mastery Levels when Skills are being used, the total value of the Skill Scores is used to define when Mastery Levels raise within that Skill Group. If a Skill Group has five Skills, then for every five points spent on Skills within that Skill Group, the Skill Group receives one Advancement. Just like when Skills are not being used, for every three Advancements in a Skill Group, the Mastery Level raises.

### Total Number of Skill Points required for Mastery Levels

| No. of Skills in Skill Group | Mastery Levels |            |            |        |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|--------|
|                              | Novice         | Apprentice | Journeyman | Master |
| 3                            | 0              | 9          | 18         | 27     |
| 4                            | 0              | 12         | 24         | 36     |
| 5                            | 0              | 15         | 30         | 45     |
| 6                            | 0              | 18         | 36         | 54     |

## *Skill Descriptions*

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### **General Skills**

**Athletics** – swimming, jumping, climbing, tumbling, dodge

**Entertainment** – playing instruments, games, dancing, sports, acting

**Influence** – diplomacy, etiquette, manners

**Perception** - spotting, searching, memory of item placement.

**Transportation** – riding, driving, flying, sailing, piloting

### **Knowledge Skills**

**Animals** – raising, moods, surviving encounters

**Cultures** – rituals and customs of different cultures, how to mingle and blend, histories

**Language** – reading and writing various languages.

**Law** – laws in effect, manipulating laws, getting laws made or changed

**Technology** – engineering, computers, weapon-smithing, agriculture

### **Survival Skills**

**Brawling** – personal defense without weapons

**Melee** – combat with handheld weapons such as knives, guns, whips, tasers, and chairs

**Ranged** – use of weapons with range like slings, knives, bottles, bows, rifles

**Tactics** – knowledge of the methods of combat, whether individual or mass armies.

**Outdoor Survival** –surviving and thriving in different terrains, tracking, weather and direction sense

### **Skullduggery Skills**

**Breaking and Entering** – lock-picking, alarms, disabling traps

**Con** – bluffing, impersonating, forgery

**Sleights** – sleight of hand, pick pocketing

**Stealth** – hiding, moving quietly

**Street Smarts** – knowledge of the dark recesses of the city, including finding food, illegal knowledge, and fencing

### **Supernormal Skills**

**Awareness** – awareness of supernormals in the area – people, items, ghosts, animals, etc.

**Lore** – knowledge of traditions, rituals, herbs

**Manipulation** – ability to use supernormal powers. Combine with Spiritual Power for brute force attacks, or with Spiritual Finesse for finer manipulations. Requires Secrets to activate.

## *Secrets & Keys*

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Where Attributes define the physical and mental properties of the character, and Skills represent all of the abilities they have learned over the years, Secrets and Keys fill the gap and venture into the darker, more mysterious and wonderful aspects of the character.

### **Secrets**

Secrets are special abilities a character can learn that augment abilities. These are often preternatural, sometimes magical, and always better than normal. In order to use Secrets, [Health Points](#) are spent, meaning that Secrets can be used a limited number of times before the [character's Health is restored](#).

Secrets can be better explained with an example:

#### **Secret of the Hidden Pocket**

This character is adept at hiding objects on her person. No matter how carefully searched the character has been, she may pull an inexpensive, small (hand-sized) item off her person with a successful Stealth ability check. There is no need for the player to have written this item on the character sheet previously. Cost: 1 [Health](#).

Some Secrets will be open for all characters to take. Other Secrets are “closed” – they are only available to certain races or professions.

### **Keys**

Keys are the primary method of increasing a character's abilities. These are goals, emotional ties, or vows a character has. By bringing these into the story, the player gains experience points (XP) she can use to advance the character, increasing [Attributes](#) and [Skills](#), or learning new Secrets and Keys.

Again, an example will illustrate this better:

#### **Key of Conscience**

Your character has a soft spot for those weaker than their opponents. Gain 1 XP every time your character helps someone who cannot help themselves. Gain 2 XP every time your character defends someone with might who is in danger and cannot save themselves. Gain 5 XP every time your character takes someone in an unfortunate situation and changes their life to where they can help themselves. Buyoff: Ignore a request for help.

The buyoff shown above is a special bit about Keys. Whenever a player has a character perform the action shown in one of the buyoffs, the player can (this is not mandatory) erase the Key and gain 10 XP. Once bought off, a character can never have the same Key again.

Unlike abilities and Secrets, the number of Keys a character can have is limited. A character can have no more than five Keys at one time.

# *Character Creation*

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## **Purchasing Attributes**

During character creation, a player has a set number of points to spread through the Attributes. These points are not distributed in the Sub-Attributes. If the system is using only the three core Attributes, the player receives eight (8) points. If the system is using the full four Attributes, the player receives ten (10) points. These points may be placed however the player desires.

### **OPTIONAL DISTRIBUTION METHOD:**

**4 Attributes** - For quicker character creation, the player may put 4 points in the primary Attribute, 3 in their secondary Attribute, 2 in the tertiary Attribute and 1 in the remaining Attribute.

**3 Attributes** - For quicker character creation, the player may put 4 points in the primary Attribute, 3 in their secondary Attribute, 1 in the remaining Attribute.

### **POWER LEVELS AND CHARACTERS:**

In some worlds or systems, a higher power level will be desired. In this case the system, setting or GM is encouraged to assign 15, or even 20 points to attributes.

## **Purchasing Sub-Attributes**

For each Attribute, the player has three times (3x) the number of points in the Attribute to distribute among the three Sub-Attributes. These points may be placed however they desire. Repeat for each Attribute.

## **Purchasing Skill Groups**

If individual Skills are not being used, players are given four (4) points to spread among your Skill Groups. Different systems and settings may provide a different number of points based upon the power level of the world.

## **Purchasing Skills**

When playing with individual Skills, a character begins play with 20 points to spend in their various skills. This may vary based upon the setting, system or GM.

## **Purchasing Secrets and Keys**

Before play, players can choose one Secret and one Key for their characters.

## **Further Advances**

Lastly, players start with a number of advances (chances to improve) for their characters. This is determined by the group before play, depending on how powerful characters are to be at the beginning of the game. The standard number is five. To figure out how to spend them, read below.

## **Character Advancement**

During the game, each player character will get experience points (XP) for meeting the player's goals for that character's story and the GM's goals for the overall story. These experience points are converted to advances, usually at a rate of five XP to one advance. Each advance that you get can be banked toward improving your character's Sub-Attributes, Skills, Secrets, and Keys. The costs are found in the table below.

| Advancement Table   |            |
|---|------------|
| Increase a skill group by 1 point<br>(if Skills are not being used) | 5 advances |
| Increase a skill by 1 point   | 1 advance  |
| Increase a Sub-Attribute 1 point                                    | 3 advances |
| Add a Secret  | 1 advance  |
| Add a Key   | 1 advance  |

You can never increase the same thing twice in a row. That is, you cannot increase the same Skill Group, Skill, or Sub-Attribute twice in a row. You need to increase something else in between. In addition, you cannot buy two Secrets or two Keys in a row.

# *Conflicts*

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## **What is a Conflict?**

Conflicts happen whenever one person wants something and someone else opposes them. It could be an intergalactic battle between two starships, scaling a wall without being seen by guards, or an argument in the Roman Senate.

## **Health Points**

Health Points represent the character's physical, mental, social and spiritual (or magical, etc) health. Whether we are physically exhausted, hurt, or simply mentally drained from hours of magical research, our current ability to perform is hampered in nearly everything that we do. All of these forms of exhaustion and pain are abstracted into Health Points.

### **Finding our maximum Health Points**

Your current maximum Health Points can be found by adding together the total points in each of the Attribute Resistance scores. For example, Peter has the following Resistance scores: Physical Resistance (5), Mental Resistance (4), Social Resistance (3), and Spiritual Resistance (2). His current maximum Health Points are 14.

This value increases whenever new points are added to any of the Resistance scores, or through bonuses given by items, magic, technology, etc.

### **Taking wounds**

During conflict resolution, a failure may result in the loss of Health Points. It must be stressed, however, that these losses do not just indicate physical damage, but also Mental, Social, or Spiritual. Suffering from a loss of an extremely important argument in the Roman Senate would remove Health Points just as much as getting stabbed in the gut.

[Each use of a Secret costs some Health Points. Refer to the description of the Secret for the cost.](#)

### **Wound Levels**

Each situation or item will have a Wound Level generally ranging from 1 to 3. For example, the GM might decide that the importance of the issue involved in the Roman Senate argument was crucial enough to your character that losing the argument would have a Wound Level of 3.

### **Recovering Health Points**

Health Points can be recovered in several ways. Special situations may arise where your GM would award you Health Points as a bonus for success.

A full night's sleep will recover a number of Health Points equal to your highest Resistance Score.

If the character has recently suffered a tremendous Social or Spiritual setback that resulted in a loss of Health Points, the GM may award a number of Health Points equal to the applicable Resistance score if the character experiences a large success in that same area. Taking our Roman Senate as an example: our Senator was trying to convince the Senate that action should be taken on a highly controversial subject. Being shot down, he lost 3 Health Points because of his loss in Social confidence, or Resistance. Later that day, our Senator discovers another plan of his has come to fruition in a surprisingly good way. Since he has a Social Resistance of 5, the GM can elect to award him up to 5 Health Points because his confidence in his Social skills have been restored. In this case, the GM would probably limit the award by matching the 3 Health Points that he lost. If our Senator had only had a Social Resistance of 2, then he could have only used 2 of the 3 Health Points that he was awarded. The remaining Health Point would be permanently lost.

A character's Health Points can never be higher than their Maximum Health Point score, even if an award or rest would put them above that number. Any remaining points are unusable, and therefore lost.

## Conflict Resolution

Skill checks are resolved by rolling 1d10 and adding the value of the Skill and the relevant Attribute or Sub-Attribute, plus any other bonuses that may be appropriate, such as for higher-quality tools or materials being used.

Skills are not tied directly to a specific Sub-Attribute. Instead, it is up to the GM to choose the appropriate Sub-Attribute for the situation. A situation often will be able to be solved using several different approaches, and the GM, paying attention to the player's description of how they want to accomplish the task, will have the flexibility to choose the best one.

For example, Lt. Johnson needs to get his men across the small chasm that blocks their path to safety. He sees two options available to him. He can either use his Sciences skill combined with Mental Finesse to design and build a bridge with cut branches and vines, or use Sciences with Physical Power to find the right tree to topple, while understanding where he needs to break it to have it fall in the correct place, and not falling into the chasm. Since the enemy is also closing in hard on their position, he decides that toppling the tree is the only realistic option.

His Physical Power score is a 3, and his Sciences Skill is a 4 (Apprentice.) So he rolls 2d10k1 + 3 + 4. (2d10 because of his Apprentice Mastery level, 3 for Physical Power and 4 for Sciences.) He rolls the dice and gets a 5 and an 8. He keeps the single highest result (8), adds his skill and attribute values and has a total of 15. If he would not have had any Mastery levels in Sciences, he would have rolled 1d10, gotten the five, and had a result of 12 (5 + 3 + 4.)

This resulting number is compared to the Difficulty Number the GM has assigned the task. If it equals, or is greater than the Difficulty Number, the skill check is a success. If it is lower than the assigned Difficulty, the roll is a failure.

If the highest value on any of the dice is a one (1), then the GM is encouraged to find something bad that might happen because of the roll. It might not happen until the next round, or it might not become apparent until farther in the future.

For example, Lt. Johnson successfully makes the tree-bridge, but rolled a one (1) on both of his dice. While the result is successful, the GM might decide that he did not judge the sturdiness of the tree as good as he should have. The tree has a hairline crack in the center of it now, resulting from the impact of the landing, and will collapse if enough weight is put on it. The GM secretly rolls 1d10 and gets a 6. He decides that when the sixth man is crossing, the tree snaps.

### STANDARD DIFFICULTY NUMBERS

|            |    |
|------------|----|
| Simple     | 7  |
| Easy       | 9  |
| Medium     | 12 |
| Taxing     | 16 |
| Heroic     | 20 |
| Impossible | 25 |

### Additional Conflict Resolution Examples

These examples have been taken directly from discussions on the forums, and are mostly the work of stickman. (Thanks!)

### **The Dance**

**Peter:** I'm going to take Lady Marid's hand and dance with her, wooing the room with my courtly skills. I actually want to impress her father, Count Marid.

**DM:** Okay, well I'd say that's Physical Finesse + Etiquette, and as it's a waltz I'll make it a Taxing difficulty.

**Peter:** I was hoping to use my Social Finesse instead, I'm not worried about being perfect, just being impressive with my manners. How does that sound?

**DM:** That's fine, I thought you wanted to impress them with your moves. That sounds good, but it's made slightly more difficult by Lady Marid who seems to want to rather more than a single dance ...

**Peter:** Oh great, I do *not* want to annoy Viscount Yander by being overtly familiar with his fiancé, so I'm going to be dancing with as much distance between us as possible.

**DM:** That'll make it harder?

**Peter:** No problem.

**DM:** So, you're dancing politely with Lady Marid in an attempt to impress her father. That's a Social Finesse + Etiquette roll against a modified taxing difficulty. If you succeed Count Marid will be impressed, if you fail then .. he's still impressed but Lady Marid will be besotted with you.

**Peter:** That's evil!

**DM:** I know, that's my job Now, is that ok?

**Peter:** How about if I fail then Lady Marid's fiancé Viscount Yander will think I've committed some wrong doing and seek satisfaction?

**DM:** Heh, yep, that sounds good too! Ok, we'll go with that.

**Peter:** Well, I rolled and got a total of 20! I don't think Yander saw anything he wouldn't approve of.

And so on. . There is room for negotiation between DM and players, which hopefully means that the player gets to roll with attributes and skills they agree are pertinent and they know the risks (to some extents) before they roll.

### **The Bridge (and further clarifications)**

Peter is crossing an old rope bridge when his enemies begin sawing at the ropes, so he begins running for the side. The DM specifies that on a success he makes it to the side, on a failure he's on the bridge as it breaks.

In either case there is little concrete fact. If he gets to the side, he might still be ambushed. If the bridge snaps with him still on it, the DM can call for another conflict to grab something before falling, or give him a chance to dive into the crocodile infested waters below ..

One of the key concepts here though is listening to the undercurrent (or in fact stated goals) of the players. If the player is talking about wanting to escape from the prison block they're in, you need to decide if this means a single conflict or a series of them. One effective way to do this is to have the player choose success and failure terms, as often they'll be more than happy to let you know which they'd prefer. An additional useful thing here is that when you want bad things to happen, players are often far more willing to think of cool bad things to happen to their own characters that you are as a DM, because *they* came up with it. That means they've already imagined that situation coming to pass.

For example, you're playing a Peter the knight in a fight and it's going badly for you. The DM states that a critical hit lands, and asks you what that means. Now obviously for some players, they'll just want the least damage they can get away with, and the DM can handle that. But for others, it's a chance to make their character more interesting. Some people might decide 'the blow lands across Peters face, scarring him horribly', and that's cool (the image of the once handsome knight now marked by his dreaded foe) but for some players, they might not be able to buy into that and prefer Peter have his hand slashed, a bone shattered or some other dark fate.