

# Project CHUPA

Version 0.13

*Expanded Rules*

*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.

December 26, 2005 - Version 0.05. Changed GM to Director for more "cinematic feel." Split Health into separate Health Pools. Added Secrets and Keys descriptions from TSOY. Slight Reorganization of document. Additions and clarifications to the combat system. Added current Skills descriptions.

January 3, 2006 - Version 0.06. Added Dice Mechanics Appendix. Altered most Secrets to fit. Expanded Sub-Attribute descriptions. Added General->First Aid Skill. Expanded conflicts a bit with Combat Scope and Opposed Conflicts.

January 4, 2006 - Version 0.06a. Added in Skullduggery Skill Descriptions.

January 9, 2006 - Version 0.07. Altered Opposed Rolls. Added Frames of Time. Clarified attribute raising methods. Added the Turning Point. Added Equipment Types. Added description of Life Paths and Templates - more to be defined later.

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January 26, 2006 - Version 0.09. Added Optional Conflict Rules. Added flavor text for a couple worlds. Added guidelines for Race design.

February 8, 2006 - Version 0.10. Revised layout. Added revised and streamlined Life Paths - renamed to Backstory. Added Attribute and Skill Descriptions to Basic Rules. Added Healing Scenes and fleshed out Energy Recovery. Added Wound Penalties. Removed Opposed Conflict rules, and added Upping the Ante under Advanced Rules in its place.

February 9, 2006 - Version 0.10a. Added Advanced Rules for Backstories.

February 14, 2006 - Version 0.11. Clarifications to Character Creation. Added Armor rules. Began work on Glossary.

March 16, 2006 - Version 0.12. Reworked Basic Rules for clarification / consistency. Moved Armor rules to Realms of Wonder. Removed Law Skill (into Culture). Moved Outdoor Survival to Knowledge. Added Act 4: Director Guidelines with ideas on handling exp. Split Act 0: Character Creation into Basic and Advanced and put in their respective Acts. Simplified Energy Pools in Basic Rules (w/ a rename to Health Pool and Energy Pool.)

July 11, 2006 - Version 0.13a. - Reworked Basic Rules to a standalone version. Added Director Notes for Challenge Ratings & Conflict Blocks. Rewrote several examples for a more dramatic, and precise feel. Added the Quick Play opening. Added Attribute descriptions. Provided more concrete numbers for all rules to remove some of the previous uncertainty.

August 18, 2006 - Revised Optional methods for Attribute generation. Changed Skill Group to Skill. Removed the General Skill.

September 24, 2006 - Revised the Skill system. Replaced lost General Skill Group with the Everyman Skill Group.

# Introduction

## What Is Project Chupa?

Project Chupa is a set of core rules intended to be used as the foundation for other settings and systems to be built on. It was developed by the members of the Dragon's Landing Podcast forums to provide a system suited towards the acting and story-telling aspects of roleplaying, and less towards wading in and rolling the dice. Its goal is to provide a cinematic feel, meaning that, especially during combat, the game did not bog down into rolls and numbers, leaving each player enough time to get a drink, and make a snack run. This was not the only goal, however. Characters should be central to the movement of the story, and they should be capable of heroic actions fitting in the grandest of Hollywood's movies and still focus on the needs and wants and pains of the character.

We wanted a system that could expand and contract to fit different styles of play and various settings, while still maintaining a consistent mechanism and familiar feel. This meant that the system had to be able to use modules that could be snapped into play with ease. Not an easy task.

While the subconscious mind holds concepts from past RPG systems, the team strove to be original. They threw crazy ideas against the wall, discussing them until they found ideas they all could pull behind. Then they reined them in and tested them, tweaking until they worked. To the best of their knowledge all of the ideas that ended up in the system are their unique creation, with the exception of the Secrets, and the advancement system it used. During discussions, ideas kept leaning towards what one of the designers called TSOY, The Secrets of Yesterday, an RPG system published under a Creative Commons License.

This started as an experiment, to see if a group of disparate role-players, each bringing their own unique views and histories, could form something new and unique, something of value. During development, the fires of passion were lit. We hope it lights your imagination as well, and brings you many years of entertainment and vivid memories.

## Using the Book

Since Project Chupa is designed with a "plug and play" approach in mind, we have split the rules into 3 distinct sections to make whatever type of play you prefer easier to grasp. The rules described in this document are just the beginning, a set of generic rules that cover most applications. Some portions of the system may not work for the setting you wish to run -- that's okay! Just don't use them. The Skill Groups listed here are not meant to be all-inclusive, and the list of Backstories is by no means exhaustive. Those rules described here are intended to provide a sturdy base to expand upon.

These core rules do not include any rules for special powers such as magic, psionics, etc. Individual world settings will provide much more information, information tailored to that specific setting. Directors are encouraged to create their own rules to better create the feel of the world they are playing in.

### **ACT 1: EXPANDED RULES**

This section expands upon some of the rules, such as splitting the Attributes into Sub-Attributes, playing with individual Skills, and more. These rules are designed to be taken or left to meet the desires of your group, setting, or play style.

### **ACT 2: DIRECTOR GUIDELINES**

In this section we will give some advice on various topics specific to the Director's role. Topics include handling experience and character growth.

# Quick Start Narrative

## PREMISE

The characters are part of Blacksmith and Weiss, a security firm. Their assignment is to track down the kidnapped daughter of a prominent businessman, Hugh Veasley. His daughter Rene had disappeared from a nightclub called Infernum in down town. Following up on a lead, the characters are trailing a suspect in cars when another vehicle pulls alongside and bullets start flying!

## SCENE 1 – INTERSTATE FIRE FIGHT

The heroes are split between two vehicles, a van and a motorcycle. Assign driving duty to whoever has the highest Drive Skills unless the players have other ideas. The suspect is Joey Bandra, a small time hood in a small time compact. The trouble is being caused by an unmarked white van containing four goons. One of the goons is armed with a pistol, one is driving, the other two have baseball bats.

### **Chase! Duration 3, Severity 1, Difficulty 9 (Traffic Manoeuvres 12)**

This is what we call an Encounter Block. It gives suggestions for how a given encounter might end up going. This block tells us that there are probably going to be three separate conflicts involved in this encounter (Duration 3). The Severity 1 lets us know that when conflicts go against the players, they will suffer 1 damage. The difficulty of 9 means that most target numbers in this scene will be set at 9, although any that involve other road users will be tougher, and set at 12.

Now comes the players turn, describing how their characters are going to either stop the goons from shooting their ride up, or how they will stop Joey from escaping. Let them discuss things if they like, then they can either take individual actions or else work together to on one conflict. The order isn't important, so if a player wants to go first that's fine, or else determine an order (say left from the Director).

Let's say the first player (the driver of the motorcycle) decides to pull alongside Joey and point a gun at him, to get him to pull over. The Director checks the encounter difficulty and decides this is in the 'Other Road Users' difficulty, so assigns a base Difficulty of 12. He then thinks over how difficult this is likely to be and decides it's regular, so leaves the Difficulty as it is. He picks an Attribute and Skill, in this case it's intimidating so he picks Physical and General. The last thing he does is put this into conflict terms for the player to agree to.

“You're trying to weave through the traffic to catch up with Joey then to intimidate him. This is a fairly tough task of Difficulty 12. On a success Joey is cowed and will try to pull over somewhere quiet. On a success another vehicle will clip you as you try to pull alongside.”

If the player is okay with this, then they go ahead and roll.

The next player and one of the others want to try something more daring. They decide to jump from the car into

the van, taking the fight to the goons! This is not really a traffic roll, so begins at a base Difficulty of 9. The Director agrees this would be cool, but it's also a tough thing to do. He decides this a tough roll, so increases the Difficulty by 3, but also lowers it by 1 for being cool, giving a total of Difficulty 11. The Attribute and Skill of this is Physical + Athletics. The Director specifies it as follows.

“As the goons pull alongside you throw yourselves across into their van. On a success you've crossed the gap and are ready to fight. On a failure you're clinging onto the side of the goons van and take 1 damage from the strain”.

Because the players are working together the Director lets them select the best combination of Athletics and Physical and they add a +1 to their roll.

Some sample conflicts that you might encounter during the chase:

Swerving towards the goons to put them off their shots - Mental + Technology

Shooting at the goons - Physical + Combat

Jumping between vehicles - Physical + Fitness

Planning a great route between vehicles to trap another vehicle - Mental + Perception

Convincing Joey to spill his guts - Social + Influence

## **SCENE 2 – THE OLD HIDEOUT**

Following up on Joey's info, the team end up at an old factory out on the old industry park.

### **Guards: Duration 1, Severity 2, Difficulty 10 (Canines 11)**

There are a fair number of regular security guards around, patrolling with guard dogs. The group will need to bypass them, maybe sneaking past, fast talking them or just fighting their way through.

### **Security Door: Duration 2, Severity 0, Difficulty 13 (Bust It Down 11)**

This encounter is a little different. Note that the severity here is 0. This means that failing to get past the door won't actually damage anyone, but there will be story based problems. Maybe it takes a long time to get past, maybe some other guards hear their attempts, maybe their tools get broken. Also note that the duration here is 2. What if they pick the lock on the first attempt? That's fine, and you can introduce another conflict shortly afterwards (being quiet, someone's phone goes off, the door slams shut after them, they trip other security measures)

### **Where'd Everybody Go? Duration 3, Severity 1, Difficulty 8**

The last encounter of this scene shows the team busting into a now empty warehouse. There are clues around, but they're hard to spot. There is a discarded match book from club Infernum, some hair from a blonde (Rene Veasley), a bunch of fingerprints and some spent shell casings. Checking a police source will reveal a connection to the Shadow Tigers, a gang from the city. Maybe it's time to pay them a visit!

# Act 1: Character Creation

Character Creation in Project Chupa is a quick and simple process. When Backstories are being used, it is one of the quickest character generation systems around.

This Act starts off with a quick overview of the process. It is alright if this does not make sense the first time you read it. It is intended primarily as a quick reference for players already familiar with the system. Once you have read the Acts about Attributes, Skills and Secrets, you will be ready to create your first character.

## Backstory

The first step in character creation is to have an idea. Write it down. Pass it by your Director and make any changes to fit better into the world. Once you have a character concept, you can proceed to earning Attribute and Skill points by choosing your Childhood, Education, Passion and Careers.

As an alternate method, you can create your idea by choosing Backstories and building your character concept from there. One of the best ways to create an interesting character is to choose Backstories that do not immediately seem to fit together, and then find ways to connect them while writing up your character concept.

So how do you assign Backstory? Assuming that your character is Human, put one point in each Attribute. If the setting you are playing has different races, or sub-races of Humans, then look at the description and assign the Attributes from there. Now pick your Backstory. Each one will have Attribute and Skill bonuses or penalties to assign to your character. Once you have picked all four Backstories (Childhood, Education, Passion, and Career,) you will have a nearly finished character.

To add a little more customization to your character, you get 8 points to spend in individual Skills however you see fit.

And there you have it: a finished character. At least, all of the points are spent. Now add some descriptions, purchase your Secrets (see below) and you are ready to play!

## Purchasing Attributes

If you would rather not use the Backstories provided, you can craft your character from scratch, spending points however you see fit.

The first step is to assign your Attributes based upon your race, as described earlier.

Once that is done, you have 10 points to spend through your Attributes however you want. If the system is using only the three core Attributes, the player receives eight (8) points.

Now that you have scores in each Attribute, you need to distribute points through your Expanded Attributes. To find the number of points you have to spend in the 3 Expanded Attributes, multiply your Attribute score by 3. You can spend these among your Expanded Attributes any way you wish.

## OPTIONAL METHOD:

**4 Attributes** - For quicker character creation, the player may put 3 points in the primary Attribute, 2 in their secondary Attribute, 1 in the tertiary Attribute and 0 in the remaining Attribute. If the character is a normal human, place 1 point in each Attribute.

**3 Attributes** - For quicker character creation, the player may put 3 points in the primary Attribute, 2 in their secondary Attribute, 1 in the remaining Attribute. If the character is a normal human, place 1 point in each Attribute.

Once these points have been spent, assign points to the Expanded Attributes as detailed above.

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

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

### **Secrets**

Before play, players can choose one Secret for their character. Check with the Director, since they may vary the amount they allow for a starting character based upon the games Power Level and Setting.

### **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.

## Act 2: Backstory

Backstory is the sum of events that happened to the characters before the game started. Many times, players will write out a general history of the character, complete with the most important events that made that character who they are today. Often, this is fine, and the player can spend points through their character to make the numbers match the backstory. Some times, though, we are playing after a long day of work and are tired enough that our muse is not working as well as we might wish. Or perhaps you want to get a game running on short notice. In cases like these, we provide archetypes you can use to build your character very quickly. These Backstories are divided into four Life Stages. They are: Childhood, Education, Passion, and Career.

To build a character as fast as possible, simply select one Backstory from each Life Stage, apply the bonuses provided, and you are almost done. All that is left is to customize your character with a few points in Skills and Attributes.

By default, the rules assume the base character race is Human. All Human characters get a +1 bonus in all Attributes: Physical, Mental, Social, and Spiritual. If the system that you are playing has other races, spend the Attribute Points as defined in that Race.

Each player also gets four points to spend in their Skills however they wish. This allows a player to customize the character to fit their vision a little bit more. It also helps to ensure that two characters that have followed the same sequence of Backstory will not be clones of each other.

It should be noted that using Backstories is not a required method to generate character, but it is a very effective method for sparking creativity and quickly building an interesting character. If a player decides not to use Backstory, they may spend the given points however they feel. See the Character Creation for details.

### Backstory Descriptions

#### CHILDHOOD

**Academic Prodigy** - Either through nature or other means, the character is born with an incredible talent for certain skills. This is combined with a prodigious intellect.

*Mental +1, Physical -1, Negotiation +1*

**Child Laborer** - The character is put to work in some fashion, either because their family requires every penny, or possibly to generate income for the lazy guardians. Either way, life is hard, but the character learns to take their knocks early, along with an understanding of appropriate machinery (looms, presses, forges, etc.)

*Physical +1, Technology +1*

**Created** - The character was brought to life in some manner outside of the normal mechanisms. This includes vat-grown clone warriors or beings summoned from another dimension.

*Physical +1, Fitness +1*

**Mercantile** – The character’s parents were traveling merchants, either from merchant guild, or peddlers. Regardless, the character spends a lot of their childhood traveling and learning to communicate with others.

*Social +1, Negotiation +1*

**Military Brat** – The character grew up attached to a military unit. They become accustomed to the discipline of a military life, and learned the basics of warfare.

*Physical +1, Combat +1*

**Monastic** – The character was raised in a cloistered manner, possibly in a religious environment.

*Spiritual +1, Everyman +1*

**Mystical** – The character is born into a mystical blood line. Perhaps the blood of dragons flows in their veins, or their ancestors consorted with daemons. For whatever reason, the forces of magic flow easily with them.

*Spiritual +1, Supernatural +1*

**Natural** – The character is brought up in harmony with nature, possibly with a tribal or aboriginal group. Their parents might be outdoors people, or they might live in a rural environment.

*Social +1, Nature +1*

**Orphanage** – The character was raised in an orphanage, which might have been a run-down state home or a private home. Money is scarce, but the character is taught the basics of learning. These children learn to work with others to achieve their goals.

*Social +1, Everyman +1*

**Royal** – The character’s parents or direct bloodline are royalty. This puts the character in a favorable position socially, but may bring responsibilities later in life.

*Social +1, Negotiation +1*

**Schooled** – The character’s parents are regular folks. Their childhood consists of climbing trees, getting into a little trouble, and generally being average.

*Mental +1, Everyman +1*

**Street Urchin** – Growing up in the streets, the character had no permanent guardian or family. They became tough and wily enough to survive rough nights, often relying on contacts.

*Physical +1, Skullduggery +1*

## **EDUCATION**

**Academic** – The character enters full-time academia. This could be as a willing student or cloistered against their will. They may serve as a librarian, scribe, or in the service of more mysterious masters.

*Mental +1, Negotiation +1*

**Criminal** – The character receives their early training from criminals, likely as part of a gang or other organized group, or working on their own. They may be a thug, con-artist, burglar, or belong to some other nefarious profession.

*Physical +1, Skullduggery +1*

**Laborer** - The character works diligently through their apprenticeship. They could work in construction, in a factory, or in agriculture.

*Physical +1, Everyman +1*

**Military** - The character learns with a group of warriors or as part of an army. They may work as a squire, help with the horses, or be involved in drilling or weapons work.

*Physical +1, Combat +1*

**Mystic** - The character's education was provided by an organization or individual that has strong connections with the supernatural. This could be a coven of witches, a strange alien benefactor, or a group of zealous cultists.

*Spiritual +1, Supernatural +1*

**Socialite** - The character spends all of their time partying and otherwise enjoying themselves. Such characters may well go on to be productive members of society, but might also stay this way.

*Social +1, Everyman +1*

## PASSION

**Collector** - be it a pack rat, a stamp collector, a vintage car enthusiast, this character will have a passion for one or two types of items, and strives to find them.

*Mental +1, Everyman +1*

**Dilettante** - The character is a social creature, finding recreation in the company of others, be it in a quiet dinner party or a raucous evening in a crowded tavern.

*Social +1, Everyman +1*

**Knowledge** - The character thirsts for knowledge, spending their free time reading or studying.

*Mental +1, Negotiation +1*

**Occult** - The character desires knowledge of things beyond mortal ken, finding dark lore and searching the shadows.

*Spiritual +1, Supernatural +1*

**Rebel** - this person seeks to do everything different than their parents, their friends, their family, their supervisors, their peers. Trailblazing or revolting...

*Social +1, Everyman +1*

**Service** - Be it service to country or service to an organization, or even to themselves, a person with this passion will devote their energies to activities to fulfill a purpose higher than themselves.

*Social +1, Everyman +1*

**Sports** - The character enjoys one, or several, sporting activities and is proficient in their chosen sport.

*Physical +1, Fitness +1*

**Survivalist** – The character enjoys outdoor pursuits, or possibly is a student of combat in one for or another. Arm-chair generals, hunters, martial arts enthusiasts, and others fit into the category.

*Physical +1, Combat +1*

## CAREERS

**Academic** – A character specializing in knowledge of some sort. Could be a professor, scientist, or sage.

*Mental +3, Everyman +1, Negotiation +1*

**Con Artist** – Quick banter and swaying others to their cause are the hallmarks of this class. Could be a demagogue, a trickster, bard, or even salesman.

*Social +2, Mental +1, Skullduggery +1, Negotiation +1*

**Diplomat** – A character who specializes in dealing with others, often of different cultures or races. Could be a diplomat, an interpreter, or anthropologist.

*Mental +2, Social +1, Negotiation +1, General +1*

**Entertainer** – A character who earns their living entertaining others. Includes singers, dancers, professional gamblers, bards and the like.

*Mental +1, Social +2, Everyman +1, Fitness +1*

**Investigator** – The investigator joins academic promise with a nose for trouble. This could represent a government agent, a detective, journalist, or a whip-wielding archeologist.

*Physical +1, Mental +1, Social +1, Everyman +1, Negotiation +1*

**Laborer** – A character whose living is made from hard manual labor, street gangs, factory workers, chain gangs. Can also represent professional athletes.

*Physical +2, Social +1, Fitness +2*

**Muscle** – Strong arm tactics are this character's weapon of choice. Without specific military training, the character gets through life with a rough and tumble approach. Bikers, thugs, militia, or bouncers fit into this category.

*Physical +2, Social +1, Fitness +1, Skullduggery +1*

**Mystic Warrior** – A warrior who has supernormal abilities influencing his martial abilities. Could include Paladins, mystical martial artists, or energy-sword wielding mystics.

*Physical +2, Spiritual +1, Combat +1, Supernatural +1*

**Occultist** – A specialist in secrets and forgotten lore.

*Mental +1, Spiritual +2,, Supernatural +2*

**Soldier** – Whether a modern infantryman, a musketeer, or an archer, the character spends their time training in the arts of warfare.

*Physical +2, Social +1, Combat +2*

**Tactician** – A military career where brains are as, if not more, important than brawn. Includes command positions as well as special forces and other military specialists.

*Physical +1, Mental +2, Combat +1, Negotiation +1*

**Thief** – A catch all career for those whose careers depend on stealth and agility. This could represent a professional art thief, a street smart burglar, or a well-trained infiltration agent.

*Physical +1, Mental +1, Social +1, Skullduggery +1, Technology +!*

## Act 3: 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.

**Table A1-1: Physical Descriptions**

0	Human sloth
2	The average human
3	Works out occasionally
4	Can lift their own body-weight
7	Olympic class gymnast or weight-lifter
10	Able to lift small trucks and contort with the best Chinese acrobats.

**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 their determination and willpower.

**Table A1-2: Mental Descriptions**

0	Won't be winning any Nobel prizes
2	The average human
3	Good at crosswords and brain teasers
4	Has a love of knowledge and can dig through dusty tomes for hours without noticing the passing of time
7	Should have been in MENSA

- 10 Can speak a dozen languages, rub your tummy and pat your head, all while chewing gum and skipping down the sidewalk

**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. It also measures how much resistance they have to other people’s manipulations, pressure, or bullying.

**Table A1-3: Social Descriptions**

0	Gets so scared at the thought of talking to people that they stammer and walk away
2	The average human
3	The life of the party
5	A born storyteller, capable of captivating crowds
7	The perfect politician: able to talk circles around others and sell snake oil
10	The ultimate leader – their charisma is a palpable aura

**SPIRITUAL** – This fourth Attribute is given as a default value. It is likely to change from game world to game world. 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 or world needs it to be.

**Table A1-4: Spiritual Descriptions**

0	Has no clue that the Truth is out there
2	The average human, may not sense or control much around them, but they do have weird things happen around them
3	Is comfortable hanging out with ghosts, though conversations may be limited
5	Can actually pull off a séance, or work the Ouija Board to find true answers
7	A potent magician - this is a true David Copperfield or Merlin
10	Able to work miracles, possibly a potent religious icon

Attributes have a maximum value of 10 for normal humans.

## EXPANDED ATTRIBUTES

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

### POWER

The Power Sub-Attribute is a measure of how strongly you can affect your surroundings.

- **Physical Power** represents not only raw strength, but also a knowledge of how to swing the weapon properly and create the best impact. You can use it to shove large boulders out of the way, pry open treasure chests, or wrestle your opponent to the ground.
- **Mental Power** is your raw intellect. It is used when learning new information from books, trying to invent a new item (this could also be Mental Finesse), recalling a specific piece of obscure information, or trying to follow complex instructions to perform an unfamiliar task (like trying to perform surgery while reading a medical manual.)
- **Social Power** is your charisma, or the power of your personality. This will effect people's initial reaction to you. It can be useful when trying to intimidate someone and it can determine the outcome of negotiations where you are basing your actions on the strength of your character.
- **Spiritual Power** is how close you are to your god, the potency of your magic or your mind, and your ability to use those special abilities with a powerful, direct effect.

### FINESSE

Finesse represents the creative, intuitive, and agile properties of the character.

- **Physical Finesse** shows how nimble and agile you are. It may be used for threading a needle, climbing a broken scaffold, or tumbling through dangerous traps.
- **Mental Finesse** is your ability to think creatively. It may be used to write a song, play games that involve intricate strategy, form a battle plan, or solve complex riddles
- **Social Finesse** is your ability to manipulate people and situations. It is used when trying to talk your way out of difficult situations, overpower an opponent in an argument with fast-talking, or manipulate people's actions or reactions without their notice.
- **Spiritual Finesse** is your intuitive ability to understand your special powers. It might be used for creating new spells in the heat of the battle, understanding what powers were used to cause the damage laid out before you, or performing complex magical rituals correctly.

### RESISTANCE

Unlike Power and Finesse, which are active Sub-Attributes that can be used to make things happen, Resistance is more reactive and used to measure your ability to resist effects that other characters, yourself, or nature are throwing at you.

- **Physical Resistance** shows your resistance to poisons and colds, and is a good indicator of the character's general health.
- **Mental Resistance** is the ability to think for yourself and not be influenced by actions around you. It can also be your ability to ward off supernatural attacks that might try to influence your way of thinking.
- **Social Resistance** measures your characters ability to resist the manipulations of others. It can help you detect a lie, or see through the public face a character may wear into the private demons that haunt them.

- **Spiritual Resistance** is your ability to protect yourself against supernatural powers that are used against you. Since most supernatural powers have a price to be paid, this can also measure how well you can stand against the cost of your powers.

Sub-Attributes 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.

# Act 4: Skills

## Skill Groups

Skills are grouped to allow characters to become more highly skilled in certain areas, allowing a synergy to take effect.

The Skill Groups are as follows:

**Everyman** – Everyman skills that everyone shares some ability in. This group includes the ability to hear things in the distance, or spot the thief crouching in the shadows, and perform basic first aid.

**Combat** – Fighting is inevitable when heroes are involved. The Combat skill covers all aspects of both individual and mass combat situations. It encompasses all forms of combat, whether martial arts, swords, guns, lasers or spaceships. The individual soldier will use this skill every bit as much as the general on top of the hill, pouring over maps and planning the entire invasion.

**Fitness** – Whether the situation calls for brute strength or extreme flexibility, the Fitness skill is the answer. It covers all physical and body related activities outside of those handled by other, more specific skills. Whether you are testing your fitness by swimming the English Channel, climbing the Cliffs of Dover, or performing in the Olympics, it is covered here.

**Nature** – Surviving the worst that nature has to throw at you, whether in extreme weather or extreme animals, are these skills. This skill covers taming wild animals, reading the signs that nature has left to track creatures or animals, knowing what to do to survive dangerous weather and terrain, and how to manipulate nature to achieve certain affects, like through herbalism.

**Negotiation** – Politicians, Philosophers, and Scientist might all have strong need of this skill. It helps you talk your way into or out of situations, or barter the price on something down to a reasonable level. If you need to find the answer to a difficult riddle, you can use this skill to negotiate your way through the maze of logic until you arrive at the answer. It also covers getting around the laws and cultures.

**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.

**Supernatural** – 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 Supernatural Skill 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.

**Technology** – The Technology skill covers any use or creation of man-made devices. This might be hacking into the InfoNet, pushing your spaceship to its maximum abilities, or trying to create a new bridge.

Skills have a maximum score of 10 for normal humans.

## Skills

Skills are very flexible, giving the player the ability to customize their character and add flavor to the game itself. Instead of having a fixed list of skills, players are allowed to write down any skills within each Skill Group that they wish. Skills should be fairly broad skills, such as Ranged or Melee under the Combat Skill Group. When done this way, the skills that are shown on the character sheet are the skills that matter to that character. Each new rank in a skill costs 1 Advance.

Players also have the option of choosing skill specialties. An example might be a Musketeer who chooses the Melee skill, and decides to specialize in Rapier. When spending Advances later in the life of the character, all ranks in specialties cost 2 Advances, instead of the 1 Advance that skills cost. When determining damage, any rolls using the specialty get a bonus to the damage equal to the number of ranks in the specialty.

A character may choose 1 skill for each rank in the Skill Group itself, or they may choose to put new ranks in an existing skill instead of getting a new skill. If a player decides to buy a specialty, it also costs 1 rank at character creation.

*Mike is creating a martial artist character. After running through the Backstory system, his character has a Combat score of 4. This gives him several options. First he could choose to create 4 separate skills, or he could choose 2 skills with a single specialty in each. To reflect the martial art style that he has chosen, which focuses solely on hand-to-hand styles, he puts the first rank into Melee. He then chooses three specialties, each patterned after a different animal: The Way of the Snake, the Way of the Crane and the Way of the Monkey. The Director and Mike work together to create the abilities and limits of each style before play starts.*

When determining the final value of a skill check, the player adds the total of the die roll, the Attribute used, the skill and the specialty.

*Mike's character, Lee Yung, is battling an infiltrator. Lee Yung's uses the Way of the Snake to perform a lightning quick strike to a pressure point. He uses his Physical Finesse (6) + Melee (4) + The Way of the Snake (2). He rolls two dice and gets a 4 and an 8. Keeping his best roll (the 8) he adds his total values together to get a 20. Instead of the 1 point of damage that he would normally do, he does 2 points of damage because he was using his specialty. If he had decided to risk 3 points of his Physical Fitness to increase the damage done, he would have done 6 points of total damage (1 point standard, plus the 3 points he was risking, plus 2 points of bonus damage from his specialty.)*

During character advancement, new ranks in a skill cost 1 Advance. New ranks in specialties cost 2 Advances, and new ranks in a Skill Group as a whole cost 5 Advances. When a new rank in a Skill Group is purchased, the character receives a number of points equal to the number of skills (excluding specialties) within that group. These points can be spent to purchase new ranks just like they are Advances: 1 point for a skill, 2 points for a specialty.

## Mastery Levels

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.

The better your character is at a group of Skills, the higher their chance of success becomes. This is called Skill Group Mastery. As more points are spent on individual Skills, the Skill Group Mastery level increases.

To raise Skill Group Mastery Levels the total value of the individual Skill Scores is used. 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. For every three Advancements in a Skill Group, the Mastery Level raises.

**MASTERY LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS**

**Novice** - This is where the character starts play. It is the everyday man trying to do everyday things.

**Apprentice** - An Apprentice has enough skills that he is capable of performing those skills better than the Novice, but can still fail miserably.

**Journeyman** - 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** - 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 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.

**Table 1: Mastery Levels and Die Bonus**

Mastery Level	Required Skill	
	Group Score	Dice Rolled
Novice	0	1d10
Apprentice	3	2d10
Journeyman	6	3d10
Master	9	4d10

# Act 5: Secrets

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 fill the gap and venture into the darker, more mysterious and wonderful aspects of the character.

## What Are 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, Energy Points are spent, meaning that Secrets can be used a limited number of times before the character's Energy is restored.

Secrets can be better explained with an example:

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

Every Secret has two costs associated with it, the Use Cost and the Purchase Cost. The Purchase Cost is the number of Advances required to purchase this Secret. This does not apply during character creation. The Use Cost is the amount of Attribute that must be spent in order to use the Secret once.

## Secrets Descriptions

### Secret of Animal Speech

Your character can speak to an animal and understand its signals. In order to get the animal to cooperate or not try to eat you, you might need a successful Nature skill check. Even if you fail this check, you'll understand that it wants to eat you loud and clear.

Use Cost: 2 Mental

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### Secret of Blessing

With a successful Supernatural ability check, your character may bless the actions of a group. You must state a specific goal for them to accomplish. For each point of Spiritual spent, maximum of 3, you get a number of bonus dice equal to the number of Spiritual spent that any member of this group can use in accomplishing this task. This effect lasts until the Episode is over.

Use Cost: 1-3 Spiritual

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### Secret of Contacts

Your character knows all sorts of people in all sorts of places. You can use this Secret for your character to automatically have a past relationship with any Extra in the adventure. You may describe the relationship in a short phrase, such as "old enemy," "wartime buddy," "ex-lover," but the Director gets to decide the history and current disposition of the relationship.

Use Cost: 2 Social

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### **Secret of Disarm**

Your character can disarm an opponent, without changing intentions, with a successful Combat Skill Check. Because weapons can be all sorts of things in this game, "disarm" just means that the weapon has been rendered ineffective for the duration of the Conflict.

Use Cost: 1 Physical

Purchase Cost: 3 Advances

### **Secret of Evaluate**

Your character's battle experience has given her the ability to read an opponent well. Evaluate your character's opponent not in descriptive terms, but in game mechanics, on a successful Combat ability check. You can ask for any of the following information, one bit per success level: current Physical score, current Mental score, combat skill score, specific skill score.

Use Cost: 1 Mental.

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### **Secret of Flying Leap**

Your character can make amazing leaps. Using this Secret, she can jump much further or higher than normal. For each Physical point you spend, up to three, you can add +2 to the result of one leap.

Use Cost: 1-3 Physical

Purchase Cost: 2 Advances

### **Secret of Focus Creation**

Your character can create Focus items (see Equipment description, below). The character must have the Secret that is being enhanced. For every 5 Spiritual points spent, the focus doubles the effect of the specified Secret. Once an item is turned into a Focus, it cannot be changed to another Secret.

Use Cost: 5+ Spiritual

Purchase Cost: 2 Advances

### **Secret of Herbal Health**

Your character can always find an herb that is an effective healing agent with a successful Nature skill check (Difficulty 11) in the outdoors. The herb lets you use your Nature skill to heal 1 person, fully restoring 1 Attribute. Herbs can be saved for later use.

Use Cost: 1 Mental

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

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

Your 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 Skullduggery skill check.

Use Cost: 1 Mental.

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### **Secret of Inner Meaning**

Your character's art carries a meaning beyond the surface. Use any non-physical Mental- or Spiritual-based skill at a distance via a piece of your character's art.

Use Cost: 2 Spiritual

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### **Secret of Item Creation**

Your character may create Items, either Internally Powered, or Attuned (see Equipment, below). Item creation has a base cost of 3 Spiritual. To create an Internally Powered Item, you must spend +1 Spiritual for every 10 charges (or equivalent). To create an attuned Item, you must spend an additional +2 Spiritual. These costs can be stacked, allowing you to create an attuned item with multiple charges.

Use Cost: 4+ Spiritual

Purchase Cost: 2 Advances

### **Secret of Knock-back**

Your character's blows send people flying. Knock back a stricken character out of normal human reach. This immediately ends the physical conflict, if you're involved in that, with no resolution as to intentions.

Use Cost: 2 Physical

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### **Secret of Mighty Blow**

Your character can strike with extreme might. Spend as many points of Physical as you like to increase the harm of a successful blow in combat by +2 per point spent.

Use Cost: Any amount of Physical

Purchase Cost: 2 Advances

### **Secret of Quality Construction (Craft Ability)**

You must choose a specific Craft Ability when you take this Secret. Your character can craft items of excellent quality. Any item your character creates using this Secret gives one bonus die to a particular ability when using the item, permanently.

Use Cost: 5 Mental

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### **Secret of the Signature Weapon**

Your character has one weapon with which she is bonded. You gain a bonus die to any action taken with that weapon and any other character attempting to use the weapon receives a penalty die. (Note: to change this weapon, this Secret must be taken again.)

Use Cost: None

Purchase Cost: 2 Advances

### **Secret of Specialty (Skill)**

You must select a skill when you take this Secret. Choose a specialty your character has within that skill - for example, cooking pastries for the Complex Crafts skill. You always have a +3 bonus when your character attempts an action that falls within that specialty.

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### **Secret of the Sudden Knife**

Your character is a master of the assassin's art. In a surprise attack, the victim automatically takes +3 Physical damage if your character successfully hits. She should make a Physical Attribute check resisting your roll. If she fails, she automatically takes an additional +2 Physical damage. This damage is in addition to any normal damage.

Use Cost: 3 points from whatever Attribute you are using, plus 1 from each other the other Attributes.

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

### **Secret of Throwing**

Anything is a dangerous missile in your character's hands. She can throw anything fist-sized to greatsword-sized as an attack, and the object counts as a master quality weapon (providing a +2 bonus).

Use Cost: 1 Physical

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

**Secret of the Unwalked Path**

Your character's footfalls leave little trace for others to follow. You can use your character's Nature skill in resistance to anyone trying to track her.

Use Cost: 1 Mental

Purchase Cost: 1 Advance

# Act 6: Equipment

Equipment in Project CHUPA is handled a little differently than in traditional RPG's. There are no huge equipment lists where the player is forced to browse through for an hour writing down each individual item the character has, calculating cost and weight. Instead, equipment is very flexible. Since the damage done with most items is the same, the player writes down primarily the special items they have. They can also write down anything that is necessary to make their character's concept come to life.

*Peter the Knight might have just his dappled-grey stallion, the horse's insect-like iron armor, the father's sword, his shield with the Raven's crest painted on it, and his plate mail with rows of sharp iron studs. They are listed on his character sheet because they help define the image of the character. Notice that it is not just listed as "a sword" but "his father's sword." This implies a history, and sentimentality to the character.*

## Equipment Types

Equipment is categorized into a few different types to differentiate between their usage and abilities, and the type of resources they require to use.

### EQUIPMENT

These are mundane devices that characters use to perform certain actions. From swords to super-computers. Some items may be required to perform certain actions (like an electron microscope to examining the molecular structure of an alien substance) or simply provide some situational bonus (using a sword against an unarmed opponent). They do not require any resources to be used.

### FOCUS

This is a device through which a Secret is employed (the awe ability of King Arthur when holding Excalibur, for example.) The power of a Focus lies in its ability to amplify a character's Secret. Some Secrets may not function unless the character has a specific Focus.

Focus items provide a +3 bonus to using the specified Secret.

### ITEM

A device with a self-contained Secret. The methods for 'powering' the item's Secrets could be one of the following options:

**Internal power supply** - the Item has its own pool of resources that are used to activate its powers. This could be charges, uses, or ammo. It is part of the Item and stays with the item. Anybody using the Item has access to this pool of resources and can therefore use the Secrets of the item. If the item is stolen, taken, or given to another it will be fully functional for that, or any, individual.

**Attunement** - the character wishing to use the item must pay some resource in order to attune it to them. Attunement could be learning the word or phrase to activate the ring, for example. Thereafter they may use the Secrets contained within the Item (possibly by spending their own resources instead of some of the internal power supply). Attunement may be limited to one user or may be open to any number of users. If limited to one user it can not be used by another character, unless it is attuned to the new character, in which case the previous owner loses their Attunement with the Item and must Attune with it again to use it. If open to other users (or other type or class of user, i.e. 'pure of heart') then it will function as mentioned for any character fitting the proper description.

## **Equipment Quality**

Poor quality equipment imposes a -2 penalty to all rolls involving that equipment. Normal quality does not have any bonuses or penalties. Master quality equipment provides a +2 bonus to all rolls using it.

# Act 7: Conflicts

A role-playing session without conflict of various kinds is just plain boring. If the characters can't get into a good argument or fight, or pull a fast one of the local curmudgeon, something is lacking. Just like reading a story, part of the excitement in RPG's comes from living through dangers and triumphs that we will never see in real life. It might be racing through the streets, chasing the burglar on your Harley, or finding our way through the maze of Roman politics, or even defeating the evil Overlord through cunning, guts and luck.

Put simply, conflicts happen whenever one person wants something and someone else opposes them. They can be a fight, a verbal argument, trying to squeeze the proper amount of venom out of snake's fang for a potion, or trying to wrest your opponent's control of magic away from them. Conflicts can be associated with each of the four Attributes. They each form a different type of conflict, but all of them are resolved in the same way.

## Conflict Scope

Every group has different elements of the game they like to focus on. Some groups like to get deep in the specifics of every combat, while other groups might like to detail only the conflicts that are most crucial to the story line, speeding through other, less important conflicts, in a single roll. Project CHUPA handles this with ease. Following, you'll find our recommendations for how to handle conflicts, and how much detail to go into. Remember, though, that the reason we role-play is to have fun, and each group should feel free to find the level of detail they prefer.

### INCONSEQUENTIAL CONFLICTS

Inconsequential conflicts are all of the smaller conflicts that do not have any direct impact on the overall story. These could be haggling over the price of a horse, or mowing through the vast battalion of orcs that stand between you and your true enemy. These conflicts are handled with a single roll for the overall conflict. They often do not present much in the way of danger to the characters.

### IMPORTANT CONFLICTS

Important Conflicts are those conflicts where it does have a small impact on how the story progresses, but not so crucial that the story would end if this conflict was lost. These types of conflict should definitely hold the possibility of danger and death, but don't necessarily need every, little blow to be detailed. In the case of multiple opponents, you might separate each opponent into their own, individual conflict.

### CRUCIAL CONFLICTS

These are conflicts that are vital to the story. The chance of death, if a physical conflict, is very real. The iconic example of this is when the heroes finally reach the primary Villain. Every strategy the players and villain

can use to put their opponent off-balance should be another conflict. Every blow might be detailed, depending on the group.

## Attribute Points

**Attribute** Points represent the character's physical, mental, social and spiritual (or magical, etc) energy. 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 the **Attributes**.

### RECOVERING ATTRIBUTE POINTS

Attributes can be replenished in several ways. Special situations may arise where your Director would award you Attribute Points as a bonus for success.

**Rest** - Eight hours of sleep will fully refresh all Attributes.

**Healing Scenes** - In order to recover Attribute points between scenes, our character must make a Healing Scene. This is a simple narrative that the player makes showing how their character got their confidence or energy back. This will fully refresh one Attribute. Only one Attribute can be healed between a scene. To recover other Attributes, you must either rest for 8 hours or heal a different Attribute after each scene.

### DEATH AND DYING

Dying does not happen randomly in Project Chupa. Instead, it will be the result of a failed conflict where the players and the Director agreed upon the terms. This allows the players to choose to make their deaths matter. It might be a sacrifice to save their party, or it might be the result of a specific spiritual ritual or quest that ends in the character's transcendence.

## Story Points

At the beginning of every game session, each character receives one Story Point (SP). Story Points allow the character to make 1 automatic success at the time of their choosing. They can not be saved from session to session. The most a character may ever have is one.

## Frames of Time

While the system is designed to be flexible, frequently a reference to how long a conflict lasts, or a spell effect lasts. To handle this, we use the following terms for defining time.

**Series** - The over arching story for the game, synonymous with a campaign in other systems, made up of one or more Stories.

**Story** - A self contained adventure with a beginning, middle and end. It may take several Episodes to complete.

**Episode** - A single playing session.

**Scene** - A series of character Actions that all take place in the same location.

**Action** - A variable length of time that allows a character to perform some task.

## Who goes first?

While some groups may not need, or desire, a set method to determine who goes first. Many people, however, have been raised on Dungeons and Dragons or other systems that have taken the idea of Initiative from it. For those that are most comfortable with a turn order in place, we've got two options for your group to choose from.

### **TURN ORDER: OPTION #1**

This method works best when the Turn Order is being determined between two people, or two groups. It is handled as any other Opposed Conflict. Depending upon the situation, it might use opposed Physical Finesse + Brawl (or one of the other combat options.)

### **TURN ORDER: OPTION #2**

Option #2 is ideal for use during Important and Crucial Conflicts, where every action matters. The turn order is determined by the character with the highest sum of Physical Finesse + Mental Finesse. This accounts for how quickly someone can spot what is happening and physically react to it.

## Handling Conflict

### **STATING YOUR INTENT**

When a conflict has reared its ugly head, the first step is for the player to tell the Director what they're trying to accomplish and how they are trying to do that. They should make sure to tell what motivations are behind it. It is two very different tasks to dance with the Princess with the intent of impressing her father with your etiquette, or dancing with the intent to seduce her. Both situations would require a different set of Skills and Attributes to be used.

Skills are not tied directly to a specific Attribute. A situation often will be able to be solved using several different approaches, and the Director, paying attention to the player's description of how they want to accomplish the task, will have the flexibility to choose the best one, or to modify the player's choice.

### **SUCCESS AND FAILURE TERMS**

Once the player has stated their intent, the Director states the results for both success and failure. Directors are encouraged to make failure more than "No, you don't succeed." Instead, the failure result should set the player up for more difficulties.

### **BARTERING THE TERMS**

Often, what the Director stakes for success or failure are not what the players had in mind. In this case, they have one chance to barter for different results. After hearing that they will do only 1 point of Physical damage to their opponent, the player might want to try going for a more difficult shot for more damage. Of course, with more damage comes a larger penalty for failure. The player is encouraged to be creative with their suggested terms for failure. A good penalty for failure is often one that will provide more roleplaying opportunities in the future, like a scar that marks him permanently. When trying for more damage, the player can not reduce the cost of failure, but might be able to change the way the failure affects them. As always, the Director has the final approval for the success and failure terms.

### **THE ROLL**

Once the terms have been set, the player makes a Skill Check against the assigned Difficulty to determine their success. Skill checks are resolved by rolling a number of d10's appropriate to their Skill's Mastery Level (1d10,

2d10, etc) and adding the value of the Skill and the relevant Attribute, plus any other bonuses that may be appropriate, such as for higher-quality tools or materials being used.

*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 Technology skill combined with Mental to design and build a bridge with cut branches and vines, or use Technology + Physical 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 fall into the chasm. Since the enemy is closing in hard on their position, he decides that toppling the tree is the only realistic option.*

*His Physical score is a 3, and his Technology Skill is a 4 (Apprentice.) So he rolls  $2d10 + 3 + 4$ . (2d10 because of his Apprentice Mastery level, 3 for Physical and 4 for Knowledge.) 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 Knowledge, 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 Director 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 the dice is a one (1), then the Director 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.

*Lt. Johnson successfully makes the tree-bridge, but rolled a one (1) on both of his dice. While the result is successful, the Director 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 Director secretly rolls 1d10 and gets a 6. He decides that when the sixth man is crossing, the tree snaps.*

## **DETERMINING DIFFICULTY NUMBERS**

There are two methods for determining the difficulty of an action, depending on if it is a direct conflict with another creature, or other types of conflict.

If the conflict is directly with another creature, the difficulty is determined by adding the opponents relevant Attribute + relevant Skill + 5.

*An unarmed person attacks an unarmed Kobold. The Kobold has Physical 1 and Combat 2, so the Diff is  $1 + 2 + 5 = 8$ . Most people should have about even odds.*

*On the other hand an unarmed person attacking an unarmed Dragon. The Dragon has Physical 18 and Combat 12, so the Diff is  $18 + 12 + 5 = 35$ . The person has a big problem.*

When the conflict is not directly with another person, we must use a different method. These conflicts add an amount of difficulty based upon the amount of story change.

- Minor: +1
- Significant: +5
- Major: +10
- Critical: +15

This number is added to 10 to determine the final difficulty.

The players may choose to lower the Difficulty by accepting a larger amount of damage, the difficulty is modified by -2 for each point of damage.

*The Kestrals Crew are locked in the brig after an almost omnipotent alien called 'P' takes over...*

*One of the crew decides to break out. This is a Significant Story change, which adds +5 to the difficulty. The Director offers a minor story change for failure (the Alien notices and trusts them less), which drops the Difficulty by 1 to 14. Wanting to drop it farther the Player suggests that on a failure his character also loses one energy (another drop of 2) to a total of 12.*

## **TAKING DAMAGE**

When a character fails a conflict, many times his penalty will be to take some damage. By default, the amount of damage done is 1 point. This damage is taken from the Attribute that represents the type of conflict they lost. If they were in a fight, the damage would be taken from their Physical Attribute. If it was a great debate in the Roman Senate, it would be Social damage.

There are no direct penalties associated with reaching zero (0) in any of the Attributes. Instead, they no longer have any bonuses to their die rolls. However, should a character reach 0 points in an Attribute and take more damage, they are considered incapacitated.

A Physical incapacitation results in the character being unable to move. They may have fainted, or fallen unconscious—the results are up to the Director and the stakes of the conflict.

For a Mental incapacitation, the character is considered dazed and is unable to perform any actions until they can heal their Mental Attribute.

A Social incapacitation results in lots of stammering, the inability to say what you mean to say, or the complete loss of any social grace. Suddenly, everything you do seems to come out wrong.

## **Optional Rules: Boosting your chances**

Since the goal of the game is to partake in heroic, cinematic adventures, we have provided a few ways to increase your chances.

### **GIVING IT ALL YOU'VE GOT**

Sometimes we just need to push ourselves a little past the bounds of our comfort zone. We need to put more of ourselves into the conflict if we're going to have any chance to win. Before they have made their roll, the player has the option of expending extra energy from their Attribute to hedge the bet and help insure a win. For every Attribute Point the player spends, they get a +1 bonus to the result. The Attribute Point must be from the same Attribute that the roll is being made against. If they roll a success, they keep the Attribute Points. If they fail, the Attribute Points are lost, just like the player took wounds from the conflict. This is in addition to any Wounds the player receives directly from the combat.

When Giving It All You've Got, the player must state before the roll that they intend to do this.

*Lee Goldenmile is racing across the rooftops of 1800's New York. Close on his heels are Hell Hounds sent after him by the voodoo queen, Shaliira. Ahead of him is a gap between buildings that he is afraid he cannot make. He runs harder, boosting his speed and throws his entire body into the jump. He knows that failure on this roll is death, so he gives it all he's got.*

*The roll is Physical (5) + Fitness (4 - Apprentice). The Director states this is difficulty of 15. Lee opts to risk 3 Physical in this task. He rolls 2d10 because of his Apprentice Mastery Level in Fitness, and gets a 4 and a 7. He keeps the highest roll (7) and adds his Physical and the extra Physical points and gets a total of 15 (7+5+3). Ex-*

*actly what he needed. He sails over the roof and lands firmly on the edge of the building. Rock crumbles under his feet, but he's alive.*

*If Lee had failed, he would have smashed into the side of the building, falling into the fire escape, where he would be given more chances. However, he would have lost the Physical points, having an effective Physical score of only 1 until he could restore them.*

If the conflict results in damage to a character, that damage is only 1 point. However, when using the Giving It All You've Got rule, the number of damage dealt equals 1 + the number of extra energy put into the blow.

*Lee reaches a dead end. He is forced to turn and confront the Hell Hound. From legend, he knows the dogs have a vicious attack, but are not overly hardy. If he can just get in one or two good blows, he can survive the attack. His Physical (5) and Combat (4) give him a decent chance of hitting, but he wants to put extra power into each blow so that he can finish the creature off as fast as possible. He opts to risk an extra 3 points of Physical. He would like to risk more, but he knows he needs to save some energy for the second shot.*

*On the first strike, he rolls an 8, giving a total of 17 (8 + Physical 5 + Combat 4). The Difficulty was only 12, so it's a success. Instead of doing just 1 point of damage, he deals 4 points of damage (1+the number of extra Physical points that he risked.)*

## **THE BARSTOOL AND THE CHANDELIER**

Combat in stories is filled with exciting battles as martial artists evade opponents with acrobatics among the pipes, and with swashbucklers swinging from chandeliers. Cowboys slide across the bar, cups shattering as they are shoved out of the way. To help players enter the thrill of these situations, they are rewarded for creative use of their surroundings.

When the player gives a creative use of their surroundings, or take a risk in a fun and dramatic way that enhances the game for everyone, the Director may lower the Difficulty Number by 3 points. This provides a gentle encouragement to players to have fun and take part in the game, which makes it a richer experience for everyone. Since the difficulties are lowered, the failure results must be steeper. In addition to the stated failure result, the Director should provide another failure result directly related to their use of the environment.

*Crash Montana is a secret agent whose cover has just been blown. He's trapped in the missile silo's control room with no weapons, and three goons to get through before he can make his escape. All three goons charge him at once. He quickly surveys his surroundings and takes action. He jumps onto a chair, his momentum rolling him into Goon #1. Just before impact, he jumps up and grabs onto the pipes that line the ceiling. Swinging his legs up onto the ceiling, he shoves off, breaking the pipe and showering Goon #2 with hot steam. He flips off and lands hard on the control booth, making sparks fly into the face of Goon #3, who backs up, shielding his face, giving Crash the space he needs to dart through and escape.*

*The Director decides that each of the three conflicts used the environment to create a wonderfully dramatic experience, and reduces the difficulty of each conflict by 3.*

## **A HELPING HAND**

When a situation allows for it, multiple characters can assist in creating a successful conflict. This may be everyone helping to pull on the rope and topple the ancient statue, or everyone searching through the library for one particular manuscript, when only one player is able to describe the tome needed.

While other characters are lending a helping hand, they add their appropriate Skill score to the results. The primary characters make the roll as usual, but the total of all of the helper's scores are added to his results.

*In order to enter the Temple of Askirae, the intrepid explorers must pull down a huge statue that sits in front of the only remaining door. Dolph, the strongest in the party, secures the rope and makes the roll. He rolls 3d10 for his*

*Fitness (7), getting a 4, 9, and 3, and adds his Physical (8) and Fitness scores. His total is 24. The other four party members grab on to the rope behind him, and pull. They have Fitness scores of 5, 3, 6, and 7, for a total of 21. The groups total result is 45. However, the Director had stated they need a score of 50 to succeed, so they each give it all they've got, adding 2 Physical each to the total. The roll comes out the same and they now have a total of 55 (45+10). The statue comes crumbling down and, once the dust settles, the party can enter through the dark maw of the Temple.*

# Act 8: Character Growth

## Character Growth Points

Character Growth Points (CGP) represent knowledge, insight, or other experience that improves the character. CGP are awarded at the end of each Episode, unless the Director chooses to award them more or less frequently.

Directors are also encouraged to award 1-5 XP for excellent role-playing – especially when the role-playing situation might hurt the character -- or for fantastic ideas and solutions during the game. These bonuses are generally handed out as they occur, since this encourages more role-playing from everyone involved.

As the game stretches into multiple scenes and episodes, your characters can, and should grow into different heroes with new skills, powers and an ever-evolving sense of confidence. To do this, though, they need some way to measure and balance their growth within the framework of the game. There are 3 fundamental ways to hand out Character Growth Points (CGP).

## Story Growth

Each story typically has a big picture which is going to take great effort and heroism on the part of the Actors. This is probably not the end of the Actors' life, however, and is just the beginning of a new story. When the Actors have come to the completion of the story, they should be rewarded in a big way.

- **Character Growth Awards:** While the number may vary from story to story, based upon the power-level of your game, and how fast you want characters to advance, a rough guideline would be 20 CGP for each actor. (And if any villains survived, be sure to give them a similar award.)
- **Story Awards:** Another type of reward that should be included at this point in the game is to reward the actors with non-CGP items. This might be the deed for a new star-ship or a tract of land, or membership in a very secretive organization. Use your imagination, just be sure to pay attention to each actor's motivations, and the motivations of the group as a whole.

## Episode Growth

In order to allow characters to grow throughout the game, they need more than just Story rewards. At the end of each Episode, reward the characters. This award can vary depending on how fast you want your characters to grow in power and skill, and how long each Episode is. A base range of between 2-5 CGP is recommended.

## SPENDING GROWTH POINTS

During the game, each player character will get CGP for meeting the player's goals for that character's story and the Director's goals for the overall story. These experience points are converted to advances, usually at a rate of five CGP to one advance. Each advance that you get can be banked toward improving your character's Attributes, Skills, Secrets, and Keys.

**Table 4: Advancement Costs**

	<b>Advances</b>
Increase a Skill 1 point	5
Increase an Attribute 1 point	5
Add a Secret	1

You can never increase the same Skill or Attribute twice in a row. You need to increase something else in between. In addition, you cannot buy two Secrets in a row.

### **THE TRAINING MONTAGE**

To spend Advancements, the player must narrate a Training Montage. This is a short description of the event that is this inspiration for what they are spending their Advancements on. This might be a flashback to a pivotal event that made them start learning this skill, or Key. It might be something that happened “off-screen” that helped them develop their current skill or gave them their Secret. The player should have fun and be creative.

# Director's Notes

## Challenge Ratings

Every character or creature in Project Chupa has a Challenge Rating (CR). The CR is a quick way to describe to the Director how much of a challenge the character is for your party.

A CR is calculated by adding the total number of points it would take to build that character. For example, consider a character with the following stats:

Physical: 8

Mental: 6

Social: 5

Spiritual: 3

Total Attribute scores: 22

General: 5

Combat: 5

Fitness: 4

Nature: 6

Negotiation: 3

Skullduggery: 0

Supernatural: 2

Technology: 3

Total Skill points: 28

Total Secrets: 2

So, to find the CR of this character, we add the total number of Attributes, Skill points and Secrets and find a CR of 52.

To increase the usability of the CR, we also add a prefix that tells what type of conflict the character is most suited to. The possible prefixes are:

- P - Physical

- M - Mental
- So - Social
- Sp - Spiritual

This character is geared most heavily towards physical and combat, so their Challenge Rating would be P52.