

Rise of Æster: Interim Character Creation and Conflict Resolution Rules, Version 1.0, 28 February 2010

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Introduction

This publication lays out the initial rules to be used for live action roleplaying (LARP) in the World of Æster. It provides the core rules required for the mechanics of character generation and play. The following pages will provide you with the basics required to:

- Design and Create characters
- Develop characters over time
- Resolve contests between players
- Resolve contests with the environment

As guiding principle for this game, Players (the person) must consider themselves “Actors” within the context of “Scene” of the “Episode” being played out. The various attributes of the “Character” should be used to guide the player in how they act when “On Stage” – in play, within the context of the scene.

The Rise of Æster is intended to be participatory theater; as such, your job as an “actor” is to do your best to interpret the “character” you have created within the context of the stage set by your Navigator.

Character Creation

This section describes how to define and organize the skills used to define your character in the game.

SKILLS – The specific talents you have which will determine what actions you can take in the game, and how well your character will perform them. Skills are ordered by GREAT, GOOD and FAIR. Any action taken which is not listed on your sheet as a skill will be treated as having the quality “No Skill”.

1.0 Character Skills

All characters portrayed in RoA initially are given **2** Great, **4** Good and **6** Fair skills to be set in one of the following three **Traits**:

Traits:

- **Physical** (Any skill tied to physical or tangible effects of the body)
- **Intellectual** (Skills tied to education, investigation, research, etc.)
- **Practical** (Skills tied to “applied” knowledge and training)

Players will order these three Traits as **Primary, Secondary and Tertiary**, and then assign skills to each Trait using descriptors of the Player’s choosing.

1.1 Character Skills

What level of skill you may apply in a Trait, and what level it may achieve is dependent on how you order your Traits. You must place a minimum of 4 skills to your Primary, 3 to your Secondary, and one to your Tertiary **Trait**.

GREAT skills may only be applied in a player’s PRIMARY or SECONDARY Trait. One GREAT skill **must** be applied to the player’s PRIMARY Trait.

GOOD skills may be applied to any Trait; however, a player may only have one GOOD skill in their TERTIARY Trait.

FAIR skills may be applied in any Trait.

As each Player can use any skills that are accepted by the presiding game Navigator, a wide variety of skills could be used. Players are encouraged to be creative, but to also think of skills that are specific enough to be useful without being overreaching. Examples of skills that might be used are:

- Physical examples: Fisticuffs, Dodge, Pole Vaulting, Weightlifting, Climbing, Jumping, Sleight of Hand, Running, Smithing.
- Intellect examples: Memory, Teaching, Repair, Recall, Spatial Relations, Targeting, Piloting (specific craft), Linguistics, Science (specific), Odd Science.
- Practical examples: Interrogation, Investigation, Observation, Search, Speech Analysis, Body Language, Scouting, Tracking, Motivation.

1.2 GLOBAL skills

GLOBAL skills are actually broad composites which encompass a number of related skills. An example would be “University Science” which would encompass the classic sciences – Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Astronomy – and additionally be inclusive of modern variants – Geology, Botany, Zoology, etc. The GLOBAL skill permits the use of all of these composite skills as FAIR skills. In order for them to advance further, they need to be advanced independently. GLOBAL skills may only be taken as GREAT skills at character creation. If added later, they start as FAIR skills and are promoted normally. The composite skills only become available as FAIR skills when the GLOBAL skill is promoted to GREAT.

GLOBAL skills may **only** be used in a player’s PRIMARY Trait. A player may start with only one GLOBAL skill.

Table of GLOBAL Skills, related Traits and cascades:

GLOBAL Skill	Trait	Applies to
Athletic	Physical	Any skills tied to athletics. Examples would be such things as Track, Cricket, Polo, Running, Hunting, etc.*
University Science	Intellect	Traditional Sciences – Chemistry, Physics
Mechanically Inclined	Practical	Any skill pertaining to the maintenance of machinery
Social	Intellectual	Any knowledge skill pertaining to society or manners
Survival	Physical	Any "In the field" activity, challenges dealing with exposure, hunting, etc.*
Military Science	Intellect	Any military knowledge skill (e.g. logistics, strategy, fortification/defense, military lore, etc.)*
Medical Science	Intellect	Any medical/medicine related discipline. Does not include Surgeon but does include anatomy.
Able Bodied	Practical	Any ship-handling skill
Street Smart	Practical*	Any skill related to law enforcement*
Criminal Mastermind	Practical*	Any skill related to illegal activity (e.g. Forgery, grifting, lock-picking, etc.)
Historian	Intellect	Anything related to historical lore, knowledge, etc.
Thief	Physical	Such skills as pick-pocketing, climbing, slight-of-hand, otherwise related to “non-violent” street crime.
Military Training	Practical	Skills applicable to using or repairing military weapons such as machine guns and cannon, using explosives, stowing gear, creating camps, etc.
Combat Training	Physical	Use of all small arms, unarmed and armed combat
General Construction	Practical	Building trade skills (e.g. Carpentry, Masonry, Painting, Limnery and other similar practical skills)
Businessman	Intellectual	Accounting, Marketing, Manners, Bookkeeping, Sales, Finance – anything tied to running a business

* Does not include weapon or combat skills

Once again, Global skills may be added as a new skill as part of character development; however, it gives the player no direct benefit until promoted to GREAT. Additional GLOBAL skills may be defined, but must apply to a discrete set of skills and must be approved by your Outpost Navigators.

1.3 Organizing Skills

Trait ranking becomes important for resolving contested and uncontested challenges. Which skills you specify as GREAT, GOOD or FAIR will strongly affect what level of success your character will have during roleplay. It is important to insure that the skills you choose and how you organize them reflect closely how you plan to express your character’s identity.

Once a Player has selected his Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Traits, he can place them in any order. For example, Sheila Cartwright, a Ships Pilot, may have the following organization of Skills:

Trait	Great	Good	Fair
Practical (Primary)	Pilot (Dirigible) Mechanically Inclined (Global)	Steam Works Ride (Horse)	Radiant Operation
Physical (Secondary)		Blunt Weapons	Dance, Ballroom Gymnastics Fisticuffs (Savate)
Intellectual (Tertiary)		Navigation	Airship Engineering Aeroplex Operations

Templates

A number of character templates are described in section 4. These are character ‘archetypes’ which have strengths and weaknesses to shape the character beyond the basic character creation. These advantages can be additional skills or improved chance of success for certain types of challenges. The weaknesses similarly are restrictions on skills, Traits and increased challenge difficulty. *Consider carefully before choosing a template, as the weaknesses will *always* be with the character.* Creating a character with a template modifies the starting state of the character, but otherwise, character creation and advancement remain the same, within the restrictions of the template.

1.4 Example Skills (non-great)

Intellectual	Practical	Physical
Academic disciplines (<i>Chemistry, Physics, History, Biology, etc.</i>)	Aester Engine Mechanic	
Accounting	Animal Trainer	Aerialist (trapeze, tightrope)
Aeroplex operations	Apothecary	Block (<i>the related art of placing something else between you and what wants to hurt you</i>)
Airship Engineering	Brakeman	Blunt Weapons (<i>choose variant</i>)
Appraise (<i>choose variant</i>)	Butling	Boxing
Architecture (choose subtype)	Camping	Climbing
Bookkeeping	Carpentry	Dance
Comparative Religion	Cleaning (<i>how to clean stuff, not the act of...</i>)	Dodge (<i>the fine art of getting the bell out of the way</i>)
Criminology	Clerical	Escape (<i>contortion</i>)
Current Events (better read the timeline...)	Cooking	Fisticuffs (<i>other than Fisticuffs; choose variant</i>)
Engineering (choose subtype)	Drover (<i>the art of hitching up and running teams of draft animals</i>)	Flame Thrower (Ratcatchers)
Finance	Engineer (choose subtype)	Gymnastics
Gambling	Farming	Handguns
Gaming	Forgery	Juggling (<i>best if you can actually do a little</i>)
Geology	Foundryman	Long Blades (<i>choose variant</i>)
Gossip (needs to be specific to social class and society)	Governess/Childcare	Long arms
Herbalism	Herdsmen	Pick-Pocketing
Linguistics/Language	Hunting	Pole Weapons (<i>choose variant</i>)
Local History	Lightkeeping	Puppeteering
Logistics	Locksmithing/picking	Riding
	Machinist	
	Masonry	

Intellectual	Practical	Physical
Management	Mining	Running
Manners <i>(this is class custom, and is broken out further into low, middle, upper-class and aristocratic. Note also, this is the *understanding*, not the *execution* of said manners...)</i>	Nurseryman	Short Blades <i>(choose variant)</i>
Marketing	Painting	Singing
Mathematics <i>(among other things, lets you use a calculator...Just keep it hidden, OK?)</i>	Piloting <i>(choose variant)</i>	Sleight of Hand
Medicine/(Specialty)	Plumbing	Sneaking
Medicine/diagnosis	Radiant Operations <i>(includes repair)</i>	Sport <i>(choose variant)</i>
Medicine/GP	Ship handling <i>(choose variant)</i>	Swimming
Meteorology	Signalman	Throwing
Mycology	Steam Works	Weightlifting <i>(Feats of strength)</i>
Rail operations	Steelworker	Wrestling
Sales	Stevedore <i>(the art of loading cargo... it *is* an art!)</i>	
Teaching	Surgeon	
	Tailoring	
	Watch making	

2.0 Character development

Over time, the concept you have for your character will likely change, and, the composition of skills and abilities your character has will change based on their experience.

2.1 Modifying Characters

All characters will start as described under character creation. After your character has been created and registered with your Navigator, each month of play will provide you with a modification point. This may be used improve your character. You may take one of three actions:

- 1) Demote a skill, (GREAT to GOOD, GOOD to FAIR or FAIR to none).
- 2) Promote a skill (FAIR to GOOD, GOOD to GREAT*)
- 3) Add a new FAIR skill
- 4) Swap two skills of adjacent level within the same Trait (FAIR/GOOD, GOOD/GREAT*)

* Any promotion of a skill from GOOD to GREAT requires 4 months of action points, and must be cleared in advance with your Navigator.

Only a SINGLE skill action may take place in any given month, with approval of the game Navigator and being logged into the Character Dossier.

Many Character Concepts may add or change the way Skills move or are ranked. See individual Concepts for details.

2.2 Character Limitations

Each character starts with 2 GREAT, 4 GOOD and 6 FAIR skills, and is limited based on the restrictions established by your Trait ranking.

Over time, additional FAIR skills may be added, and existing skills promoted. Eventually, a character may have at total a maximum of:

3 GREAT skills, only one of which may be in a SECONDARY Trait. Any GLOBAL skills added may only be added in the characters PRIMARY Trait.

6 GOOD skills, only one of which may be in a TERTIARY Trait.

9 FAIR skills, which may be distributed as desired under any Trait.

3.0 Conflict Resolution

Normally, if a Skill Trait is on the Character Dossier, it can be used without challenge or risk of failure under most circumstances. If you know Navigation, for example, under most situations your character can figure out which way to travel and estimate distance and time to destination.

However, there are times when it is unclear if a Character can perform a given action, either due to circumstances determined by the game Navigator or by being contested by another Character. At these times, the following rules are in effect.

3.1 General Contest Resolution

This system is designed for simplicity and quick resolution. It is designed to be quickly learned, quickly played and to give enough structure to allow for resolution of required contests. The key to this system is that it is intended to get out of the way of role play; therefore, it is extremely simple.

3.1.1 Resolution:

There are only two possible outcomes of any contest between skills*.

SUCCESS or FAILURE

*For purposes of clarity, "No Skill" is included in the following sections.

Success or failure may be determined either automatically, if player skills are sufficiently different, or by RANDOMIZATION, if they are equal or near equal.

SUCCESS definition:

A contest, with either the environment or another player, is successful to the degree that it can be dealt with as a single action. For example, a strike with a sword is a single action, a simple repair can be a single action, and an attempt to influence someone can also be a single action. A SUCCESS is relative to the intent of the players. A SUCCESS in attack by one player is a FAILURE for the other. Only one player will have SUCCESS in a contest.

FAILURE definition:

The chosen attempt fails to the degree that the single action attempted is unsuccessful. Only one player will have FAILURE in a contest. FAILURE is once again relative to the intent of the players. A FAILURE in attack by one player is a SUCCESS for the other.

3.1.2 Automatic Successes

Any contest between skills separated by two or more levels is always a SUCCESS for the higher-skilled player. Examples:

- Any contest between a GREAT skill and a FAIR skill or No Skill will always end with a SUCCESS for the GREAT skill.
- Any contest between a GOOD skill and No Skill will always end with a SUCCESS for the GOOD skill.

No randomization is required for resolution of a contest of this nature. Players should immediately work to roleplay the outcome.

3.1.3 RANDOMIZATION

When RANDOMIZATION is triggered, the result will be determined by one of two modes, **UNEQUAL** or **EQUAL**, depending on the relative skill levels of the players. The resolution of these randomization modes will determine the player's SUCCESS or FAILURE.

In both modes, RANDOMIZATION is begun by the initiating player calling their intended action (e.g. "strike", "shoot", "kick"), and the skill they are using (e.g. "Sabre", "Guns", "Savate"). A specific example would be "Strike, Club". Then, at an agreed signal, both players simultaneously display a number of fingers from one hand, including NONE. NONE is denoted by presenting the thumb alone to represent no fingers. Any other single finger will represent ONE. Any other combination of fingers and thumb represent the appropriate number TWO through FIVE. Presenting the thumb alone will always and only be used to represent NO fingers.

Play Note: *It is preferable that the RANDOMIZATION be performed in a manner which minimizes interference or interruption of roleplay. Where possible, use non-verbal signals or wrap your action into dialog. We also **STRONGLY** encourage players to determine outcomes ON roleplay, rather than randomizing actions. It just simply makes for better flow and more fun.*

When the fingers are presented, they are evaluated to determine if the total fingers displayed by both players is *odd* or *even* in number. For UNEQUAL RANDOMIZATION, they are also evaluated to determine whether both players are displaying the same number of fingers (a TIE).

3.1.4 RESOLUTION:

UNEQUAL randomization occurs when the players involved in a contest have different skill levels. The player with the higher skill level is said to be at an ADVANTAGE. (*Do recall that any time the players are separated by two or more skill levels, the higher skilled player wins automatically*). When the mode is UNEQUAL, the total number of fingers is presented by both players counted. Any ODD result, or, when the players hold up the same number of fingers (a TIE; See TIEs below) is a SUCCESS for the player who has the ADVANTAGE. Any other result is a FAILURE for the player who has the ADVANTAGE.

EQUAL randomization occurs when both players involved in a contest are of the same skill level. When the mode is EQUAL, the total number of fingers presented by both players is

counted. If the result is ODD, it is a SUCCESS for the INITIATING player. Any other result is a FAILURE for the INITIATING player.

TIES:

A TIE occurs when both players present the same number of fingers. A TIE also occurs when both players hold up no fingers (a thumb, indicating NONE). A TIE is only relevant when player skills are UNEQUAL and one player has an ADVANTAGE.

In this situation, a TIE will be a SUCCESS for the character with the higher skill. Therefore a TIE between GREAT vs. GOOD, GOOD vs. FAIR or FAIR vs. *No Skill*, is a SUCCESS for the higher skill.

3.2 Combat

The rule of thumb is that combat is the death of role play, and so the idea is to make it quick and get it out of the way. This idea is also to allow people not directly involved in the combat to react in character to a combat erupting in their presence.

In any combat between a character who has a GREAT skill in a weapon or combat skill and an opponent whose skill is FAIR or has NO SKILL, the SUCCESS will always go to the character with the GREAT skill.

The combat should be ended quickly or simply scripted to allow role play to resume as quickly as possible. Similarly, a character that has a GOOD skill against a character with NO SKILL will always have the SUCCESS. As above, the combat should be ended quickly or simply scripted to allow role play to resume as quickly as possible.

With the exception of the situation above, characters of differing levels or the same level of skills will RANDOMIZE. This should be dealt with rapidly, ideally a combat should occur in as close to real time as possible.

3.2.1 Ganging Up:

Ganging up on an opponent is a good way of dealing with someone of higher skill. The rule of thumb is that any two characters initiating an action with the same skill level increase their effective skill by one step. Their skill is improved by an additional step for each additional two players "Ganging Up". A maximum of 6 players may gang up as part of an action.

Examples:

2 Characters with FAIR skill would use EQUAL RANDOMIZATION against a single character with GOOD skill.

2 characters with GOOD skill or 4 characters with FAIR skill will have an ADVANTAGE in an UNEQUAL RANDOMIZATION against a character with a GREAT skill.

6 Characters with GOOD skill will automatically achieve SUCCESS against a character with GREAT skill.

As a rule of thumb, each two individuals of a given level count as one of the next higher. Regardless of level, a single individual helping someone of a higher skill level would give the higher skilled player an ADVANTAGE over another individual of the same skill. For example, a player with FAIR skill will give a player of GREAT skill an ADVANTAGE over another player of GREAT skill.

Note: These rules apply to characters initiating an action. If characters gang up to RESIST an action, *where appropriate as determined by the Navigator, they suffer the same result as the original target.* Rational common sense of course applies. 6 characters with FAIR skill assisting

someone in an attempt to resist being struck by a club, will not *all* be cold-cocked by it if the attacked player fails the challenge.

Note: These rules would also apply to certain types of physical player vs. environment challenges. Example: Using a battering ram to open a door. In that case, the Door would be given a challenge level, and duration required to bash it open. See notes on **Extended Actions** below.

3.2.2 Body Points/Injury and Death:

All characters have wound points equal to their “Body”. This is the total of their Character Trait maximum (the combined total of their Physical, Intellect and Practical Skills). It reflects the total amount of damage they may absorb prior to being rendered incapacitated. For most Characters, this will be 10 points plus any additional Skills they receive from a Character Template at creation. Development over time will also add to this total. *No character may have more than a total of 18 “Body” points. Skills provided by templates do not increase this maximum.*

After combat, when damaged, an actor must flag a number of skills equivalent to the damage they taken. These skills selected are reduced one step until healed.

A character that has lost all their Body Points is unconscious and unable to act. They can only be killed through the direct action of another character who announces their intention to deliver a killing blow or by the Navigator as a result of circumstances in the scenario. The announcement of intent to deliver a killing blow is one action; the actual killing blow is the next action.

Do note: ending another character’s life must be announced and intended; there is no character death in combat between players without this statement of making a killing blow.

If a Character retreats from combat, no further damage is taken unless they are pursued.

3.2.3 Weapons

There are only two classes of weapons; DEADLY and INCAPACITATING. All weapons of each category do the same amount of damage. The only difference between the two groups is in the amount of damage they do.

DEADLY weapons are:

Swords and other large blades, guns, knives, axes, maces, grenades, etc.

All DEADLY weapons reduce Body by 5 points.

INCAPACITATING weapons are:

Cudgels, table legs, bottles, clubs, fists, feet, knees, small blades etc.

All INCAPACITATING weapons reduce Body by 3 points.

Obviously it is easier to bring someone to zero Body Points with a DEADLY weapon than an INCAPACITATING weapon. The idea is that a character has to be literally beaten down with an INCAPACITATING weapon vs. being cut down by a blade or gun.

To signal each other in game play without disrupting the immersive environment, Players should establish relative skill level prior to action. During action, they should display their “throw” while describing the action or mimicking the movement (without causing harm to each other—no real punches or sword blows, please). *Display of hands should of course be simultaneous.*

After being damaged, Characters must note how the damage has affected their Body by temporarily reducing Skills (*an activity by preference done of stage, please!*). Skills are reduced from highest to lowest and in Trait order from Physical to Practical to Intellectual. All skills within the Trait will be reduced prior to moving to the next Trait. Within a given skill level, the player may choose which skills will be affected. For example, Sheila Cartwright's Blunt Weapons, Dance (Ballroom), Gymnastics skills and Fisticuffs (Savate) would be reduced before moving on to her Practical Skills. These skills are not usable at their normal level until he has healed.

ONE SHOT KILL: There is no "Instant Death" in this game, UNLESS precipitated by a game NAVIGATOR. For a player or NPC to be killed requires first that they be incapacitated, and then clear intent to kill be stated on as a following action. That you state intent and *then* take the action is to insure that other players have the opportunity to act or not in response, as roleplay determines.

AT THE NAVIGATOR'S DISCRETION: If two Characters have equal Skills (or one higher ranked character and an appropriate number of lower skilled characters), they are evenly matched and, unless they are aided by another Character or another situational modifier comes up, they are unable to harm each other but remain unharmed themselves. (See “Flynn, Errol” and his many evenly matched battles on film.)

Healing: During an episode, at the Navigator's discretion, characters may recover from damage caused by *incapacitating* weapons. How this comes about should be driven by role playing on the part of the actors. This typically will mean some player vs. environment tests on the part of an actor with medical skills against the nature and severity of the damage applied. Characters that are damaged by *Deadly* weapons may require multiple scenes or even multiple episodes to recover fully. Roleplay it!

Navigator note: Reward creativity. Convincing props and acting *in character* on the part of the participants benefits the episode, and the players should be rewarded accordingly.

3.2 Order of Play

- 1) Announce intent. Use the general formula described previously, stating your intended action and skill you are using. Examples: “Attack, saber”, “Hide, stealth”, “Repair, mechanical”.

***** Once declared, the action MUST be resolved.*

- 2) If this is an opposed contest, the defending player states the skill they are using in response. The skill chosen must be one which would appear relevant to a third party. Defensive use of a completely nonsensical skill is an automatic SUCCESS for the initiating player.

For example, “Dodge” would be an appropriate response to a gun attack, whereas “Library Science” would only get you shot. Similarly, the skill used should be appropriate to the conditions. Using a “Block” skill and a cane against a saber would work. Using the latest edition of the Brisbane Guardian would not. (Well, maybe the *Sunday* edition...). Players are encouraged to be creative *but* should apply their best judgment.

- 3) Players identify skill levels.
- 4) Both players simultaneously present one hand, displaying a count of fingers as described previously.
- 5) Determine result based on the type of randomization.
- 6) Role-play the outcome.

To signal each other in game play without disrupting the immersive environment, Players should establish relative skill level prior to action. During action, they should display their “throw” while describing the action or mimicking the movement (without causing harm to each other—no real punches or sword blows, please). Display of hands should of course be simultaneous. Any method which disguises conflict resolution is encouraged. Examples of this include resolving actions privately, or “off stage” and then re-entering play and role-playing the result.

3.4 Player vs. Player or NPC contests

If two Characters are contesting, they must first determine the Skills involved. Once established, they will use standard contest resolution described above.

For example, Sheila has GREAT in blunt weapons uses a medium-sized wrench (determined to be an incapacitating weapon by the Navigator) to attack Terrance Castle, a boarding Pirate, who has a FAIR in Climbing. (He’s unable to use a weapon effectively as he is climbing on to the dirigible). As Sheila attacks, the difference is 2 skill steps. Therefore, every segment (duration as determined by the Navigator), Terrance will automatically take 3 points of Body damage until he can either withdraw or use a more effective defense.

3.5 Player vs. Environment Contests

An environment contest is any challenge which is does not directly involve another character. It includes such things as repairing items, giving medical attention to characters, piloting vessels and similar activities.

When the Character has initiated an environment or other action that is not instantaneous (such as repairing an engine as compared to such things as firing a weapon, engaging in fisticuffs or picking a pocket), the Navigator will determine a challenge level and specify an amount of time it would take a character to complete. The nature of these challenges will typically be established off-stage, but can be spontaneous.

Player vs. Environment contests are resolved with the Navigator or their designee. Alternatively, the Navigator may permit players to resolve these challenges on their own using the honor system.

Note: *The Navigator at their discretion may chose NOT to reveal the level of the Challenge.*

Player vs. Environment contests by nature have two dimensions – Complexity level and Time Frame.

3.5.1 Complexity Level

Complexity level is an abstract, heuristic value assigned by the Navigator to a given activity. It considers the complexity of a task, modified by the environment.

Example: Picking a simple lock with good light and tools would be easy. In pitch darkness, average. In the dark, in freezing snow and high winds, it would be difficult. In the dark, in freezing snow and high winds, while being shot at, challenging.

Effective Complexity Level	Difficulty Number
Easy	0
Average	1
Difficult	2
Challenging	3

3.5.2 Time Frame

Time Frame represents the urgency or immediacy of the challenge. It is applied as a modifier to the complexity. There are 4 levels of Duration:

Time Frame Urgency	Typical time constraint	Difficulty
Open Ended	Not limited (effectively)	0
Long	Less than 15 minutes	1
Short	Less than a minute	2
Immediate	Seconds	3

IMPORTANT: Urgency here should not be confused with the time in action segments required to execute a task. For example, getting a lock picked might be of immediate urgency, so it would be wise for those affected to insure the skill of the character doing the work is up to the challenge of finishing within that time constraint...

3.5.3 Challenge Level

Challenge level is determined by combining the time frame and complexity difficulty numbers. This then translates into an effective skill level used to test against in the challenge.

Effective Challenge Level	Combined Complexity and Timeframe factor	Effective Skill Level of the Challenge
Easy	0-1	No Skill
Average	2-3	FAIR
Difficult	4-5	GOOD
Challenging	6	GREAT

3.5.4 Time in Game

Time in the game is maintained in arbitrary units called *Action Segments*. Typically, this is a measure important only for the Navigator in assessing the movement of people on or off stage, as a result of actions, acting and roleplay. As a relative “rule of thumb”, an action segment is a period of time of approximately 20 seconds in length. The specifics of time during a scene, or required for completing a challenge, are entirely up to the Navigator, who may expand or contract duration at their discretion, as best assists acting out the story arc.

Completion Time: As part of resolving an environment challenge, the Navigator will also determine the number segments required to complete the task. This will be the amount of time required to complete the task, by a character whose skill level matches the *Effective Skill Level of the challenge*.

3.6 Environment Challenge Resolution

Once the effective skill level and time to complete a challenge have been established, the challenge can be resolved with the Navigator using the General Contest Resolution rules described previously.

A player within one step of the challenge skill level will use RANDOMIZATION with the Navigator to resolve the task.

A player with skill two steps below the Challenge will automatically FAIL at the task.

A player with skill two steps above the Challenge will automatically SUCCEED at the task.

Navigator's Note: Managing time in a LARP is an exquisitely complex problem, and is challenging under the most favorable of play conditions. The duration of a task generally should be adjusted to match the needs of the scene, relative to the abilities of the characters.

As rules of thumb, If the player's skill is BELOW the challenge level (e.g No Skill vs FAIR, FAIR vs GOOD, etc.), the duration doubles. If the player's skill is ABOVE the challenge level, (GOOD vs FAIR, etc.), the duration is halved for each step their skill exceeds the Challenge (e.g GREAT skill vs a No Skill challenge would take 1/8th the time a player with No Skill would require to complete it).

3.6.1 Assistance

Other players may assist the player undertaking the Challenge. Each assisting player will make their own separate test, and if successful, will reduce the duration required by one action if the have No Skill, 2 if FAIR, 3 if GOOD, and 4 if GREAT. Assisting players may not retry their attempts.

3.6.2 Interference

Players may interfere with an environment challenge. Interference may be direct or indirect.

Direct interference includes instantaneous actions such as attacks. Damage will prevent completion or progress of a task during the segment it occurs. Successful interference (e.g. Someone attempting to hold a door closed while someone else is trying to force it) will similarly prevent completion of a task.

Indirect Interference includes actions which are not instantaneous in nature. Examples would be such actions as modifying patient's medical record to interfere with diagnosis or treatment, or making engineering changes to interfere with the piloting of a ship. Indirect interference if successful will increase the challenge level of an environment challenge by one step (none to fair, fair to good, etc.). If the challenge level is already GREAT, it will prevent completion of the task during such time the interference is active. Interference may be treated as a completely separate environment challenge with its own challenge level and duration. The "Interference" task must complete before the challenge to be effective.

Special note: By nature, it becomes more difficult to interfere indirectly with a task as more people assist in completing it. Increase the difficulty and time required to successful interfere by one step for each individual assisting. Similarly decrease it by one step for each individual interfering. If the interference does not complete before the task, it has no effect on the challenge.

Note: Practical limitations

Obviously, there are physical limitations to how many people can practically assist in or interfere with a given duration task. For game purposes, no more than eight individuals may assist or interfere in any given duration task, and at the Navigator's discretion, this may be

reduced based on the nature of the task (e.g. 8 people trying to help someone pick a lock will *NOT* provide useful assistance).

Example: If Terrance wishes to pick a lock, the game Navigator may have made a determination ahead of time that it will take at least a FAIR skill in Lockpicking, and take at least 8 segments. Terrance has that skill at that level, so he resolves a player vs environment test using EQUAL RANDOMIZATION with the Navigator. Assuming he was successful, in 8 action segments (approximately 2 1/2 minutes) he will have the lock open. If he fails, he may make one re-attempt at picking the lock, otherwise, another means will be required to open it (Either someone with the same or better skill, or, a big hammer). If he had GOOD skill, he would have had an ADVANTAGE in the lockpicking check, and if successful, would have opened it in 4 action segments (A little over a minute). If he had GREAT lockpicking skill, his success would be automatic, and he would have the lock open in 2 action segments (approximately 40 seconds).

If Terrance had No Skill, he could attempt to open it at a DISADVANTAGE, and the task would take twice as long (16 actions, or about 5 minutes) if successful. If the challenge level was GOOD, he would be unable to pick the lock under any circumstances.

3.6.3 Re-attempts

If it is deemed appropriate by the Navigator, players may make additional attempts to succeed at a challenge. The number of attempts which may be made is determined by the player's skill level as shown below.

Skill Level	Re-Attempts allowed
No Skill	None
FAIR	1
GOOD	2
GREAT	3

Note: Players using skills from a GLOBAL skill cascade use the GLOBAL skill level (GREAT) to determine re-attempts. As such a FAIR skill depending from a GLOBAL skill gets 3 re-attempts, if permitted.

3.7 Reminder of Who's in Charge

The game NAVIGATOR will always be the final arbiter of all dimensions regarding a challenge, and may use their own judgment rather than these rules to determine who, when, how long and what other actions may take place as part of its resolution.

4.0 Character Templates:

Character templates provide a combination of advantages and disadvantages which can be used fine tune a character concept.

Skills acquired by templates do not count towards the total skills a character may acquire during development.

4.1 Nobility

Nobles are just that—born better, at least in their minds (and the minds of many others who support their influence, money or power). Simply put, their legacy of birth allows them access to far greater political and monetary circles than those of lesser standing can hope to achieve, and in the years since the Æster first appeared and social structures started to fall, it was those few families and individuals who stepped into the vacuum and created safe havens for all.

Noble characters are not necessarily descended from Kings. Some *are* true aristocracy, descended from lineages going back centuries before the rise, and those few have amassed such personal power that they are now nearly indistinguishable from European monarchs. However, the vast majority of noble characters are from families of wealth and industry, including those families whose forebears created the very machines that now keep the world moving.

NOTE: *You must get approval to use this template from your Navigator. Also, nobility does NOT mean peerage or precedence. Royalty and high ranking peers are NPC's *ONLY*.*

4.1.1 Advantage:

Characters from Nobility gain either an extra GOOD skill, or 2 FAIR skills to spend in Intellect Skills. This has the additional advantage of increasing Intellect by a like number of Skills. A final advantage is that a Noble has an additional FAIR Physical or Practical Skill of their choosing, as long as it can be explained by virtue of birth.

4.1.2 Disadvantage:

Noble characters may not choose Intellectual as their Tertiary Trait. In addition, Nobles must choose two Practical and two Physical Skills that they despise or will refuse to perform unless life-threatening; this is explained that some tasks will always be the role of commoners, and are beneath the Noble's function. In game play, these tasks cannot be attempted unless the character is at risk of character death, and the RP at all other times should include disdain or disinterest in anything to do with said Trait.

4.2 Laborer

Every society has those at the bottom of the social order. From farmers working to provide food for the masses, to those who maintain the huge vessels in the sky, and those who stitch, forge and patchwork create this world we find ourselves on, those who labor long hours for small wages make the world go around. Those from the throngs of humanity are exceptional in their modesty, their strength and their conviction, for what else do they bring to the table other than resolve and a set of skills?

4.2.1: Advantages:

Characters from Labor gain an extra GOOD skill or two FAIR skills to use in their Physical Trait. This has the additional advantage of increasing Body by a like number of Skills (Body would increase by 1 if a single Skill at GOOD is chosen or it would increase by 2 if two FAIR skills were chosen). A second advantage is that a Laborer may increase their skill level one step with any non-contested challenge when using appropriate items (for example, a toolbox or a sledgehammer) to resolve the challenge. Simply put, they know their crafts.

4.2.2: Disadvantage:

Laborer characters must choose Physical as their Primary Trait. In addition, Laborers must choose two vices that they find hard to resist. In short, they know how to relax, and some vices just call to them, such as Seduction or Rowdy Music. When faced with this form of social activity, all non-contested challenges they attempt are reduced by one skill level.

The Navigator is the final arbiter of what works and what does not, and what events may trigger such a penalty.

4.3 Scientist

There are men and women of science, and then there are Scientists, those whose lives are dedicated to research and discovery, theory and advancement. Not looking to the past beyond what has already been achieved and improved upon, Scientists are adept at using their minds to resolve issues, where others might use brawn or social pressures. No secret of the world seems out of their reach, and no questions remain unanswered for long.

4.3.1 Advantages

Scientist characters gain an extra GOOD skill or two FAIR skills to use as Intellectual Skills. Also, the Scientist receives a bonus of one skill level to any non-contested challenge made when research time is available and when they have tools or a library suitable for such research. A Navigator is the final arbiter of what constitutes enough time for research (but should never be less than two hours or between games) or which research tools or library contents are sufficient.

4.3.2 Disadvantage

Scientist characters must choose Intellect as their Primary Trait. In addition, Scientists must choose a single negative behavior to roleplay that they find hard to hide when engaged with their highest ranked Intellectual Trait. They also may not have more than two FAIR physical skills at start, and may never have more than one GOOD physical skill. This reflects both a lack in physical skill due to hours spent in study, and a shortcoming in their social upbringing due to focused intellectual curiosity instead of social interaction. For example, a Scientist, while normally positive and cheerful, when working on a GREAT intellectual skill, their single-mindedness may leave them curt, short, surly and oblivious to the feelings of

others. In addition, they will tend to find anything of a purely physical nature somewhat alien.

4.4 Explorer

Some folks just have the knack for exploring, whether it be to uncharted areas on the map, below ground in ancient tombs, or high above the Earth seeking the truth of the Æster. These Explorers specialize in few things, instead seeking to expand their skills into many areas, meaning few Explorers are like anyone you've ever met. All, however, do share one Trait—a love of what once was, and what can be learned by going where no one has gone before...or for a very long time.

4.4.1 Advantages

Characters from the ranks of Explorers gain ONE GOOD skill which they must choose from either their Practical or Physical Trait. This has the additional advantage of increasing Body by one point.

4.4.2 Disadvantages

Explorer characters must choose either Practical or Physical as their Primary Trait, and may not have Physical as their tertiary; all Explorers must be the rugged sort, with some ability to physically overcome the rigors they face.

In addition, all Explorers seek some level of fame or infamy, from those wanting the spotlight of all in a city to those who desire respect from their peers or a relative. All Explorers must choose area of Fame in which they focus (e.g. Native American Enclaves, Mushroom forests of the Dominion of Canada, etc.), and must choose a minimum of 3 FAIR and one GOOD skill within their Primary Trait to reflect their need to address this.

4.5 Nightman

You are the child of the “Stay Behinds”. Living with your clan, you have become absolutely expert at surviving in the Nyx, and its secrets.

4.5.1 Advantages

Characters from the ranks of Nightmen gain TWO GOOD skills they choose from physical. This has the additional advantage of increasing Body by two points. A second advantage is that a nightman receives a bonus of one skill level to any non-contested challenges involving survival.

4.5.2 Disadvantages

Nightman characters must choose Intellectual as their Tertiary Trait, Practical as their secondary and Physical as their primary. This reflects the rigors of surviving under the Nyx.

In addition, Nightmen automatically fail any uncontested Intellect challenge for which they have no requisite skill.

4.6 City Worker

You are active heart pumping life into the city, regardless of your trade. Nightmen, nobles, soldiers and the kind may all proclaim their superiority, but you know for certain that if you don't get the work done, the lights won't come on, people won't eat and commerce will grind to a halt.

4.6.1 Advantages

Characters from the ranks of City Workers treat any uncontested "city" related practical challenge as if it were one step lower in difficulty. They also gain one additional GOOD skill they may choose from the Practical Trait skill list.

4.6.2 Disadvantages

City Worker characters must choose Practical as their Primary Trait.

All uncontested challenges they face outside of a city are treated as if they were one step higher in difficulty.

4.7 Soldier

You are the steel that make up the walls of the empire, protects its commerce, and disposes of its threats. You are trained and practiced in the manipulation of lethal force. You prefer action to discussion, and find little practical in endless analysis.

4.7.1 Advantages

Characters from the ranks of Soldiers treat any un-contested physical challenge as if it were one step lower in difficulty. They also gain one additional GOOD skill they may choose from the Physical Trait skill list. They gain one additional Body as a result of this, reflecting the rigors of their training.

4.7.2 Disadvantages

Soldier characters must choose Physical as their Primary Trait. At start, Soldiers also may *not* chose intellectual skills which do not directly relate to war or combat. For example, military history and medicine are in. Accounting and Botany are out. Practical skills also must be chosen for their specific relevance to military life.

All uncontested challenges in their tertiary Trait are treated as if they were one step higher in difficulty, reflecting the highly focused nature of their training.

Roleplaying note: *Officers will tend to have Intellectual as their secondary Trait; Enlisted will tend to have Practical.*