

Diesel Empire, v9.2.1-alpha

Written by Jefferson Lee | November 2020 Alpha Release

Creating Characters

Step 1: Attributes

Attributes are the traits that have a strong influence over your character, like *agile*, *strong*, *precise*, *small*, *creative*, *technical*, *wise*, *impulsive*, *beautiful*, *confident*, *witty*, *stubborn*, *brave*, *determined*, and *cowardly*.

- **Give your character two Attributes.** You can use our examples or create your own.
- **Your character can have duplicate Attributes**, which just means that it has a bigger impact on their lives, for better or worse.

Step 2: Species

Pick your character's species. Your choice will give your character additional Attributes.

Species: Human

Prolific. Over-confident. Stubborn. Except for the Elven *Silohain*, humans have a significant presence in every kingdom and of all the Gods-touched species, humans are probably the majority, and they are easily the species with the most influence today.

The human ruled *North Kingdom* and the *Southern Kingdoms* have been the center of world power since the *Grand Ascendant Kingdoms* of humans, elves, and orcs defeated the *Fae* nearly 6,000 years ago.

Attributes:

- **Social Dominance** - All major cities in the world accept the human North Gilder as currency, and almost everyone in these cities can, at least crudely, communicate in the common human language of *Northword*. Also, since most of the industries are controlled by humans, modern devices and equipment are generally designed for humans.

Elves

Dogmatic. Magical. Ancient. Elves were the first species to be Gods-touched more than 200,000 years ago. They founded the first schools of science, magic, and philosophy, and these founding texts still form the fundamentals of modern academia.

Magic became a central tenet of elven societies nearly 100,000 years ago, and which is assumed to be the reason for their extended lifespans. The complete mastery of magic allowed the elves to rule virtually unopposed for 90,000 years, unifying and maintaining order among all of the younger Gods-touched species, until the *Fae* nearly wiped all civilized societies in the *Ascendancy Wars*.

The Elves still maintain a huge amount of influence as a founder of the *Grand Ascendant Kingdoms*, and as the stewards of the most powerful magical relics and creatures in the world.

Attributes:

- **Magically Attuned** - Elves are naturally attuned to magic and are able to naturally sense magical energies, perceiving magic in a way similar to a sense of smell. This also makes it easier for elves to cast complex spells as they have an added dimension of control.
- **Long Lives** - Elves live a long time (*500-800 years or longer*), which gives them a level of historical wisdom, but makes it much harder for elves to manage the *immediate* future.

Orc

Expansive. Powerful. Stubborn. Orcs evolved throughout the plains and steppes of the Eastern Expanse, where they continue to maintain *total* control. They were Gods-touched alongside humans, around 100,000 years ago. Second only to humans, orcs are a major presence in every major kingdom outside the Silohain.

Though orcs helped to defeat the Fae and found the Grand Ascendant Kingdoms, orc Kings were denied *Ascension* by *A'sholk's Prophecy*, and they would eventually leave the Grand Ascendancy.

Civil war and hardened tribalism have kept orc societies from attaining the same level of power as their human and elven counterparts, but orcs as a whole have maintained significant influence and presence in the world.

Attributes:

- **Resilient** - Orcs are famous for their ability to survive.
- **Family First** - This concept is a central tenet of all orc nations. Orcs are *driven* to advance the interests of their *own* family before the interests of anyone else, including themselves.
As an orc, who is your family?

Halflings

Patient. Diplomatic. Friendly. Halflings are the demi-Fae who were born during the Ascendancy Wars, nearly 8,000 years ago.

Though there are no major halfling nations, halflings have kept their Fae ancestors from obliterating the world for thousands of years by maintaining a peace with The Veil and the Fae. By all accounts, the Fae only tolerate the existence of this world because of their half-cousins.

The Fae nature of the halflings means that they care very little for worldly power or wealth, preferring to spend their lives in pursuit of joyful fulfillment as explorers, artists, and teachers.

Attributes:

- **Short** - Halflings are short, never growing much taller than four feet. This also makes them slightly lighter and weaker than the average human.
- **Demi-Fae** - Halflings *usually* look like smaller humans or elves but halflings have a wide range of vestigial physical traits that come from their Fae ancestry. They are also able to sense the presence of other Fae and demi-Fae as a natural intuition.

Dwarves

Productive. Generous. Loyal. Evolving to Gods-touched from deep within the mountains of the *Essian Range*, the dwarves have formed largely isolated, but peaceful societies in the last 12,000 years, even integrating the outcast *Lorrash* and *Koto Harrain* orcs into dwarven societies.

Though dwarves defended themselves from the Fae, their isolated societies kept them from being too deeply involved in the Ascendancy Wars.

Dwarves have a special kinship with saurians, whose medicines and ingenuity helped to stop the Firehand Plague, which nearly wiped out the dwarves 2,000 years ago.

This friendship exists today, as the saurian-founded *Huxlon Republic* was the first world power to recognize the *Dwarven Compact* as a legitimate nation, a move also supported by *Bonethorne Port*, which has allowed the *Compact* to grow into an extremely powerful industrial nation.

Attributes:

- **Resilient** - Dwarves have a strong constitution due to their mountainous roots.
- **Short** - Dwarves are usually only about four feet tall, and never taller than five feet.

- **Muscular** - Though shorter, dwarves have a very *dense* musculature which makes them as strong and as heavy as an average human.
- **Clan Affiliation** - Dwarves are strongly tied to their clans, and are fiercely loyal, and will do what they can to help fellow clan members. **As a dwarf, what is your Clan?**

Saurians

Strange. Respected. Isolated. This species is relatively young, Gods-touched only 80,000 years ago, but during that time saurians have been able to achieve the same level of scientific and philosophical achievements as the ancient elves. For the last two centuries, saurian scientists have been a part of every major technological advancement.

Saurians, like the dwarves, were not badly affected by the Ascendancy Wars, which allowed them to create a stable and thriving civilization in the swamps of the Southern Expanse.

The saurians also have a long-standing relationship with the dwarves. After saurian doctors saved the dwarves from the Firehand Plague, dwarven experts and materials helped the saurians raise their empire from swamps and muddy coasts.

While the *Ascendant Kingdoms* of the North Kingdom, Southern Kingdoms, and Silohain are the *de facto* ruling kingdoms, the saurian-founded Huxlon Republic is probably the second *richest* nation on the planet, surpassed only by its ally, *Bonethorne Port*.

Attributes:

- **Abstract Thinker** - Saurians have a unique brain structure and thought process.
- **Cold Blooded** - Saurians require less food to survive (preferring large, infrequent meals), but they also are unable to *naturally* regulate their body temperature and sudden temperature changes can be *harmful*.
- **Amphibious** - Saurians are able to *safely* breath underwater for a little under fifteen minutes and roughly twenty minutes in an *emergency*.

Goblins

Curious. Ancient. Underestimated. Goblin labor helped to build the *First World* and the *Ancient World*, and they were witnesses to every great fall for the last 200,000 years. Their history is as long as the elves, but goblins have never held any significant power. Instead, they have quietly co-existed in the margins with humans, elves, and orcs, living in peaceful, isolated, communities.

Goblins have begun to see a renaissance in the last few centuries. While many kingdoms still use goblin labor, modern manufacturing has replaced this need, and many goblins have begun to explore both the world and their history.

Several *key* archaeological and scientific discoveries in the past century have been made by goblins, whose infamous stubbornness has driven them further than any other explorer or researcher.

Attributes:

- **Small** - Goblins are small, never exceeding more than three feet. This makes them much lighter, but also much weaker than the average human.
- **Stubborn Survivors** - Goblins can survive on miniscule amounts of food and water in very extreme conditions.
- **Extreme Immunities** - Goblins *can* get sick and are weakened by infectious diseases, poisons, and *radiation*, but only *very old* Goblins (80 years or more) actually *die* from these causes. Sadly this has made Goblins a favored subject for magical and scientific experimentation, both *voluntary* and *involuntary*.

Step 4: Trades and Proficiencies

Trades represent a general field of knowledge and expertise. Trade **Specializations** represent your character's specific area of focus, which could include a broad range of individual abilities and skills. The Ranger's *Wilderness Survival* Specialization grants the character all of the training they need to survive *all* extreme environments.

You get **five points** to spend on your character's **Trades** and the Trade's **Specializations**.

- **Pick one starting Trade.** **Additional Trades cost one point each**, and you can buy as many Trades as you want for your character. Trades **do not** have ranks, so any extra points you spend on a Trade will go towards advancing a Trade's *Specializations*.
- **Specializations start at rank zero**, and it costs **one point to increase its rank by one**. Rank *one* means that the character is *skilled*, while rank *four* makes them a *master*. Your character can have **several Specializations** for a Trade.
- **Pick a Background** for **each** Trade you purchase, and describe how your character gained their experience and training in the Trade.

Trades

The Trades listed below are *not* exhaustive and just act as a general *guideline*. New Trades, Specializations, and Backgrounds can be added to this list, as long as the GM approves.

Scholar

Knowledge, both old and new, has been key to unlocking the modern world. While professors teach advanced skills to thousands of eager students, field scholars do the work of adding to and advancing the boundaries of science, philosophy, and history.

Specializations: *Teaching, Research, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Philosophy, History, Culture and Societies, Arcane Lore.*

Backgrounds: *University, State-Sponsored, Kings Bound, Independent, Corporate.*

Special Operations

A relatively new field of military training that has become increasingly more important in the post *Grand War* era, where smaller, specialized, units proved to be more effective than entire battalions.

Specializations: *Urban Warfare, Assassination, Infiltration, Guerrilla Warfare, Reconnaissance.*

Backgrounds: *Military, Private Contractor, Special Intelligence Office, Oath Bound.*

Bounty Hunter

This ancient trade has become more important as the Grand Kingdoms have begun to lose their influence to dozens of younger nations and kingdoms. Extra-judicial authorities like bounty hunters are willing to take the risk of crossing borders to drag back fugitives of Kings and states.

Specializations: *Close Combat, Tracking, Investigation, Wilderness Survival, Streetwise, Negotiation, Sovereign Laws.*

Background: *State Sponsored, Private Contractor, Kings Bound, Honor Written.*

Field Engineer

The world is rapidly modernizing and industrializing and there is an enormous demand for experts who can be on the *ground* to help build and maintain very complex technical systems.

Specializations: *Engineering, Jury Rigging, Research and Development, Field Management, Repair and Maintenance.*

Background: *Academics, Military, Corporate, State Sponsored.*

Fixer

Kings and Princes are no longer the sole arbiters of power, and individuals who can creatively wield the law and leverage political capital are rapidly building their influence in the shadows.

Specializations: *Back Channel, Geo-Politics, Blackmail, Negotiation, Manipulation, Arcane Courts.*

Background: *Special Intelligence, Corporate Lobbyist, Independent Contractor.*

Field Medicine

The world has always been deadly, but modern medical techniques and medicines have made it possible to actually survive the dangers of the world without a seasoned Anatomancer or Necromancer.

Specializations: *Pathology, Pharmaceuticals, Field Surgery, Emergency Trauma Care, Arcane Pathology, Arcane Herbalism.*

Background: *Military, State Sponsored, Church Sponsored.*

Ranger

While the world is rapidly modernizing, vast parts of the world are still completely untamed. Old World rangers are still in high demand guiding caravans through the Eastern Expanses and the Northern Orc Orderharden.

Specializations: *Hunting, Wilderness Survival, Danger Intuition, Scouting, Arcane Beasts*

Background: *Freelancer, Military, State Sponsored.*

Soldier

Professional soldiers have become much more prominent in the few decades since the *Grand War*. The art of war is constantly changing now, and only the most dedicated warriors will be able to survive and win the coming wars.

Specializations: *Combat Training, Tactics, Explosives, Reconnaissance, Heavy Weapons (RPGs, Mortars, Flamethrowers, etc).*

Background: *Mercenary, Kings Bound, National Military, Militia.*

Spy

In the modern world espionage has become much more important and much more complicated. The Ascendant Kingdoms are now as vulnerable to a well-placed spy as any other kingdom or state, and the most terrifying conflicts today are fought and won through stolen secrets.

Specializations: *Manipulation, Interrogation, Clandestine Operations, Surveillance, Analysis, Close Combat, Evasion.*

Background: *State, Kings Bound.*

Thief

Eleven *trillion* North Guilders in the global economy. The world is so rich now that it would be a crime *not* to steal. While Guilders are still a popular option, the *newly* wealthy are willing to pay for other *luxuries*, and ambitious corporations are starting to pay for *stolen secrets*.

Specializations: *Fast Talk, Black Market Trading, Evasion, Street Thievery, Breaking and Entering, Identity Theft, Surveillance.*

Background: *Street, Corporate, Ex-Spy, Criminal, Professional.*

Magical Trades

Magical Trades are similar to normal trades, but almost all Magical Trades have *Trade* or *Attribute prerequisites* that must be fulfilled.

Elemental

The ability to channel and embody the primal forces of nature. This is likely the oldest and most primal kind of magic but it requires an innate understanding of the energies at work and is *significantly* harder to *control*.

Attribute Prerequisites: *Magically Attuned*

Specializations: *Manipulation, Transmutation, Creation, Fire, Air, Water, Earth.*

Background: *Wild, Kings Bound, Academic, State Naturalist*

Alchemical

The manipulation of base materials through the use of magic. Innovations in this art birthed the Industrial Revolution: the first primitive diesel fuels were made by saurian alchemists. Today, alchemists are leading the way in creating new materials, such as plastics, but *stable* components have always been the most lucrative, but also the most *elusive*.

Trade Prerequisite: *Scholar.*

Specialization: *Transformation, Deconstruction, Plastics, Analysis.*

Background: *Industrial, Natural, Corporate, Research and Development.*

Mecharcana

This art is less than a century old, but it has had a *massive* impact on society. It is a derivative form of *Alchemy*, drawing from that art's *transformative* rites. While a Mecharanaist is not able to create *new* materials, they can shape existing materials down to the *microscopic* level, visualizing paths for integrated circuits, then fusing them to silicon wafers. Mecharanaists are also able to imbue limited magical effects on items: arcane-powered batteries *created* the modern electronics market.

Attribute Prerequisites: *Abstract Thinker*

Trade Prerequisites: *Engineer*

Specializations: *Analysis, Shape Material, Weld Materials, Imbue Properties.*

Divination

This Art allows the wielder to open their minds to visions from other realms. It can be used to peer into parts of our own reality, or even other *existences* and futures. This is an *embodied* art, and generally does not require rites or materials, but rites do make the casting *safer* and significantly more accurate.

Attribute Prerequisites: *Magically Attuned, Intuitive.*

Specializations: *Precognition, Prophecy or Alternate Realities, Remote Viewing, Astral Projection.*

Anatomancy

A modern School, derived from the art of *Necromancy*, allows for the manipulation of living tissue. This is a highly disciplined and tightly regulated School, and while this school is renowned for tremendous contributions to medical science, rogue Anatomancers are among the most feared criminals on the planet.

Trade Prerequisite: *Field Medicine.*

Specializations: *Mend Flesh, Sense Flesh, Shape Flesh, Transfuse Flesh, Blood Analysis.*

Illusionary

This School is derived from the banned *Domination* School, but follows the same principles of mental control and psychic manipulation in order to create convincing illusions. These traits have been heavily blunted to fit the *Higher Orders of Conduct*, but the School is still extremely powerful.

Attribute Prerequisite: *Empathy*.

Specializations: *Hallucination, Suggestion, Invisibility, Perfect Disguise, Sense Thoughts (vague unconscious reactions), Read Thoughts (licensed use only)*.

Step 5: Starting Point

In addition to the starting resources from your *Trades*, describe your character's:

- **Income** from their *Trades*. The average income is 15,000G per year, but a highly-qualified professional might earn 25,000G-40,000G per year.
- **Essential possessions** that they have gained as a part of their *lifestyle* and *hobbies*.
- **Friends and family** that still have an impact on their life.

Playing the Game

The Deck

You'll need a regular 52-card **Poker deck**, *with both Jokers*.

The Hand

At the beginning of each game, the GM deals **five cards** to each player. **The GM does not get a hand.**

Running Out of Cards

When a player runs out of cards the player **draws five cards, minus the character's current level of Injury**, as their new hand.

The player can **only draw new cards when their hand is empty**. Players **cannot discard cards**, unless the card is played during a *Check*.

The Check

The GM can call for a **Check** whenever the *outcome* of a character's action will have a *significant* impact on the story. A *Check* would be appropriate if the character is trying to *lie* to save a life, but is not needed if they are just *lying* to get into a club.

A player can call for a **Check** if they want to *change* or *interrupt* the outcome of an event that has *just occurred*. A character that is *ambushed* by an attack might ask for a *Check* to see if their character can react *before* the attack happens.

Whoever called for the **Check** needs to declare what *outcome* they want to **Check**, and the results of *Check* decides what *actually* occurs in the story.

Step 1: Set the Stakes

The *player* picks one of the following **Outcomes** and **narrates** how they *want* their character to resolve the *Check*.

Suit	Outcomes
Club	Daring. Risk for the sake of glory. Fury. Unrestrained passion.
Spade	Resolve. The will to do exactly what needs to be done. Patience. The strength to do nothing until the right time.

Diamond	Awareness. Revealing the hidden. Expertise. Applying knowledge and experience.
Heart	Influence. A strong impression that is made on others. Empathy. A deep understanding of another's emotions.

The **suit of the Outcome** is important to remember because it will help determine if there are *consequences* or *side-effects*.

The **player can choose any Outcome**. A character can use *Daring* to tell a lie so *outrageous* that everyone is too *shocked* to verify the truth, or use *Expertise* to *hide* a lie in obscure knowledge.

All narrations should follow the given prompts. A player that chooses *Influence* during a Check involving a *bomb* cannot narrate an outcome where their character *disables* the bomb, but the player can narrate an outcome where their character gets everyone to *quickly evacuate*.

Step 2: Risk

Risk starts at one, but the GM can increase Risk based on any obstacles or challenges that would affect the Outcome. A *Daring lie* is harder to tell in *polite* company, and even *harder* if there is a seasoned *con-artist* in the room.

Each Attribute that might *hinder* a character also **increases Risk**. The *honest* Attribute can help win *trust*, but it makes *lying* more difficult.

The character's **Injury level** might also increase the Risk.

The **GM draws one card from the deck for each level of Risk**, and places them *face down* on the table. These will be revealed once the player plays *their* card for the Check.

Step 3: Draw and Play Cards

The GM draws a spread for the *character, facing-up*. They draw **one card if a character's Trade is relevant to Check**. If a *Specialization* from the Trade *also* applies, **add the Specialization's rank to the draw**. Only **one Trade** and **one Specialization** can apply to a Check.

The GM then draws **one card for each Attribute that could help the character** during this Check.

It is possible that **zero cards** are drawn, since there may not be any relevant *Trades* or *Attributes*.

The **player then picks one card from the spread to use for the Check, or they can play a card from their hand**. The rest of the spread is then *discarded* and shuffled back into the deck.

Step 4: The Outcome

Once the player has chosen their card, **reveal the Risk cards and compare the value of the player's card to each Risk card**.

- **Jokers are the most valuable cards.**
- **Cards that match the suit of the Check are always more valuable than off-suit cards.** In an *Influence (Hearts)* Check, the *2 of Hearts* will *beat* an *Ace* from any *other* suit.
- **Aces are highest ranked cards in a suit.**

If **none of the Risk cards beat the player's card**, then the player's outcome is **unchanged**, and the Check is *resolved*.

If **any one Risk card ties or beats the value of the player's card**, the player's outcome remains **unchanged**, but the GM narrates a *Consequence* that comes as a *side-effect* from the player's Outcome. This *Consequence* **cannot negate** the player's outcome, so a successful *lie* is still *believed*, but it might cause *controversy*, or create additional *suspicion*.

If more than one Risk card ties or beats the value of the player's card, the GM narrates a *Consequence* that can *partially* or *completely negate* the player's outcome. Lies become *unravelling*, and *suspensions* boil and explode.

Consequences

Uncertainty	An unknown threat forms , which could affect the scene immediately, or sometime in the future.
Loss	Something is lost . This might not cause any immediate danger for the character, but should be something that is important.
Danger	The risks increase . Things become more complicated and hazardous for the character, and any actions they take in the future might entail more <i>Risk</i> .
Trauma	Someone is injured . This might be physical or emotional trauma, but it is significant enough that the character's <i>Injury</i> level increases.

Once the outcome is resolved, all of the cards on the table are shuffled *back* into the deck, and the story continues.

Magic Checks

Magic Checks use the same rules as normal Checks, but there are a few things that can affect the *Risk* levels of a Magic Check.

Magic is the manipulation of the natural order. Spells that go with the natural order tend to be *less risky* to cast. Spells that *heal* wounds are easier to cast than spells that *cause* wounds, but on the same token, spells that *remove diseases* are more difficult than spells that *cause wounds*, because a broken bone is a *possibility*, but *Stage Four Cancer* does not simply *disappear*.

Practitioners shape their magical effects by using well-practiced rites or rituals to pull energy from local space-time, and alternate realities. The risks of casting a spell come from *regulating* and *controlling* this energy over a *fixed* amount of time. Any effect is possible with *unlimited* casting time, but most mages have to work on a *deadline*.

- **Rites** are the most basic and most common spell casting method. They generally produce the *weakest* effects, but they can produce effects in just a few minutes, or even *seconds*. *Extreme* effects are *possible*, but *riskier*, and the *faster* a mage casts a rite, the *less control* they have over the energies.
- **Rituals** are the *oldest* form of spell casting, and are the *easiest* and most stable way to cast a spell, but rituals can take *hours*, *days*, or even *years* to complete. These spells *slowly* draw energy over time, creating an effect that *grows* in strength. The *longer* a ritual is performed, the *lower* the risk, and the more *powerful* the effect.
- **Sacrifices**, either *material* or *living*, are used with rites and rituals to make a spell easier to cast by providing an *instant* source of energy that can be consumed. The effectiveness of a sacrifice is based on its personal *value* to the caster. A raw diamond is a good sacrifice because it is dense, old matter, but a character's *heirloom wedding band* is a more *substantial* sacrifice since it contains a *shaped probability path* and *collapsed alternate realities*.
- **Foci or totems** make a spell *easier* to cast by providing "shortcuts" for the caster, but they are always tied to a single rite, or a set of rites that have extremely *similar* effects. While this limits their use, foci and totems are *reusable*. Foci and totems are often used in conjunction with *simple* rites to ensure consistent and sustainable effects: ER Anatomancers will use *foci* to simply *stabilize* patients, so that they live long enough to survive surgery.

Magic requires intent and devotion. Mages have to *commit* to a spell ("*The Promise*") before the effect can be shaped. As a result, **the consequences from a failed spell usually involves losing control of the energy driving the spell**, which can result in dangerous side-effects for either the *character* or their immediate *surroundings*, including *other people*. For spells with *limited* effects, this might just result in

a loud noise, a terrible smell, or harmless *imperceptible* effects, but failed spells have also *torn reality*, *altered local time*, and driven practitioners to *madness*.

Magical Duration

Spells simply require *concentration* to maintain an effect, so if a character *succeeds* their Check, **they can maintain a spell for as long as they are able to *focus* on the effect**.

If the conditions of a spell change, another Check might be required. While a character could hold on to a spell indefinitely, *consistency* is the key. If the character needs to change their focus or becomes distracted, the player will need to make *another* Check to maintain their spell.

Special Checks

Combat Checks

Violent conflict is handled with a normal Check, and the *base Risk* of this Check is based on the *Attributes*, *Trades*, and *Specializations* of the character they are trying to *fight*.

If the order of combatants needs to be established, the GM decides the order based on the *scene* and each character's *capabilities*. **If a player wants to act *earlier***, they can make a *Check* to change their position in a fight.

Contested Checks

If a player wants to make a Check against *another player*, no *Risk* cards are drawn by the GM. Instead, **the GM draws a spread for *each* character**.

Each player involved picks their own Outcome for the Check. When comparing the value of the cards, use the *individual suits*, so a *Heart* played for an *Influence* Check for one player is *equal* to a *Club* being played for another player's *Daring* Check.

In a *tie*, the *GM* picks and narrates a *Consequence* for *each* character.

Background Checks

A player can ask to see if their character's *background* can help out their character. This might be calling in favors, getting better equipment, or even finding important contacts.

Equipment Checks

Sometimes the *character* is better qualified than the *player* to pick their equipment. If it is *unclear* if a character has an essential piece of equipment, the player can ask for an *Equipment* Check, which determines if the *character* thought to bring the equipment.

This is a *normal* Check, but any *consequences* from the outcome are narrated as a *flashback*, which can have an effect on the *current* scene.

Rest Scene

The player must narrate a scene where the character takes a *genuine* break. The player can then *discard* and *redraw* their hand. Remember that *Injuries* limit hand size.

It is up to the GM to decide if a Rest Scene is possible. The scene can be as short as a pull from a flask and a deep breath, but the character needs to be able to *safely stop* and *take a break*.

Injuries

Whenever a character is hurt, the GM decides if the wound is severe enough to increase their *Injury* level. *Psychological* damage can also inflict *Injuries*.

If a character's **Injury level increases**, they must **discard cards** from their **hand** until the *hand limit* is reached. These cards are shuffled back into the deck.

Injury Level		Hand Limit
Strained	The character is hurt, but their injuries are only annoying.	4
Wounded	The pain is hard to ignore, but the character can still focus. This <i>may increase Risk by one during Checks.</i>	3
Impaired	The trauma is now <i>debilitating</i> , but the character is still conscious. These injuries <i>may increase Risk by two during Checks.</i>	2
Incapacitated	The character has succumbed to their trauma and is barely able to stay conscious.	1
Crossroads	The character is at a pivotal moment in their story. They may <i>not be dead</i> , but they are certainly unconscious.	0

Crossroads

When a character reaches a **Crossroads**, the player must decide if their character's story is going to continue.

If the player wants to **continue**, they must narrate how the character is able to survive, and the GM creates a *new* Attribute based on the character's injuries.

If the player *does not* want to **continue**, they must narrate how their character exits the story. **This does not have to be a death scene**, but they are no longer part of the story.

The player *always* gets a choice when deciding a **Crossroads**, even if an injury is *grievous*. There is **no limit** to the number of Crossroads a character can endure.

Treating Trauma

When a character's injuries are being treated, a Check could be called. **The starting level of Risk for this Check is equal to the Injury level**, so treating an *Incapacitated* character starts at Risk four, and increases normally.

If a character's injuries are left *untreated*, the GM can ask for a Check to see if the Injury level gets worse. **The starting Risk level for this Check is equal to the Injury level.**

Weapons And Armor

Weapons

Weapon Strength

This is the number of injury levels a character suffers if they are hit with this weapon. The GM can change this value depending on the situation: *glancing* hits should be *less* severe.

Attribute Modifiers

For melee weapons, a character's Attributes *might* increase the strength of a weapon.

Weapon	Strength
Fists. Still the most popular fallback, especially with orcs and dwarves.	0+Attributes
Combat Knife. The classic.	1+Attributes
Long Sword. The mainstay weapon of the Silohain.	2+Attributes
Spear. Also widely used by the Silohain.	3+Attributes
Longbow. Aside from magic, this is the main ranged weapon of the Silohain.	4
9mm Pistol. Most civilian pistols.	3
.45 ACP Pistol. Heavier firepower, but sometimes harder to manage. Very popular in civilian markets.	4

5.56mm Combat Rifle. The kind of rifles favored by armies of the Ascendancy.	4
7.62mm Combat Rifle. These heavier rifles are favored by the militaries of the orc nations, but also by Bonethorne Port and the Dwarven Compact.	5
30.06 Sniper/Hunting Rifle. Used in both civilian and military arenas.	6
14.7mm Sniper Rifle. An anti-vehicle class of weapon used in many militaries.	8
Hand Grenade. Now a common part of military equipment.	6

Armor

Protection Rating

Subtract the armor's protection rating from the strength of any attack the character suffers. The GM can change this rating based on what is attacking the armor: steel offers *less* protection from *fire* than kevlar.

Strength Rating

An armor's strength rating is how well it endures damage. If the armor absorbs an attack with a strength *equal to or greater than* its strength rating, the **protection rating is reduced by one.** Even the *strongest* armor has a breaking point.

Armor	Protection	Strength
Ballistic Leather. Synthetically strengthened leather that a lot of survivalists wear.	2	1
Half-Plate. Steel chest armor that some kingdoms still field.	2	2
Elven Half-Plate. Magically enhanced steel armor which is as light as aluminum.	4	3
Class IIa Kevlar. The kind of protection commonly given to watch members in major cities.	3	2
Class IIa KevFlex. Magically strengthened Kevlar, which makes it light enough to be woven into plain clothes. Worn by special watch members.	3	3
Combat Armor. Laminate cloth with a light steel plate backing. This is what is used by most militaries due to its low cost and <i>acceptable</i> protection.	3	2
KevFlex Combat Armor. Heavy KevFlex with ceramic inserts, which is rarely fielded by any military beyond Bonethorne Port and the Huxlon Republic.	6	4

Feedback

Thanks for picking up this game and taking a look! If you played in one of my playtests then *very extra* special thank you! *Diesel Empire* is in very early development, and I would absolutely love your feedback if you have any, especially if you decide to take this home and play it with your friends as the GM! Please send any feedback to jlee@uptoolategames.com.