

## **Game Design By Telephone**

### **- The Rules So Far -**

#### **Character Creation**

At character creation, players have a pool of 24 Character Points they can assign at will to base Attributes to match their character concept. Players will then receive a number of additional Character Points based on their Intelligence Attribute to be spent on Skills. The creation of NPCs by the GM follows the same system.

#### **Attributes**

Characters have eight primary scores that define their base attributes: Strength, Speed, Dexterity, Fortitude, Intelligence, Willpower, Charisma, and Perception. Additional attributes may also be present for certain character types.

Each score begins at 0, representing a severe lack of competence in a particular area, and can be increased through the spending of Character Points. A score of 2-4 in an Attribute represents the average person's capacity, while a score of 6 equates to the peak of human ability, such as that possessed by a world-class genius or Olympic-level athlete. Depending on setting and group preference, a GM might seek to cap Attributes at 6; or for a "larger than life" or super-powered game, allow players to raise Attributes as high as they wish, perhaps even awarding extra Character Points at character creation to allow prevent players from having to balance high Attributes with low ones.

The attributes can be described as follows:

##### **Strength**

A character's Strength represents his or her physical brawn. Strength determines how heavy a weight they can lift, how much damaging their attacks are, and how likely they are to succeed at grappling an opponent.

##### **Speed**

Speed is the measure of how fast a character can move. Speed determines the extent of a character's movement during a turn, ability to catch fleeing opponents, and the number of turns a player has per round.

##### **Dexterity**

Dexterity represents a character's agility and reflexes. Dexterity determines how accurate a character's melee attacks are, their ability to evade hits in combat, and how capable they are at tasks requiring hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills such as disarming traps, picking locks, performing surgery, etc.

## **Fortitude**

Fortitude represents a character's ability to carry in spite of exhaustion and their injuries. Fortitude determines a character's Stamina Points and the number of Wounds they can bear, the rate at which they heal, and their ability to succeed at challenges such as holding one's breath, fighting off disease and resisting poison.

## **Intelligence**

A character's Intelligence lets a player know how smart his or her character is, and represents that character's ability to think and learn. Intelligence lets characters solve mental challenges such as a difficult equation or puzzle, lets them draw upon lore or education, and determines the number of Character Points they'll have to spend on Skills.

## **Willpower**

Willpower allows a character to stand up to mental challenges in much the same way as Fortitude allows them to stand up to physical challenges. A player's Willpower allows them to resist Fear, interrogative techniques such as seduction or torture, magical or psionic effects, and assaults on their Sanity.

## **Charisma**

The higher one's Charisma is, the more effective that character is at social interaction. Charisma determines how good a character is at persuading others to give up information or to do them a favor, how attractive others find them, and how successful they are at actions like bluffing, haggling and crafting disguises.

## **Perception**

Perception defines how observant a character is towards the world around them. Perception determines how effective a character is at finding clues or hidden items, spotting ambushes or traps, aiming their ranged attacks, and sensing deception in others.

The above are the universal Attributes common to all characters. In certain settings, there may be other Attributes available to some characters. For example, in a high-magic campaign, a player may possess a Mana attribute that determines how potent their usage of magic is, while in a cyberpunk campaign a character with a brainjack may possess a Hardware attribute that reflects their ability to mentally access and effect computer systems. Players with an extra Attribute will still only receive 24 Character Points to spend on Attributes, and will require GM approval of their character concept beforehand in any case.

## **Skills and Abilities**

After assigning Character Points to their various Attributes, players receive 5 Character Points for each point they have invested in Intelligence, which can be used to purchase ranks in different Skills and Abilities. Characters with an Intelligence of 0 receive no additional Character Points, and thus cannot acquire Skills or take a non-human template.

A Skill is a mundane talent that a character has picked up over the course of his or her life. Mechanically, it serves as a bonus on rolls where having such a Skill could be applicable. Only a single Skill can be utilized per roll. Investing one rank into Lock Picking results in a +1 bonus to rolls involving picking locks, while investing two ranks in it would result in a +2 bonus, etc.

There is no pre-determined list of Skills; rather, each player is free to make up his or her own for their character, subject to GM approval. A player should think of their character concept and choose Skills that will not only help distinguish them from characters with similar Attributes, but that can be applied in a variety of situations. Skills can be associated with a piece of equipment a character has, though should they lose that equipment in play they lose access to that skill until they can reacquire it. As long as in the GM's eyes a Skill is remotely applicable to a given roll, a character can utilize it, though only one Skill can be utilized per roll.

Functionally, Abilities work in the exact same way as Skills. An Ability is a mundane or supernatural gift as a result of a character's biology or heritage. Essentially, they are Skills that normal humans can't perform, and serve to differentiate human and non-human characters. For example, Marksmanship +5, Tap Dancing +1 and Hacking +4 are Skills, while Nightvision +2, Superhuman Beauty +2 and Smell Fear +2 are Abilities.

Non-Human characters take a "Template" of mandatory Abilities. A Sasquatch template might consist of Bestial Senses +2, Feral Strength +2, and Sasquatch Stealth +2. In the case of Bestial Senses and Feral Strength, these particular Abilities are effectively Attribute bonuses to Perception and Strength, respectively, and allow a Sasquatch to have beyond-human abilities while still having the same total number of Character points as a human. As for Sasquatch Stealth, there isn't any real difference between it and a Skill called Stealth, but here it is a racial ability common to all Sasquatches, who remain elusive even with cryptozoologists roaming the woods searching for evidence of their existence.

After purchasing their Abilities, non-human characters are free to choose whatever Skills they can still afford with their remaining Character points. Abilities themselves can't be increased by players through the expenditure of Character Points, however a Skill and an Ability can both be added to a roll's total. So while a creature with the Ability Invisibility +2 doesn't become more invisible with experience, they can advance their Stealth Skill over time and apply both to a roll involving stealthiness.

While normal human characters can't take any Abilities, they have the freedom to spend their entire Skill budget as they see fit, in effect making adaptability and resourcefulness the

defining human racial trait. "Gifted" Humans might be able to take Abilities at the GM's discretion, but still it comes out of their Skills budget. It might seem odd to tie Abilities to Intelligence, especially in a super-heroes campaign or similar setting, as characters might routinely have immensely powerful capabilities but be rather lacking in smarts. However, any good super-hero origin story always has a period of training, in which the hero not only figure out exactly what their powers are, but the most efficient and effective ways of utilizing them. In game terms, even though one has the innate Ability to fly or shoot laser beams out of one's eyes, one must expend time and effort in learning how to control the activation and deactivation of said powers. Even an Ability as "simple" as Superhuman Strength +2 requires this kind of training, otherwise doors would fly off their hinges every time a character tried to enter or exit a room.

## **Advancing Characters**

After character creation, the game can begin in earnest. Characters continue to grow in power and experience over time, however. Generally, at the end of each gaming session, the GM awards one Character Point to each player to be spent on advancing one of their characters' Attributes or Skills. But some GMs might wish to speed up or slow down the rate of advancement, and that's OK too. One point every other session or after dramatic points in the narrative can help lengthen the lifespan of a setting featuring "normal" heroes, while three points a session will quickly allow characters to become routinely capable of truly impossible feats.

## **The Core Mechanic**

Interaction with the game world takes place through player narrative. In general, any mundane, non-time-sensitive task can be resolved through simple narration—there's no need for a roll every time a character opens a door or talks to an NPC.

When an action carries the potential for failure, however, it's time to break out the dice. To determine whether an attempt succeeds or fails, a single ten-sided die (d10) is rolled. The relevant Attribute score is added to this number, and if there is a relevant Skill or Ability in the character's repertoire, its bonus gets added, too. The GM is the final arbiter of whether an Attribute, Skill or Ability is relevant to the task at hand.

This result (d10 + Attribute + [Skill and/or Ability]) is compared against a roll made by the GM. The GM's roll might possess modifiers of its own, based on the stats of an NPC or inanimate object. For example, when a character is attempting to pick a lock, the GM might decide that it should be an easy task and assign that lock a difficulty of +2. A much more advanced electronic lock should be much more difficult to pick, and for such an attempt a modifier as high as +10 could be applied.

## **Combat**

Combat takes place in units called *rounds*, which are abstract periods of around 10-15 seconds. Each round is divided up into *turns*, during which players move around, make

attacks, or attempt other actions.

Depending on their Speed Attribute, players have multiple turns per round:

Speed 1 or 2: 1 Turn Per Round  
Speed 3 or 4: 2 Turns Per Round  
Speed 5 or 6: 3 Turns Per Round  
Speed 7 or 8: 4 Turn Per Round  
etc.

A player may take exactly one action per turn; some actions, such as casting a spell or hacking a computer or picking a complex lock while the rest of the party provides cover might take multiple turns or even rounds.

The order of characters' turns during combat is determined by their Action Ranking (AR). The AR is simply a character's Dexterity score plus their Perception Score. The higher one's AR, the earlier their first turn takes place in the combat. Identical ARs are resolved by rolling a d10; the highest roll goes first. Once the order of everyone's first turn has been assigned, additional turns are assigned to those with more than one turn per round, also based on their AR.

## **Movement**

Movement occurs in 1 yard (3 feet) or 1 meter increments; if play is conducted on a grid, this is the assumed size of an individual square. Moving counts as an action during combat; a player may move or attack during a turn, but not both. A character may move at three times his or her Speed rating per turn, so a character with Speed 2 may move 6 yards / meters / squares per turn. On a player's first turn in a round, if an enemy is within range of their movement capability, they may Charge instead of simply moving, placing themselves adjacent to that foe and following up their move with a melee attack (see below) – this counts as one action.

## **Defensive Actions**

Though defense rolls to evade attacks are made automatically, if a character is attacked before it is their turn, or a character with more than one turn per round is attacked in-between turns, they have the opportunity to take additional action. If the attacker actually lands a hit, before rolling for damage, the defending character has the option of moving up his or her next turn to perform a Defensive Action such as a block or a parry instead, granting them a re-roll to their defense. If the second defense roll beats the initial attack roll, they've successfully canceled out the hit. A Defensive Action can only be performed if a character has at least one turn remaining in that round. Since there can be only one action per turn, performing a Defensive Action effectively skips that turn in favor of attempting to avoid the hit.

## Melee Attacks

When making an attack, the recipient of that attack automatically attempts to defend. For both armed and unarmed melee attacks, the basic structure for an attack is the opposed Dexterity roll, plus a relevant combat Skill and/or Ability, if applicable. Should the attacker win that roll, they make a Strength roll to determine the amount of base damage his or her attack inflicts. When rolling for damage, a roll of 10 results in a Critical Hit.

When making an armed attack, the specific weapon used adds a bonus to the damage dealt by a successful blow; the weapon also determines the *type* of damage dealt. Simple weapons that deliver bashing or striking damage, such as a club or lead pipe, deliver base damage like unarmed combat, though they carry damage bonuses that unarmed combat does not. Damage types aren't necessarily more powerful than one another, but determine whether the attacked party is vulnerable or resistant to the attack. For a weapon with multiple damage types, each damage type receives its own roll for damage.

For example, a sword or dagger does Blade Damage. If a character were to wield an iron dagger, however, and the target was a faerie-type creature vulnerable to cold iron, the dagger would do Iron Damage as well and an additional damage die is rolled. Similarly, while a katana delivers Blade Damage, a flaming sword might deliver Blade *and* Fire Damage. If an opponent wears plate armor with a +2 resistance to Blade Damage, the roll of the Blade Damage die would be reduced for both swords, but the Fire Damage die of the flaming sword is unaffected because the target is not Fire resistant. Similar effects would apply to werewolves and silver, animate scarecrows and fire, alien superheroes and meteor rocks, etc.

## Ranged Attacks

When making a ranged attack, a character relies on their Perception score to aim against the target's Dexterity score, with relevant Skills being added to each side's rolls. Should the target win this roll, the attacker misses; if the attacker wins, the hit is successful. Because of the nature of the attack, players can't take a Defensive Action to parry ranged attacks unless they have a shield equipped; though if a GM permits them, super-heroic Skills such as Snatch Arrows Out of the Air +4 or Catch Bullets +3 might also be applicable.

Damage rolls for a ranged attack are not modified by a character's Strength Attribute, and only weapon-specific Skills such as Best Archer in the Land +3 or Trained Sniper +4 can add to this roll. The weapon used determines the weapon bonus applied to the damage roll and the damage type: Sling Damage for a slingshot, Javelin Damage for a javelin, Arrow Damage for bow, Bullet Damage for a gun, etc.

As with melee attacks, a roll of 10 on a ranged attack is a Critical Hit.

## Armor

While the Dexterity roll determines whether the defender evades a hit or not, armor's role is to soak damage when a strike actually occurs. The simplest, weakest armor simply allows the

recipient of a hit to roll a d10 and subtract that number from the attacker's damage roll. Most general combat skills aren't applicable to this armor soak roll, but specific armor-related Skills such as Experienced with Plate Armor +2 or Knows How To Take A Hit +4 could be allowed.

More advanced types of armor offer resistance bonuses to particular damage types; the average full plate armor might offer Blade Damage Resistance +2, while an expensive Kevlar vest might offer Bullet Damage Resistance +4. Types of armor that are particularly heavy or cumbersome might carry penalties to Dexterity and/or Speed, causing a character wearing it to have an effective Dexterity or Speed score equal to their actual Attribute score minus the penalty.

## **Shields**

Shields are essentially a weapon that can also be used as armor, with a shield bonus instead of a weapon damage or damage resistance bonus. When used to attack, they are functionally identical to a bashing weapon such as a club and deal out base damage in the same way as bashing weapons do, adding their shield bonus to damage rolls.

When wielding a shield, players get to add the shield bonus to attempts to block or parry when they take a Defensive Action. Furthermore, even when a hit lands after a failed Defensive Action, it is assumed that getting around the shield lessened the effectiveness of the attack, meaning defenders get to make an armor roll even if they're not wearing armor, rolling d10 and adding their shield bonus and subtracting the result from the attacker's damage. If a shield-bearing player is already wearing armor, then they get to roll 1d10 for their armor bonus and 1d10 for their shield bonus. Players must use a Defensive Action to utilize a shield as armor; if they have no turns left in that round, then they are caught off-guard after their previous action(s) before they have time to bring their shield around to bear, and damage is rolled as if they had no shield at all.

Shields also allow players to use a Defensive Action to block ranged attacks; normally, ranged attacks cannot be deflected.

## **Stamina Points**

Each character receives 5 Stamina Points for each point of Fortitude they possess. Stamina Points stand in for a player's tolerance for lesser injuries, representing a mixture of luck and physical endurance. When a character with Stamina Points takes damage, they are accumulating bruises, scrapes, and sprains instead of more serious injuries; when they are out of Stamina Points, they can no longer prevent the accumulation of Wounds. Essentially, Stamina Points are a way of keeping characters alive against impossible odds while preserving verisimilitude; successfully shooting a character with Stamina Points with a gun results in a mere graze, while shooting that same character again after their Stamina Points have run out results in a serious gunshot Wound.

There are no negative Stamina Points; a damage roll that would produce negative Stamina Points reduces a character to 0 Stamina Points and allows the attacker to roll again to inflict a

Wound.

## **Wounds and Critical Hits**

After a character's Stamina Points have been depleted, they remain alive; however, they are now a little bit more unsteady on their feet, a little bit slower to react, a little less lucky. Without Stamina Points, any damage suffered by a character is translated into Wounds, which are much more serious than the minor injuries that are soaked by Stamina Points.

When inflicting Wounds on a character without Stamina Points, a roll is made for damage but treated as if it were a zero. Instead, the relevant modifiers to the damage roll determine the number of Wounds inflicted. This number is divided by the victim's Fortitude score, rounded down.

So if a damage roll would have received a total of +7 in Attribute / Skill modifiers, and the recipient has a Fortitude of 2, the result would be 3 Wounds ( $7 / 2 = 3.5$ , rounded down to 3). If that same attack was made against a character with a Fortitude of 4, only 1 Wound would result ( $7 / 4 = 1.75$ , rounded down to 1).

Characters can bear a number of Wounds equal to their Fortitude score; upon reaching this amount of Wounds, each subsequent Wound inflicts a penalty of -1 to all Attribute scores until healed. When one's Fortitude score has been reduced to 0 by Wounds, a character is dying, and unable to take any actions at all.

When rolling for damage, a roll of 10 is a Critical Hit. When a Critical Hit is made, Stamina Points are bypassed entirely and Wounds are inflicted. If a Critical Hit is made and the recipient of the hit was out of Stamina Points anyway, then the attacker gets to add their roll of 10 to the amount of damage done.

## **Healing**

Characters automatically regain 5 Stamina Points for every 10 minutes they spend in-game not taking damage.

In general, those with Wounds are stuck with them, although characters with access to the relevant medical equipment (tourniquets, bandages, etc.) can take the time to treat their own or another's Wounds with a Healing roll. During combat, this roll takes one action, using up a character's turn. To make a Healing roll, a character adds their Knowledge score and any relevant Skills to the roll of a d10. If this number is higher than the GM's roll of a d10 + the number of Wounds the patient suffers from, 1 Wound is removed from the patient. Outside of combat, only 1 Healing roll is permitted in between fights. In their downtime in between quests or missions, characters are assumed to have had time to fully heal all Wounds. Magical healing, of course, is an exception to the above rules: a successful Healing Spell can restore a character to full health.

Dying characters (those whose Fortitude score has been reduced to 0 through Wounds) will



linger on, unconscious and unable to perform actions on their turns, for a number of rounds equal to their Fortitude score, at which point they will die. If an ally makes it to their side and performs a successful Healing roll, as many Wounds will be removed from the dying character as it takes to bring their Fortitude score up to 1.

## **Bonus Dice**

The goal of any role-playing game is to have fun, and while play styles differ from group to group, fun, rewarding role-play ought to always be encouraged and rewarded. Therefore when a player are especially creative, clever or amusing in describing their character's actions, GMs should feel free to reward them with a Bonus Die. Though they shouldn't be handed out willy-nilly, the Rule of Cool is in full effect when deciding to grant a Bonus Die for good role-playing. If a player's role-playing makes a GM think "Cool!" or "Brilliant!", then that deserves a Bonus Die.

Bonus Dice are d10s just like regular dice. On virtually any roll they choose, a player can choose to add a Bonus Die to roll 2d10 instead of the standard 1d10; only one Bonus Die can be added to a roll. Bonus Dice can be rolled at the same time as the regular d10, or afterward to hopefully boost a poor roll into a successful one. A player could use a Bonus Die to inflict extra damage on an attack, to give them a bump to a low defense roll, or to increase their odds of making a successful Skill or Spellcasting Roll. Bonus Dice can allow for cinematic and downright impossible stunts, but mirror seemingly impossible events in the real world such as lifting a car off of a loved one or surviving a railway spike through the brain.

While players might be advised to save their Bonus Dice for times when they'll really need them, they should also know that Bonus Dice are "use them or lose them" – they don't carry over from session to session, so any player with unrolled Bonus Dice at the end of the night have wasted them.

## **Magic Systems**

Because magic systems are so important at influencing the feel of a game in which they are featured, a "one-size-fits-all" system may not, in fact, fit all styles of play. Specific settings, in particular, may utilize wildly different magic systems from one another in an attempt to capture the preferred tone and mood. Therefore GMs should feel free to substitute other magic systems for the default one presented below to better fit their desired setting, or add them in in addition to it in order to depict different schools of magic.

For example, rather than casting Spells, a Summoner might perform a Skill roll (or a series of Skill rolls) to successfully summon a powerful entity such as an elemental, Jinn, angel, or demon. A contested Willpower roll would then determine whether the Summoner binds the entity to perform the desired task, or whether they now have to face off against an escaped and highly annoyed archfiend from the deepest darkest pits of Hell...

Similarly, a Shaman type character might have the Ability Visions +2, allowing them astral projection into the Spirit Realm, where they might encounter various spirits. In order to

acquire information about events in the physical world or enlist the spirits' aid in healing or magical workings, rather than striking bargains with or binding the spirits to his will as would the Summoner, the Shaman must *persuade* them. In game terms this would be a Charisma vs. Willpower roll instead of an opposed Willpower roll, a relatively minor mechanical difference. However the change in fluff and the opportunity for astral adventures in the Spirit Realm means that ultimately a Shaman character plays very differently from a Summoner.

In the end, there are as many potential magic systems as there are players, and the rules for spellcasting below should be taken as guidelines only, at least until your group can come up with a system that works for you.

## **Spellcasting**

To cast a Spell, one must have the ability to perform magic as well as the knowledge of how to use it. By default, this means magic-users possess an additional Attribute such as "Mana" or "Sorcery" to represent their innate magical gift. This Attribute score plus a relevant Skill such as Spellcasting +3 or Magical Lore +4 represents their Spellcasting Roll.

In a setting where anyone can be taught to use magic, the Spellcasting Roll might consist of one's Willpower score combined with a relevant Magical Skill instead.

Each spellcaster possesses command over certain Spheres of magic; the number of Spheres a character has is equal to their magical Attribute score, or their highest magical Skill score in a setting in which anyone can perform magic. A player can also have fewer Spheres at their disposal in exchange for a more powerful Sphere bonus to their Spellcasting Rolls. For example, a player with Mana 4 can have four level one Spheres, or two level two Spheres, or one level four Sphere, etc.

Spheres are coined individually by players much as Skills are, and represent a domain of magic such as the four classical elements of Fire, Air, Water and Earth, or concepts such as Lightning, Healing, Protection, Death, Destruction, etc.

For example, a character with the Sphere Vibration might be able to cast a Spell vibrating the molecules of the air around them, creating sonic effects, or cause an object such as a wall or a sword to vibrate at their resonance frequency, shattering them. As with Skills, Spheres are subject to GM approval, and players and their GM should be in agreement over just what a given Sphere can do – overly vague or inclusive Spheres should be whittled down to something more clearly defined and specific. Beyond this simple requirement, however, virtually any usage a player can think of to utilize their character's Sphere should be allowed, though assigned an appropriate difficulty. If a given Spell does damage to its target, the Sphere determines the damage type (e.g. Spells of the Fire Sphere do Fire Damage, Spells of the Lightning Sphere do Electricity Damage, etc.).

To cast a Spell, a player defines their desired effect and makes a Spellcasting Roll + the level of the utilized Sphere, comparing this to the GM's roll of a d10 + difficulty modifiers. Common difficulty modifiers include the number of targets and the duration of the spell.

There is no difficulty modifier for casting a spell on one target, but each additional target adds +1 to the GM's roll. Similarly, an instantaneous spell (such as a fireball or a blink-and-you'll-miss-it teleportation across the field of battle) adds no difficulty modifier, but each round of combat one wants an effect to persist costs +1. Outside of combat, it's assumed a character has more time to focus and cast at their leisure, and each +1 added to the GM's roll counts as an hour longer the spell persists, rather than a round.

Spells can be cast on line-of-sight targets only, though if the target is hiding from the caster's view behind a wall or other such obstruction, the spellcaster may still cast the Spell as long as the target would otherwise be in their line-of-sight and they have a reasonably accurate idea of where the target is. The only time a Spell can be cast on a target that is outside of a caster's line-of-sight is when said caster has a direct thaumaturgical link to their target, such as some of their blood or hair clippings. In such a case, a caster can "sense" their target and cast the spell precisely as if they were in the same room together, no matter how much physical distance separates the two. The GM might want to instill a +1 penalty to the roll for each day that's passed since the hair or blood was acquired, however, as fresher links are more effective than older ones.

Casting a Spell in combat takes at least one turn, and may make multiple turns or rounds – for each turn a player chooses to dedicate to casting a spell, they can pool each roll together for when they finally release the spell.

For example, casting a Sleep spell on a single target is relatively easy for a character with the Sleep Sphere. However, putting a room of 40 enemies to sleep is impossible in a single turn because of the +39 modifier owed to the GM's roll for casting against multiple targets, not to mention the +30 duration modifier one needs if they are to remain asleep for 5 whole minutes. A player can take as many turns as they want making Spellcasting Rolls, adding each one to the ones before until they elect to release the Spell.

Taking multiple rounds to cast a Spell is useful even when one doesn't have to worry about multiple targets or persistent effects. When making a Spell that inflicts damage on a target, there is no damage roll; the amount of damage inflicted is the same as the score of the successful Spellcasting Roll. However, supercharging a Spell over multiple turns allows one to achieve a much higher total, and there multi-turn Spells allow for much higher damage totals.

Even if a Spell is successfully cast, its target(s) may get a chance to avoid its effects. For example, an opponent is granted a Dexterity roll + any relevant Skills or Abilities to avoid an attack that can potentially miss, such as a fireball or bolt of lightning. Mental effects such as Domination Sphere Spells might have to overcome the defender's Willpower roll, while a physical affliction such as a withering Death Sphere Spell might potentially be countered by a Fortitude roll.

## **Backfiring Spells**

Once they start casting, however, the only action that character can perform is a Spellcasting

Roll until the Spell is completed; they can't move, attack, or perform a Defensive Action, though they still get a Dexterity roll to avoid a hit if attacked. If a spellcaster receives a hit from an opponent in the middle of casting, is forced to perform an action other than making a Spell Casting roll, or misjudges the difficulty modifier of the Spell and is beaten by the GM's roll, a Spell is considered to have backfired. When a Spell backfires, the GM decides precisely what has happened but a general rule of thumb is the bigger the caster's pool of Spellcasting Rolls was, the more dramatic the backlash. Simple one-roll Spells might simply fizzle out, while more potent Spells might be cast at the wrong target. For example, botching a Fire Sphere Spell might set the caster's own robes aflame, while a backfiring Plague Sphere Spell might sicken an ally instead of an enemy. The most powerful Spells might have bizarre or truly earth-shattering effects, such as a Necromancy Sphere Spell spontaneously animating all of the corpses in a ten-mile radius and sending the hungry zombies after their accidental creator.