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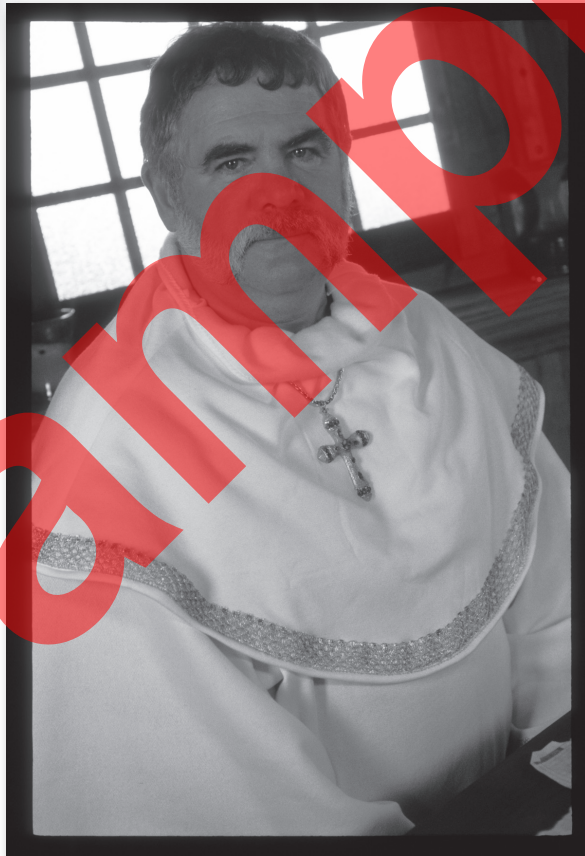


# INTRODUCTION

By picking up this tome, you (“the Demon Hunter”) agree to hold the Brotherhood of the Celestial Torch (“the Brotherhood”) blameless for any death, dismemberment, or damnation that may occur while battling the forces of Darkness under the command of Satan-Larry (“the Enemy”). The Demon Hunter also understands that while the Brotherhood will supply him with the training, weapons, and tools of Mad Science necessary to defeat the agents of the Enemy and the sundry other supernatural dangers he may encounter, the Brotherhood is in no way responsible for the survival of the Demon Hunter should he misuse these boons while performing acts of egotism, blatant stupidity, or unnecessary endangerment of Brotherhood property (“heroism”).

Right. Now that the boring legal stuff is out of the way, we can get to the good stuff! And don’t worry. All that talk about death, damnation, yadda-yadda-yadda... It’s not really all that likely. Seriously. Almost half my last group of trainees survived Basic, so we know Larry is getting lazy.

2



Saint Peter  
Director, Brotherhood of the Celestial Torch

So here’s the scoop. The book you’re holding is a one-way ticket out of your blissfully ignorant, mostly safe, mortal existence and into the daring, fast-paced life of a Demon Hunter! In the following sections you’ll find all the information you need to play the sample Tabletop Field-Mission Training Exercise (or “adventure,” as some might call it) included in this booklet. With a little imagination, you can even have your Field Simulation Instructor (or “Game Master”) come up with further missions using the Brotherhood agent profiles (“Player Characters”) included with the adventure, to better prepare you for real life experience in the field, hunting—or, more likely, being hunted by—the agents of Darkness!

However, these training simulations are only the beginning. The full Brotherhood field manual, under the clever guise of the *Demon Hunters Role Playing Game* core rulebook, will soon be available to you. Using the *Demon Hunters RPG*, you and your friends will be able to form your own Chapter of the Brotherhood with all-new characters, do battle with Evil, and sometimes even survive! The core rulebook contains the full, expanded rules—of which this recruitment manual is only a taste.

See you in the field!

## PLAYING THE DEMON HUNTERS RPG

The *Demon Hunters Role Playing Game* (RPG) can be thought of as a vehicle for telling your own stories set in the world of the Demon Hunters—a world very much like our own, but where the forces of Good (fictional versions of the benevolent beings of almost all real-world religions, mythologies, and pantheons) battle the forces of Evil (fictional versions of all the bad guys ever thought to lurk in the shadows by those same sources). Mad Science and strange sorcery fuel powers on both sides of the conflict, and the members of the Brotherhood of the Celestial Torch are the mortal footsoldiers who weigh in on the side of the Light.

Using this game, you could play out the adventures of a Chapter of the Brotherhood, the mishaps a bunch of clueless mortals suffer when they get involved in the crossfire, or even a group of

THE RULES



undead just trying to stay warm and keep their heads down. This recruitment manual presents one example of what your game might be like.

However, before you get to playing the game, the next few pages will introduce you to the basics behind the rules, giving you the tools you need to make the game work for you. Since this is just an introduction, you will probably have some unanswered questions, and you may find you quickly outgrow the limited examples provided here as your own creativity takes over. You can find solutions to many of these problems in the upcoming *Demon Hunters Role Playing Game* core book. For anything not answered there, feel free to visit the *Demon Hunters RPG* online community at [forums.deadgentlemen.com](http://forums.deadgentlemen.com).

## PLAYERS AND CHARACTERS

A game of *Demon Hunters* follows the adventures of a group of people who—you can probably guess—hunt demons. Well, not *just* demons—demons tend to be the worst of the baddies, but there are plenty more nasty things out there to shoot, stab, or incinerate. And these Demon Hunters (a common name for members of the Brotherhood of the Celestial Torch), be they admirable or despicable, everyday Joes or young godlings, are the “heroes” of the story. These characters are created and controlled by the players, who describe the heroes and decide their actions and reactions throughout the game. Player Characters are often called PCs for short.

Part of this requires an understanding of the mechanics of the game—how to build and run a character using the rules provided—but even more important is a player’s understanding of who his character is. A player needs to have a vision of his character’s appearance, a feel for his general attitudes, likes, and dislikes—as well as understand various personality quirks, noble aspirations, and ridiculous flaws. The rules of the game provide guidelines for determining many things, but exactly how those different numbers and dice mesh together into a living, breathing character is up to the player.

The point of any game is to have fun, and a role playing game can give players a lot of opportunities as their characters learn, survive, and grow—or die, come back, and try again. The world of *Demon Hunters* is a dangerous one, though—hilariously so, but dangerous nonetheless. While the players should always be having fun, their characters are a different story! Bad things happen to everyone, especially the

main characters, so players should keep in mind that their characters may have their lives, sanity, and very souls endangered at every turn.

Why do they keep going, then? Maybe because they have to. Or maybe because they feel the risk is worth it in order to make the world a better, safer place for normal people. Or maybe they’re some kind of crazed psychopaths who have found an acceptable outlet for their desires to maim, kill, and destroy. The answer is up to the players.

## THE GAME MASTER

Every game requires a Game Master (or GM) who takes upon himself the job of creating the story, non-player characters (NPCs), locations that the Demon Hunters will explore, and determining what happens when the PCs screw up (or succeed, which they may occasionally do, despite their best efforts). Some GMs like to have prepared information for each session of the game (a period of time when the players and GM get together to play for a while, usually several hours), and some prefer to “wing it” and make it up as they go along. Chances are that no matter how much the GM preps, the players will take the story in an unexpected direction, so most sessions will require a mix of prepping and on-the-fly invention.

The GM is the final arbiter in the outcome of an ambiguous situation. Like a good leader, the GM should keep things in line—but fairly, and they should reward a job well done. The GM has a lot of responsibility, but his primary purpose is to keep the story moving and keep the game fun. He is helping the players tell the story of their character’s adventures.

## THE RULES AND THE STORY

Fun is the most important result of a game, and sometimes what would be most interesting, dramatic, or fun for the characters comes in conflict with the rules. It’s also possible that—because people can be nearly infinitely creative—a player might come up with something he wants to do for which there are no explicit rules. In these cases, the GM should be able to come up with a solution using the basic system provided below, but should remember that the story comes first—when in doubt, give the players the edge in a situation.

The rules of the *Demon Hunters RPG* are meant to facilitate play and enjoyment of the game and story. Because of this, the rules are designed to be extremely



## STEPS

Dice in the *Demon Hunters RPG* are considered to form a kind of “ladder.” Each die type, from two-sided (d2) up through twelve-sided (d12), represents a “Step” on this ladder. Higher Steps, in general, represent greater ability, skill, damage, etc.; a d6 is better than a d4, and a d8 is better than a d6. This ladder can even extend above d12. At that point, a second die is added, making the next Step “d12 + d2.” That makes the first eight Steps: d2, d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d12+d2, d12+d4. There is, theoretically, no upper limit, though it would be rare for anything to be begun with a rating higher than d12.

Also, changes to rolls that make tasks harder or easier are called “Step modifiers,” or individually “Step bonuses” and “Step penalties.” These modifiers move the die type up the ladder if positive or down the ladder if negative. For example, a -1 Step penalty would turn a d6 into a d4, a +2 Step modifier would turn a d6 into a d10, and so on. While dice can be reduced below d2, at that point they become negated entirely (d0), and any further penalty is ignored.

flexible. There isn't a special rule to cover every situation that might occur, but the system allows GMs to easily find a way to resolve anything, without having to memorize books and books of specific information. If you are the Game Master for your group, take extra time to go over the information provided here, and you should be able to deal with anything your Brotherhood Chapter throws at you.

## WHAT YOU NEED

To play out the adventure included here, you will need:

- ⊕ Pencils and copies of the character sheets in this recruitment manual.
- ⊕ Polyhedral dice of different kinds: two-sided (d2), four-sided (d4), six-sided (d6), eight-sided (d8), ten-sided (d10), and twelve-sided (d12). These are available at most hobby shops and game stores. If need be, coins can be used for d2s, blank dice can be bought and modified, or you can visit [www.margaretweis.com](http://www.margaretweis.com) to order some for yourself.
- ⊕ A group of friends and a willing soul to be the Game Master.
- ⊕ -A good place to relax and play comfortably.

## GAME RULES

In the following sections are the actual rules of play for the *Demon Hunters RPG*. First we take a look at characters and the Attributes, Skills and Traits that describe them in game terms, and then we cover the ways in which these three things (and a few others) let them interact with the game world—for example, by smashing a werewolf's head repeatedly into a telephone pole.

## CHARACTERS

Characters, both PC and NPC, in the *Demon Hunters RPG* are described primarily by three things: their Attributes, which determine their innate abilities and power; their Skills, which represent learned knowledge and experience; and their Traits, which cover a wide variety of additional details. Characters also have several ratings which are called “Derived Statistics.” Two of them, Initiative and Life Points, are explained in the Combat section below.

Using just the core rulebook, players will be able to make vastly different and individual characters. The four pre-made characters included in this recruitment manual demonstrate just a few examples of what is possible with the full game.

## ATTRIBUTES

Characters in *Demon Hunters* have six primary Attributes, listed below. These represent broad areas of ability that the character possesses, and are rated in terms of the type of dice a player would roll when his character is using that Attribute. Dice of a higher Step (with more sides; see the sidebar “Steps”) represent greater ability than lower Step dice, so an Attribute of d8 is much better than an Attribute of d4.

While characters could potentially have Attributes of anything d2 or higher, d2 is a crippling deficiency, and d12 is the high end of normal human ability. Most characters have Attributes that average around d6, which represents a moderate score for a human adult. Of course, supernatural monsters, demons, angels, and so on will often have some Attributes much, much higher than this.

Most of the time, when the GM calls for a roll, the character in question would roll at least one of his Attributes, usually in combination with another die (either another Attribute or a Skill). Which



Attribute(s) or Skill is used is determined by the situation. Generally, common sense gives an obvious choice, but the GM has the final word on which Attribute to use in a given situation.

**Agility** represents the character's grace, quickness, and hand-eye coordination. A character with high Agility would have an edge with most skills that involve movement, fine control, aiming, and so on.

**Strength** is the character's physical brawn. High Strength lets the character deal more damage with hand weapons, carry more, run harder, and the like.

**Vitality** is a measure of the character's health and fitness. A higher Vitality keeps him from catching colds, helps him avoid getting tired, and lets him resist poisons.

**Alertness** covers how aware the character is, whether it be of people and their unspoken cues, the environment, or a hidden clue. A character with a high Alertness would be able to tell when someone is lying to him, notice that someone has been acting strangely, or hear something sneaking around.

**Intelligence** represents the ability of the character to work out puzzles, think clearly, or understand things. A high Intelligence lets him figure out the answer to difficult riddles, win chess games, and crack codes.

**Willpower** is the strength of the character's psyche—his personal drive, his inner fire, and his determination. A high Willpower lets the character live when he should die, persuade others with the sheer force of his personality, and resist intimidation or fear.

## SKILLS

In addition to Attributes, characters also have Skills—ratings that represent how well trained or experienced they are in different fields. When attempting to do something that falls under one of these categories, they roll their Skill die (which are rated in the same way as Attributes, but with no minimum level) in addition to an Attribute. Also, like Attributes, a d6 in a Skill represents a moderate level of competency, and a d12 represents mastery.

Some Skills can be used even if the character has no training in them, but others cannot be used unless the character has a rating of at least d2. These are usually specialized fields of knowledge or Skills that are extremely dangerous—constructing a death ray or performing open heart surgery are not things one should do untrained!

Because there are too many Skills to list fully here, each character's sheet includes the list and descriptions of Skills that he possesses. However, to provide an example, three Skills that a character might possess are Athletics, Guns, and Influence:

**Athletics** represents just that; it would be used for any action that involved active movement, possibly some that involve physical fitness or endurance, and so on. Swimming, jumping, running, and dodging all fall under the category of Athletics.

**Guns** covers most ranged hand-weapons like pistols, rifles, submachine guns, energy blasters, and the like, though it would not be used for rocket launchers or something on that scale (that would be the Heavy Weapons Skill instead). Guns would be rolled when shooting, cleaning, or identifying any of the weapons listed above.

**Influence** would be the character's ability to persuade others, whether it is through fast-talking, clever public speaking, or seduction. It would also help the character to lie convincingly, write a good speech, or intimidate someone.

## TRAITS

It's a poor character that is nothing more than a collection of numbers. For the *Demon Hunters* RPG, most things that describe the characters can be thought of as Attributes and Skills, sometimes they have less definable qualities. Is the character a vampire? Does he assume that he's so cool he cannot lose? Does he die every single time, and yet always comes back again? These are the kinds of things we call Traits.

Traits are broken down into two categories: Assets, which are generally positive Traits, and Complications, which are generally negative. Like Attributes and Skills, Traits can be rated by their die Step, though not all of them have the same range of possible Steps. Traits are also limited to a more narrow list.

Traits can have a variety of different effects. Some will provide bonuses or penalties to different types of rolls, usually by letting you add the Trait's die to the roll. Some might give new ways to spend Plot Points (see the section Story Elements, below). Others might allow occasional re-rolls for failed results. When creating a character with the complete rules, players will have access to a very broad selection of Traits from which to choose; for the purposes of this



recruitment manual, you can see examples of the available Traits by reading their descriptions on the pre-made character sheets.

## ROLLING THE DICE

When a player wants his character to try and shoot a vampire, rewire a superweapon's power source, or jump the gap between rooftops while running from a werewolf, the character is performing an action that might fail—a failure that carries some dramatic consequence. In the *Demon Hunters RPG*, these actions are resolved by rolling dice. The exact dice to be rolled usually depend upon the character's relevant Attributes and Skills; what happens after the roll depends upon what type of action the character is attempting.

### Standard Actions

Most actions are “standard actions.” The GM decides which Attribute and Skill combination is most appropriate for that particular action in that situation. Every roll uses exactly one Attribute and one Skill, except for certain special rolls that use two Attributes and no Skills. The dice are rolled and added together; if the total is higher than the “Difficulty Number” set by the GM (and the situation), then the character succeeds. The Difficulty Number (Diff) can be set by the GM, by how difficult the situation is supposed to be (see the chart below, under “Standard Difficulty,” for common values), or even by an opposing roll (often the case in combat).

Most standard actions take very little game time, but a character can only perform one of them at a time. Those things that don't actually take time or concentration, and which carry no real consequence for failure (like shouting a warning or flipping on a

light) don't require a roll. These actions can possibly be performed simultaneously as long as it makes sense given the situation.

This is a simple method of resolution, but it also allows the GM and the players a lot of flexibility. The rules never permanently pair a single Attribute with any Skill. Because of this, it is up to the GM to think about the specific situation and choose an Attribute and Skill pair for each instance. This allows the rules to accommodate a very broad range of things and be easily adapted to almost anything.

For example, a character could roll Agility + Athletics to see how quickly he can run through a patch of dense foliage (since he needs to be careful not to trip or get tangled in the brush). Then again, he would roll Strength + Athletics when running across an open field, when sheer muscle power is more important than grace and precision. Finally, should that open field turn out to be a minefield, the character would be rolling Alertness + Athletics to see if he can cross it safely.

### Complex Actions

Some actions are more lengthy or involved than others; while sprinting across a room would be a standard action, running a marathon would be a “Complex Action,” one that takes multiple rolls to resolve over a period of time that could vary from minutes to days. Complex actions use the same general difficulty scale as standard actions, but the totals required to succeed are much higher (see the chart below, under “Complex Difficulty”). Each roll the character makes takes a certain amount of time, and the totals are added together until the Difficulty is reached, all the dice come up showing ones, or the character cannot make any more rolls because he ran out of time.

## DIFFICULTY NUMBER CHART

CATEGORY	STANDARD DIFFICULTY	COMPLEX DIFFICULTY
Easy	3	15
Average	7	35
Hard	11	55
Formidable	15	75
Heroic	19	95
Incredible	23	115
Ridiculous	27	135
Impossible	31	155



When performing a Complex Action, the GM decides the Difficulty and the dice to be used exactly like a standard action roll. Then they need to decide two more things: how much game time each roll represents for the character, and if there is a time limit that restricts the number of rolls the player can make. For example, a character might attempt to repair a car's engine after a rust-demon thoroughly clogged it up. The GM decides that the character should roll his Intelligence + Mechanical Engineering, and that this is a complex action with a Difficulty of Hard (55). The GM also decides that each roll takes half an hour of game time, and that since the car needs to be used in a daring escape in about 2 hours, the character only has 4 rolls in which to reach the total. The player makes his first roll, and his dice total 10. The second roll adds up to 15, for a total of 25. The third roll gives a score of 13, bringing the grand total to 38. The engineer had better hope he gets at least 17 on his fourth and final roll!

In that example, had the dice turned up all ones at any point, the character would have botched the attempt. The repair would be considered a failure—perhaps the engineer made the problem worse. At that point he would have to give up, and either start over or find someone else to do the job—unless the GM decides that the failure has been so catastrophic that it has prevented all further attempts.

Because the ancient crafts known as the Mystic Arts are difficult, ritualized performances, they are always resolved by Complex Actions. They are identical to other Complex Actions save that they always require some form of sacrifice. The core rulebook has the full, detailed rules needed to create or cast most spells, but some examples of rituals and the rules for them can be seen on Harkadian's character sheet, where a couple of his favorites are described.

## COMBAT

While most actions can be resolved very simply using the system above, combat can get a little more complicated. The basics are the same, but because there are so many conflicting factors involved, here are some guidelines to help work out the results.

## Combat Turn—Initiative, Movement and Action

Combat is broken down into “turns,” each of which is approximately three seconds long. During a turn, each character will act, what he does will be resolved, and then the next turn will begin. This repeats until the combat is over—usually when one side surrenders or is destroyed.

The order that characters act in is called the “Initiative order.” Initiative is a Derived Statistic, and each pre-made character has his Initiative listed on his sheet. The character with the highest Initiative goes first. His player (or the GM) declares what he is doing, the action is resolved, and the character with the next highest Initiative takes his turn. In the case of ties, PCs go before NPCs, and, if necessary, tied characters can roll their Agility dice until an order is established.

When it becomes a character's Initiative turn, he has the opportunity to both move and act. He can choose to move or act first, and need not do both; however, moving only allows him to travel up to 15 feet at a fast walk. If he wants to go farther, he can choose to run. Running requires his action for the turn, so he will not be able to Attack, Dodge, or perform other actions, but it allows him to move up to 30 feet in one turn.

Each turn, as long as they aren't running, characters can also perform one action. This could be used to make an attack, dodge to avoid an attack, attempt to kick down a door, or any number of other things. Most standard actions can be performed in one combat turn, but unless a complex action only takes one turn per roll (which is unusual) they are out of the question.

## Life Points and Damage

When a character in the *Demon Hunters RPG* is hurt, he suffers Damage. The amount of Damage he can withstand before he dies is represented by his Life Point (LP) total. Whenever he suffers Damage, he loses a certain number of Life Points, until his current total drops to 0 and he dies. Life Points can be restored through rest—two days of bed rest will restore 1 Life Point, as long as the character is receiving moderate medical attention.

Damage can be inflicted upon characters in a number of ways. The most common is through attacks in combat, but characters can also be damaged by accidents, poisons, terrible weather conditions, and



so on. Players should be cautious if their character's current LP total is getting low—in the universe of *Demon Hunters*, life can be brutally short!

A character's maximum Life Points is a Derived Statistic. His current LP can never be higher than this number, but when it is lower, a good night's rest will restore 1 Life Point.

## Attacking and Defending

During combat, characters will most likely be trying to inflict harm on someone else while avoiding as much as possible to themselves. In order to go about this properly, their players will need to know how to attack and defend.

The basics of an Attack are very simple: An Attack roll is a simple action with a Difficulty set by the target's Defense. If the Attack roll is equal to or higher than the Defense, then the Attack hits, and Damage needs to be calculated.

### Attacks

There are as many different ways to Attack as there are people and weapons. However, for ease of use, the *Demon Hunters RPG* breaks them down into a handful of combat Skills: Guns, Heavy Weapons, Melee Weapons, and Unarmed. Whenever a character makes an attack, he uses one of these Skills (if he has the appropriate one) and an Attribute for his

Attack roll. The Attribute used will usually be Strength for Melee Weapons and Unarmed, or Agility for Guns and Heavy Weapons, but as with any Skill these are not set-in-stone pairings.

Making an Attack uses the character's action for that combat turn, but it may force the target to spend his action while Defending, leaving him open to further Attacks and unable to make one of his own.

Because things happen quickly in battle—often in such a way that the participants may only perceive things as a blur of motion and sound—it is important to remember that an Attack roll with a fast weapon may represent more than one actual "attack." For example, in a single combat turn (three seconds) it may be possible to slash at someone several times with a knife—a feint to the left, a deflected blow, and finally a penetrating strike, for example. In order to keep things going, these are all represented by the single Attack roll and a single amount of Damage, but the drama and tension of combat are much more heart-stopping than a mathematical calculation! GMs and players should be sure to interpret the results of combat with this in mind—the excitement of cinematic combat and life-on-the-line danger can be greatly enhanced through description. When a zombie successfully bites a PC, that character doesn't just



Tabletop combat simulation.





lose Life Points—he screams in agony as the decaying teeth sink into his skull and the other zombies all shout, “Brains!”

## Defenses

When a character is Attacked, his player will want to know what Defense is available to him, and that depends heavily upon the situation and his decisions.

If the defending character is surprised, asleep, restrained, or otherwise completely unmoving for some reason, his Defense is automatically set to 3. Sneaking up on an enemy provides a significant advantage!

If the character is actively engaged in combat, moving around even a little bit (even if he isn’t aware of the attack), and isn’t using his action to Defend (perhaps he has already used his action for the turn to Attack or Defend, or is waiting to Attack when his Initiative comes up), then he uses his Innate Defense. He roll his Agility die by itself, to Defend, applying the result against the Attack roll. This does mean that the result could be lower than 3! Such a thing would be unfortunate, but that’s the problem with random chance.

If the character has not yet used his action, and he is aware that the Attack is coming, he could spend his action during that turn to Defend himself. This would give him a normal skilled roll for his Defense. Depending upon the type of Attack, he could choose either to Block or to Dodge.

Against Melee Weapons or Unarmed attacks (NOT Guns or Heavy Weapons) he has the option of using his own Melee Weapons or Unarmed Skill to Block, along with either Agility or Strength. Dodging is a little more versatile, and is useful against any kind of Attack; the defender Dodges using his Agility + Athletics.

## Calculating Damage

When an Attack roll is greater than or equal to the Defense, it is a hit, and may do Damage. To determine how many LP the target loses, first look at the difference between the two rolls: Attack — Defense = the “Initial Damage” of the Attack, which can be 0. However, the attacker may then roll a Damage Die, adding its result to determine the final Damage. Weapons list the Damage Die they provide, and fists have an effective Damage Die of ‘d0.’ If the defender has any Armor, its Armor Rating is subtracted from the Damage, and the remaining Damage is subtracted from the character’s Life Points.

If he hits 0 LP, he might be dead! However, if the possibility exists that he could be saved by first aid, a kind GM might let him be merely unconscious.

## EXAMPLE OF COMBAT

In a tabletop field simulation, Gator and Armageddon (playing as themselves, with Harkadian acting as the GM) have been left to guard the entrance to an abandoned junkyard while the others explore inside, looking for the source of some necromantic energy Harkadian sensed. Note that the example includes a few concepts that are explained further below.

**Game Master (Harkadian):** “The others have been gone for fifteen minutes, and there’s been no sign of them or anyone else so far.”

**Armageddon:** “I have been watching both the junkyard and the street outside, correct?”

**Gator:** “Yeah, you told him that already...”

**Armageddon:** “Well, I would not have to watch both ways if you were doing your job as instructed—”

**Gator:** “Hey, hey, I’m not complaining. You do it better’n I could, anyway. Besides, reading *Reptile Wrasslin’ Monthly* is important preparation for—”

*The GM notes that at this point, a small group of shambling zombies are about to appear from inside the junkyard. Armageddon and Gator, arguing, don’t get the normal Alertness + Perception roll they might in order to notice them, but Armageddon’s Second Sight Asset prevents him from being ambushed.*

**GM:** “Armageddon, you suddenly get a chill down your spine; you’re not even sure you heard it, but you think you might have caught the soft sounds of someone approaching.”

**Armageddon:** “I hold up a hand to Gator for silence and back up against our van, looking around for the source!”

**Gator:** “If he’s worried, I’m worried—I hold real still and listen hard.”

**GM:** “In the sudden quiet, you can both make out the sound again; footsteps, a small group of people, coming from inside the junkyard. Unfortunately, the low moaning doesn’t sound like the rest of your Chapter. You hear one word, repeated over and over: “Brains!”

**Gator:** “Zombies? Easy enough. ‘Geddon, you just set up with that rifle of yours and mow ‘em down.”

