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THE RPGING

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HOW TO DO STUFF

This game does assume you have some familiarity with roleplaying games and if you're okay with it, I'll forgo the usual explanations of terms or any mission statements about the roleplaying games are and how this game supposedly fits in. If you have somehow come across this document and honestly have no idea what an RPG is, I would strongly suggest picking up one of the many marvelous games out there. Recommendations would include Dungeons and Dragons by Wizards of the Coast, or my personal favourite, Talislanta by Stephen Michael Sechi.

Unlike many other pen and paper rpgs, this game does not require dice. All it takes is the pencils and the paper. Our goal is to to provide a rules-lite, cinematic game, that while diceless, still feels and plays like a traditional roleplaying game.

The basic mechanics are pretty simple. Everyone has played Rock-Paper-Scissors. Paper beats Rock; Rock beats Scissors; Scissors beats Paper. This roleplaying game works on the same principle. In the event of a tie, the character's Skill Number is used to determine the winner. That is pretty much it.

One person takes on the role of the GameMaster (GM) and runs the adventure, responsible for running the plot, obstacles, problems, enemies and NPCS (Non-Player Characters, basically everyone not controlled by the other players). While the others create their characters and try to make it through the bloody deathtraps concocted by the vindictive GM.

As you read through, please note that no rule is set in stone. You don't like how something is handled, want more detail or can think of a better way to do it, change it! Now on to some specifics;

HOW TO DO STUFF: CHARACTER CREATION

Player controlled Characters, sometimes referred to as PCs, in RoShamBo don't have the endless list of abilities and stats that require a spreadsheet and an advanced degree in statistics to figure out, what they do have are *SKILLS*. There are two categories of skills: Combat and Regular. Combat Skills handle fighting, be it ranged, hand-to-hand or nuclear annihilation. Regular Skills cover everything else from picking a lock, to casting a spell, to performing an emergency underwater tonsillectomy.

SKILLS

In some games, the Skills are so specific that the character ends up with a laundry list of very detailed, very specific skills, most of which will never actually get used in game play. Skills in RoShamBo are broad categories or aptitudes where the character with such a skill is reasonably expected to be able to attempt a related task, such as Magician deciphering a mysterious rune, or a Tech figuring out a how an unfamiliar engine works.

Starting Characters have 10 points to divide amongst all 14 Skills.

COMBAT SKILLS	REGULAR SKILLS
Attack	Thievery
Defend	Magic
Action.	Science
	Art
	Adventurer
	Pilot
	Tech
	Business
	Athletics
	*Professional
	*Hobby

*Professional and Hobby are catch-all Skills and should be made more specific to reflect the character's interests ie, Professional: Law, or Hobby: Ethnic Dance, etc. They can be taken more than once to reflect different professions and interests.

GMs should feel free to add, expand or remove Skills as needed to suit their game needs.

MORE POINTS!

If a player writes a history or creates a portrait for their character, then they gain an additional 2 points to place anywhere they wish (Doing both merits 4 points). This option is only available during character creation and all histories and portraits MUST be approved by the other players. GMs may award more or less points depending on their own preferences, and/or on the quality of the portrait/write up. The GM reserves the right to use the character's history against them at any time.

PRIME SKILL

The player then chooses ONE Skill to be the Character's *PRIME SKILL*. This Skill should reflect the main premise of the character, such as Magic for a wizard or witch, Thievery for a smuggler or a thief, Pilot for a race-car driver etc. Warrior characters can choose between the three Combat Skills, but the choice should reflect what kind of fighter (offensive, defensive or tactical) the character is meant to be.

The Prime Skill also becomes the character's Points (*P*s), and will play a role in how a character behaves in battle.

HOW TO DO STUFF: COMBAT

There is no initiative; all characters and their opponents are assumed to be acting at approximately the same time during a round (which is 2 seconds game-time, if needed). At the start of the first Combat round, the GM starts with the player sitting on her right. Once the GM has gone around to every player at the table, that is 1 round. The next round, the second player to the GM's right starts; on the third round, start with the third player, and so on. If there are more opponents than characters, the remaining opponents act after all characters have played a turn (see Multiple Attackers, below).

The acting player then chooses an opponent and the battle is on. The player begins by declaring which Combat Skill they would like to play that round. This is called an **Option**.

ATTACK ~ DEFEND ~ ACTION

ATTACK and *DEFEND* are exactly that: taking either an offensive or defensive stance.

An *ACTION* however, is any other action taken in a combat situation and it can be one of two things: The *COMBAT ACTION SKILL*, or a *REGULAR SKILL*. The Combat Action Skill is a maneuver to gain an advantage, such as drawing a weapon, moving, or something like a feint, flank or parry, etc. In a Throw, when a player uses Combat Action

against an opponent who is Defending, they have won the throw and the Defending character looses 1P.

A Regular Skill involves using a separate skill altogether, such as Magic or Thievery and would use those skill points in the event of a tie which in this case, would include an opponent using the Combat Action skill. In this case, the player must state specifically they are trying to do. A successful Regular Skill Action would result in the spell being cast, or the purse being lifted, etc.

Once the player has decided which Option their character is using, the GM then declares which Option they chose for the opponent.

How this is done is up to the GM, but the recommend method is the GM either choosing or randomly drawing the Opponent's Option, writing it down on a piece of paper then placing it face down on the table. The Player then declarers their character's Option.

The recommended way to do this is for the GM finds three Index cards and write one of the three Options on each card. This way they can be placed on the table when needed.

Other possibilities include the GM rolling a dice to decide an Option or even playing straight Rock~Paper~Scissors.

Once the Player's Skill has been declared, the GM's choice is revealed and the outcome revealed. Anytime Options are revealed, it is called a **Throw**.

Defend beats Attack. ~ Attack beats Action. ~ Action beats Defend.

The winner of the Throw is successful and the loser suffers the result. In the event of a tie, both the player and their opponent choosing the same Option, the character or opponent with the higher Skill Point total wins. If there is still a tie, both characters have succeeded and both suffer the Result.

Phil the Ignoramus stands ready to battle Briss the Kosher (a GM controlled character). Phil sits to the right of the GM and chooses first: Action with 8 points. The GM flips over the card they had turned over for Bris, and reveals Defend! Since Action beats Defend, Briss has lost.

THE RESULTS

ATTACK BEATS ACTION: The loser takes damage. See 'Weapons and Armour' for how to do damage.

ACTION BEATS DEFEND: The declared action or skill is a success. If the character was using the Magic Skill, the spell was successfully cast and the loser suffers the consequences. For combat Actions, the losing opponent automatically loses 1Ps. This represents a loss of position or concentration as opposed to actual physical damage and cannot be defeated by armour.

DEFEND BEATS ATTACK: The character takes no damage.

THE ROLE OF PRIME SKILLS
In combat, character's Prime Skill points represent the overall stamina of the character. When a character takes damage, they loose Prime Skill Points (Ps), which means that they have less points (Ps) to use next round. They can also loose Ps from being outmaneuvered by an Action. In this way, they are not so much a representation of actually physical health like traditional Hit Points, but instead represent the overall condition of the character and their ability to hang in a fight.

Lost Ps also affects the character's Prime Skill. A fighter with their Prime Skill of Attack, will find it harder to fight as they go along, a Mage will find it harder to cast spells, etc. In this way, the more damage a character takes, the harder it becomes for them to continue.

Since Phil chose Combat Action while Briss choses Defense, Phil won the throw. Because Action automatically takes 1Ps from Briss's Prime Skill of Attack, Briss now has one less 1 Attack Point to spend in further rounds.

Unless it is their Prime Skill, a character cannot Throw the same Skill twice in a row. A ninja can out-maneuver their opponent (as a Combat Action) or a Wizard can cast spells (as an Magic Skill Action) all day long, but they cannot Attack or Defend twice in a row. Nor can a Warrior with Attack as his Prime Skill Defend twice in a row.

BUT HOW DO I...? HOW TO DO SOME OTHER FIGHTING STUFF

RANGED COMBAT

All ranged weapons come with a number representing how far they can be used. As long as all parties involved are within that range, then combat is handled normally.

Hand to Hand	0
Thrown	1
Short	2
Medium	3
Long	4
Extra Long	5

If one of the characters attempts to hit an opponent outside of that range, then the difference is added to the defending opponent's Skill Number AND Armour in the event of a tie.

Skinky the Skink is throwing a dagger at Mortimar the Made who is standing a Medium distance away. Since the dagger has a range of Thrown and Mortimar is a Medium distance away, Morti gets a bonus of +2 in the event of a tie, and +2 to Armour if Skinky does manage to hit him.

If one of the characters has NO ranged weapon, then they may not select Attack as an option during that combat round.

HEALING

In keeping with RoShamBo's cinematic style, lost Ps are regained at the rate of 25%(of total, round up) per hour of rest. So a fighter who has a total of 13P and lost 7 P in the last fight would regain 4 hit points per hour of rest and be completely healed within 2 hours.

However, if a PC's P falls below 0, then their injuries are considered serious and require medical attention. (see How To Do Some Other Stuff: Healing)

ADVANCE AND RETREAT

Moving into, or out of range during combat requires an Action throw. What skill is used is up to the player. Athletics and Combat:Action are obvious, but a resourceful player could likely make a case for Thievery or Adventurer, for example. They may move one Range level per throw.

SNEAK ATTACKS

A sneak attack is actually handled by a Skill Throw (Hard~Soft~Nougat) using the attacker's Combat: Action (or possibly Thievery) vs whatever skill the GM deems necessary. By default this would be Defend, but it could also be Adventurer if the target is on watch, for example.

COVER

In Combat, if a character hides behind a wall or a particularly large Welshman to avoid attack, they have Taken Cover. There are two kinds of cover.

COMPLETE COVER: Complete cover comes when a character is hiding behind an object large enough to totally conceal them. The character must not be fighting back in any way. With Complete Cover and the attacker must eliminate the cover or find another way around it.

To do this, the attacker forgoes the usual Combat Action and instead does a Skills Throw (Hard~Soft~Nougat) using their applicable skill (usually Attack, but may

vary) vs the Durability of the Object (assigned by the GM).

•If the Attacker wins, she does full damage to the Durability of the Object. Once the object looses more than half of its Durability, it can now only provide Partial Cover.

•If the Object wins, it withstands the assault with no damage.

•In the event of a tie, the Durability is compared to the damage of the attack. If the damage is higher, the difference is subtracted from the Durability. If the Durability is the same or higher than the Damage, the object then takes 1 Damage.

Zar Dweeble the mage is hiding from Phungi the Elf's arrows. He dives behind a large boulder large enough to cover him, sticks his head between his knees and starts praying to Yellowstayne, the god of cowards. At the angle she's at, Phungi can't hit Zar directly, so she fires a few arrows in his general direction to keep him pinned.

Phungi, using her Attack skill, and Zar using his Defend skill do a Skills throw. They both chose HARD. Phungi's arrows only do 3 damage, while the stone has a Durability of 10. Zar is safe, but the stone has been chipped away and now only has a Durability of 9. If she can whittle the stone down to Durability of 4, Zar would now be vulnerable to attack.

PARTIAL COVER: if the object is not large enough to fully conceal a person, as say behind a slim elm tree, a ruined wall or a dachshund; or if the person concealed is fighting back in any way, then they only have Partial Cover and are vulnerable to attack and damage. A Combat throw is made between both the attacker and the partially concealed opponent (remember, the partially concealed opponent may also be Attacking).

The Attack is treated like a normal Combat Throw and the cover only come into play if both character's choose the same Option. In this case, Durability of the cover is added to the covered character's chosen Skill.

Zar decides to fight back and decides to cast Fuzzel's Forbidden Furry Fury at Phungi. The next round, they make a Combat role as normal. Since Phungi has been circling around to see if she can hit Zar from another angle, she chooses her Combat: Action skill 9, against Zar's Magic Skill of 4 (which also counts as Action). Since they are tied, they compare their skill numbers. Under normal circumstances, Phungi would win, however the Durability of the rock s added to Zar's magic score to give him a total of 13 and he successfully cast's his spell while Phungi's arrow harmlessly bounces away while she begins to suffer the truly horrifying effects of the spell.

Note that Partial Cover rules also applies to the use of shields.

MORE THAN ONE OPPONENT

There will be many times when a character is facing more than one opponent in a round (or vice versa). Handling this is simple. For the first opponent, the Throw is handled normally. Then, for all subsequent opponents, the throw is handled normally, but character is assumed to have 0 skill points. Which means that they would loose in the event of a tie.

Conversely, a character may choose which opponent they would like to use their Skill points. So if they are facing a horde of kobold underlings and the dark wizard, they would ignore the wave of flunkies and concentrate on the big baddie.

Note that some monsters or Maxs (bonus abilities) may allow the use of skill points in subsequent throws during the same round.

HOW TO DO STUFF BESIDES HIT THINGS: SKILLS

When a character wants to do something like pick a lock, jump a dirtbike over a pit full of rabid wallabies or bake a panini under fire, they choose an applicable Ability Skill.

As we discussed, Combat is resolved through a Throw of the options of Attack, Defend and Skill. Pretty much everything else, including

Skills and Abilities are resolved through the options of:

HARD ~ SOFT ~ NOUGAT*

The skill being performed is assigned a difficulty number by the GM, while the Option for the skill is randomly selected each time the skill is selected. On paper it will simply look like; 'skill throw Athletics 4'. The player then simply chooses an Option to see if they succeed in performing the skill and if they wins the Throw, then they are successful.

HARD beats SOFT ~ SOFT beats NOUGAT ~ NOUGAT beats HARD.

*okay fine, make up your own options then.

In the event the character chooses the same option as the one randomly generated by the GM, the character's skill number is compared to the target number. If they are still tied, a traditional Rock~Paper~Scissors decides the winner (play until there is a clear winner.)

If a character does not have an applicable skill, but wants to try it anyway, they can do so at the discretion of the GM. They have NO skill points. In the event they pick the same Option, they fail in performing the skill.

> Moley is trying to break into the bank again. The GM decides to make the bank's Security System a Nougaty 14. Mole's Thievery skill is 15 and he chooses Hard. Since Nougat beats Hard, he fails and the Security System goes into alarm. Had Moley chosen Soft or Nougat, he would have easily beaten the system, since Soft beats Nougat and if he had chosen Nougat, his Skill of 15 would have beaten the Bank's target number of 14.

HOW TO DO SOME OTHER STUFF

ROUNDING
If you have to round a number, always round up!

DIFFICULTY
FEAR NOT! WE HAVE A CHART!
When determining what difficulty something should be, simply pick a number within the range given below.

DIFFICULTY	NUMBER RANGE
Why Bother?	1-2
Easy Peasy	3-4
Easy	4-5
Not So Hard	5-7
Hard	7-9
Way Hard	10-15
Xtreme!!	15+

TRYING IT AGAIN.
Whether or not a PC can attempt a Skills action a second time is always up to the GM.

SPOT
In the classic spot check, the player searches the room or door for traps or hidden passages. In RoShamBo, this is handled as a normal skill throw, using whichever skill the GM deeps useful in the situation, likely Thievery or Adventurer depending on the situation.

KNOCKOUT
Knocking unsuspecting guards out with a concussive blow to the back of the brainpan is one of those cinematic staples that doesn't quite work in real life, but can make for good gameplay. It is always up to the GM whether to allow a PC to knock someone out, but if it comes up, make a Skills throw using the Attacker's Combat Attack vs the Defender's Combat Action skill.
If the Attacker wins, the defender is now sleeping like a baby.
If the Defender wins, he takes no damage and now very aware that he is under attack.
If Attacker and Defender tie, resolve normally (higher skill points win). If they are still tied, the Defender takes normal damage, but is still awake and now able to fight back.