

I had planned to start the campaign write-up for Daphne and Bertwald, but it has proven to be quite lengthy. I have been converted the chat logs into straight narrative, including all the character dialog, which puts it at 80 or so pages. I will probably post it to my website instead, rather than print it here. After I finish that project, then I may condense it into a more traditional write-up for these pages.

So instead, you get two pages of comments.

comments

315

paul cardwell

And those who would speak out against the current reactionary policies are being marginalized.¹

robert castle

RAE Shared Fantasy. I had a problem in my online fantasy campaign when there is a discontinuity between Matt Helms' assumptions and the tone that developed in the way I ran the campaign.²

robert dushay

Why are so many rpg rules desperately dull? They have to be functional first and "fun" second. Why are they to be hidden away? So they do not disrupt any sense of flow.

It is possible to make fun rules that either encourage a sense of flow or are so fun that no one minds the disruption, but if it was easy to create these kind of rules, everyone would do it. :)

lee gold

An idea that popped into my head when I replied to Myles two issues ago was to have the skill roll indicate the time required for success, rather than success/failure. The GM sets the base time required (hopefully with guidelines given in the rule book) and the skill roll either multiplies or divides this time by some factor. This is especially useful for those activities, like searching or researching, that the GM wants to succeed yet still wants the characters' skills to come into play. You can also use this method for healing and training.

¹ IIRC, the lone congresswoman who voted against military action received death threats for her trouble.

² Correct me if I'm wrong, Matt.

spike y jokes jones

Sorry about that.

A teenage Arcade recently made an appearance in the X-Men Evolution Saturday-morning cartoon.

joshua kronengold

I agree with you completely; it is perfectly acceptable to describe trivial scenes or events in an "I say such-and-such" manner. This is also appropriate when the character is acting beyond the player's skill. Not every encounter needs to be roleplayed.

rene a louviere jr

I too share your fears of the reaction to terrorist acts. I do not worry about the lack of hate crime legislation; I worry about the reactionary legislation and executive orders that are currently being pushed.

The Master admitted his deep-seated fear of the cross and was burned when he touched it, even though there was no human around. This implies that the power of the cross has nothing to do with the willpower of the person holding it. At best, it is a purely psychosomatic response of the vampire.

If it was just a matter of willpower, then crosses or holy water could not harm vampires unless they were aware them. This is (and correct me if I am wrong) not the case in the Buffiverse. A vampire was destroyed by drinking holy water that he did not even know was holy water until after it started killing him.³ Besides, this concept could lead to some very silly confrontations.

paul mason

Team-based comic books (Avengers, Legion of Superheroes, etc.) are especially well suited to party-based roleplaying. While some people want rpgs to "follow the tropes of fiction," I want rpgs to transcend the trappings of traditional fiction.

brian misiaszek

My comments to you regarding Galileo last issue are either missing a "not" or should be read as a very sarcastic tone. :)

Ultra-fast combat simulation: punch someone. In one, split-second action, you know whether or not you hit, how much damage you did, and what the effect was—just like a movie. In rpgs, figuring out each part takes much longer. Over the course of the entire fight, it is dreadfully slow. The only way

³ I have been catching up on my Buffy on FX.

around it is to take short cuts, like condensing a combat into a few rolls. While fast, it lacks the artistic and tactical detail of rolling for every blow. If you condensed all the combats of *Iron Monkey*, for example, you'd have a 30-minute movie!

In a movie, a conversation with an important background character, like an informant, may take fifteen minutes. In an rpg, it may take an hour or more. The players, unlike the actors following a script, do not know the best, penetrating questions to ask. Players have to pause and think about what their characters will say and how they will act—they cannot just go by the script. Plus, each player has some input in the scene, dragging out the conversation or the action.

How many times have you said something in character that was anachronistic, out-of-character, or otherwise inappropriate? Do you keep playing or do you rephrase what you say and try again? Movie actors have the opportunity to practice and re-take the scene if they screw up and the audience never notices.

As Paul Mason pointed out, the party of PCs is not really typical of other narrative forms, like movies. Roleplaying games are not movies and should not try too hard to feel like movies.

jonathan nicholas

I agree that space patrols should be consolidated around planets and other bottlenecks of activity. There still may be uses for deep space patrols, based on the range of sensors, for intelligence gathering, counter-intelligence, and other operations. Think of submarines instead of destroyers.

Nostradamus is seductive because people apply prophecies after the fact. Or in the case of Sept 11, they just make up their own quatrains and say it was from Nostradamus. No one has ever used the quatrains to actually predict anything that has not already happened, but hindsight is very seductive.

simon reeve

Why should “the bad guys” be protected by rules they are not obeying? Because we are “the good guys.” It is not about *them*, but about *us*.

robert rees

Drawing “subtle variations in meaning ... from your unconscious and imagination” is something that can be improved with practice. This is true whether using dice, cards, or completely freeform mechanics.

brian rogers

For my online campaign, I used purely subjective character creation—the players just picked specialties as they saw fit. In trying to formalize the system, I am using a point-based system. Increasing a specialty is half the cost of increasing the entire attribute. The optional, by-permission-only “negative specialty” like Daphne’s Good Physique with Average Strength would earn back ¼ the point cost. For example, increasing Athletics from Average to Good might cost 4 points. Increasing Dancing from Good to Great would cost 2 more points. Reducing Jumping back to Average would be -1 point.

jonathan tweet

In combat, BESM is closer to BRP or GURPS than *Ars Magica*. To hit, you have to roll your ACV or less and the defender must roll over her DCV. It does not matter who rolled under by the most, though many people probably use that house rule. My untested house rule is to turn it into a roll+stat+skill system (a trivial modification), counteracting the “backwards math” you dislike about BESM.

jim vassilakos

I think you have set the chances for space sickness and cramping much too high for experienced characters. At the start of a triathlon, for instance, you do not have 1/12 of the field cramping and having to tread through it. Shuttle crews are not in danger of becoming ill 1/6 of the time. Instead, I would use cramping or sickness as an explanation for a fumble or critical failure on the skill roll.

The disadvantages are not comedic, but by the way you describe them, it seemed as if you thought they were. In a setting with poor hygiene, halitosis and flatulence would probably not be noticed and not worthy of a disadvantage, anyway.

I do agree that you should mix in setting details and sample difficulties with skill descriptions. I think you are taking a great approach here, but I am still concerned over the tone of your examples. Furthermore, any setting information that is included in the skill descriptions should also be included in the more setting-focused areas of the rules. Information that is too scattered is very hard to reference and greatly increases player frustration. For example, if the “Oceans of Taltos” are only described under the skill description of Underwater Welding, the GM is going to hate you.