

## comments #333

**Viktor Haag**

Perhaps you are thinking of the Mamet movie House of Games?

Luggage locks will not stop any determined handler with a simple blade from getting into your luggage. I have used them for the sole purpose of preventing the zippers from accidentally opening. These days in the U.S., all locks must be removed when you check in the bags to accommodate luggage searches.

**Paul Mason**

I have been using Tahoma at work for UI design, since it is the default Windows font. Unfortunately, Tahoma's spacing looks pretty bad on the word processor screen, and I tend to go with what looks better on my screen rather than what looks better after printing. Because of a nagging issue in Word having to do with column breaks and shading, I am now giving OpenOffice a spin.<sup>1</sup>

You mentioned that there were "seeds of another approach" for you to worry at, but was there ever an "inset box on the topic on the next page?"

I am having trouble with your example of Ling Cong and Yang Zhi. How did Lin Chong initiate the staring match that created the advantage? What was Yang Zhi's player doing at the time? Was it just a matter of who said what first? Did the arbiter overrule Yang Zhi's player's assertion (not illustrated)? What was the actual conversation among the players? In this way "initiative" and "advantage" are very similar concepts when neither side has the opportunity to make an assertion first.

If the goal is to have a "neutral arbiter," I fail to see how having a player other than the referee is any better than having the referee do it. The "public nature of arbitration" will not hold back most players, I am afraid. Good players do not need to be told, bad players do not listen, and so the best you can do is describe playing fairly to the mediocre players and hope they follow your guidelines.

Dice (or other randomizers) are your neutral arbiters (assuming, of course, that they are rolled openly). I say let the dice will tell you if the assertion is acceptable. Typically, the die roll is based on the

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1: I had tried it before when it was SunOffice, but I was mostly looking at the spreadsheet. I am finding that the OpenOffice has the same poor on-screen font spacing as Word. In particular, adjacent letters are often crammed together. I just refuse to create this zine with anything more sophisticated than a word processor.

ability levels of those involved, which is a natural way to adjudicate assertions. Staring down an opponent only gives you an advantage if it actually intimidates the opponent. So you make an opposed intimidation check to see if it works—it does not matter if the referee or a player rolls.

Structuring combat actions based on what the combatants want to accomplish is something I have thought about. The way I see it playing out is that the difficulty of the action has to affect the die roll, so that asserting "I cut off his head" is harder than "I slash his arm" or "I drive him back a few paces." With results-based assertions/actions, combat techniques become a matter of roleplaying: do you go for the single, decisive blow that is more difficult and thus may take several attempts or do you try to whittle-down your opponent that is easier but takes longer? The players shape how combat looks and feels instead of the game designer.

In setting the difficulty, the arbiter can set a modifier or simply declare that a partial, complete, or critical success is required. Saying "you need a critical success" leads to an "all or nothing" outcome, which may not always be inappropriate. Conversely, setting modifiers is fiddlier but allows you to have a partial success on difficult maneuvers.

**Robert Rees**

Even if you never plan on running a game, that does not mean you do not want it or cannot use it. I think most people pick up games they have no intention on playing either as inspiration for the games they do play or because the games are just plain interesting.

**Simon Reeve**

The Armory, who made the original d30, put out a book of d30-centric tables.

**Brian Rogers**

Your example of the Tyrannosaur illustrates to me that a job belongs to the character who is most skilled at it. If this is a PC, it is a PC job. If it is an NPC, it is an NPC job. There is a long tradition in rpgs of having NPC (especially clerics and thieves) to fill niches not covered by the PC's abilities.

RAE Toadtown. I think it would make a fine submission to Pyramid or other rpg-related publication. I suggest adding a simple map and a few adventure seeds.