

Quickstart Rules for The Simple Game System

Starting Simple

Chris Sakkas

Playtest Release 1

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Based on

The Simple Game System

Release 2

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Contact Chris Sakkas at <sanglorian@gmail.com>.

Year of
LIVING free 

THE SIMPLE GAME SYSTEM RULES ON ONE PAGE

CORE MECHANIC: When you do something risky or are put at risk, you will roll dice. If you have the highest dice pool (usually this means having the highest die) you are successful.

How many dice you roll depends on if one of your abilities applies: 0 if a disability applies, 1 if no ability applies, 2 if an ability applies and 3 if a doubled ability applies. If a skill applies, roll an additional die (or two if a doubled skill applies). If circumstances work against you or in your favour, roll one or two extra dice.

When someone opposes your action or you oppose someone's action (dodging a punch, countering their argument, etc), they also roll dice based on their abilities and skills. Whoever has the highest dice pool wins. If you have the highest die, you have the highest dice pool. But if you and your opponent are tied for highest die, you must compare second highest dice. Then third highest, until someone has a higher die or the other person runs out of dice. If both run out of dice at the same time, it's a mixed success.

When your action is opposed by a thing rather than a person, you roll against a Difficulty set by the Game Master. Your highest die has to be higher than the Difficulty. If the Difficulty is two numbers, your highest die has to beat the first number and your second highest die has to beat the second number.

ABILITIES (DISABILITIES): Strong (Weak), Tough (Sickly), Clever (Dense), Wise (Foolish), Dexterous (Fumbling), Agile (Clumsy), Fast (Slow), Charming (Unpleasant), Attractive (Ugly). You get three abilities, although you can take abilities twice ('doubling up') – then you're 'Very Strong' or 'Very Clever'. If you choose a disability, you get a fourth ability or an existing ability is doubled.

SKILLS: Skills are things your character knows or knows about. Yes, you can double up to have Swordfighting +2 or Journalism +2. How many skills do you get? Roll a die and add one. That many.

COMBAT: Violence works a little differently.

Initiative: An Agile or Fast roll. Whoever has the highest dice pool goes first, then second highest and so on.

Your Turn: When it's your turn, you can move: 20 feet if you're Slow, 30 if normal, 40 if Fast, 50 if Very Fast. You can also attack: a Strong or Dexterous roll for melee (or Agile if you know martial arts), Dexterous for ranged. When attacked, make a defence roll – Agile (or Fast if you're running or Strong if blocking a melee attack).

You can wait and move or attack later (you can move now and attack later, or vice versa, or attack and move later). When you attack later, you act simultaneously with anyone else acting at that point.

Wound: If the attacker, not the defender, gets the highest dice pool then the defender takes one wound point – two if a melee attacker is Strong, three if Very Strong; two if a ranged attacker is Dexterous, three if Very Dexterous).

Subsequent Roll Penalty: Each time you roll attack or defence dice in a round, you accrue a -1 to all subsequent rolls this round. So if you've defended against two attacks, your next attack or defence will suffer a -2 penalty. When two characters attack one another simultaneously, each chooses whether the attack or defend roll occurs first for the purpose of this penalty.

WOUNDED: You took a wound? Immediately roll Tough against a Difficulty equal to the number of wounds you have. If your roll fails and the attack was unarmed or blunt, roll two dice – that's how long you are unconscious for; if the attack was with a lethal weapon, roll a die – you will die in that many rounds.

You're dying? Another character can roll Clever with a Difficulty equal to the number of wounds you have. Success means you're unconscious for a number of rounds equal to the roll of two dice.

While wounded, you lose dice equal to your wounds on Strong, Agile, Fast, Dexterous and Tough rolls – except Tough rolls to avoid succumbing to injury. Also, your speed is reduced by 10 feet.

HEALING: If you sleep for eight hours or get treatment from an expert, make a Tough roll with Difficulty equal to the number of injuries you have. Success means you lose one measly wound. You can get treated once a day, plus once after each incident in which you're injured.

SENSE, GHOULS AND SENSIBILITY: A SETTING ON ONE PAGE

It is the beginning of the 19th century and love and the smell of rotting corpses is in the air. Eligible young bachelors and bachelorettes flirt as never before over dueling sabers in the dojos and over the disemboweled corpses of their enemies. Lovers snatch quick kisses between the reports of musket fire as the unstoppable armies of the damned rise from their graves to do the Devil's work.

ABILITIES (DISABILITIES): Strong (Weak), Tough (Sickly), Sensible (Foolish), Willful (Impressionable), Agile (Clumsy), Fast (Slow), Charming (Unpleasant), Attractive (Ugly), Well-Bred (Common). Sensible includes Clever and Wise. To be Willful is to be stubborn and courageous – use it to face down a charge of zombies or to tell a lady how ardently you love and admire her.

RECOMMENDED SKILLS: Perception, Gaming, Seduction, Handling Animals, Athletics, Acrobatics, Performance, Manners, Lies, Gossip, Guns, Swordfighting, Daggerfighting, Axefighting, Archery, Dodging, Blocking, Dark Lore, Education, Wealth, Strategy and Tactics, Riding, Courage, Hardiness. Use Hardiness when making Tough rolls to avoid succumbing to injury.

SAMPLE FOES

Skinless Shambler

Skinless shamblers are aged skeletons awoken by an unknown, compelling force.

Strong, Sickly, Foolish, Slow, Unpleasant, Ugly.
Clawing, Biting, Hardiness.

Empty Raiment

When a wife or child dies, a man's mourning can animate the lost one's clothes. Well-bred aristocrats are reluctant to mention that a lady is not altogether there – the euphemism 'she is not all herself today' is preferred. Raiments do not communicate, instead leaving impressions – one might walk away from a one-sided conversation agreeing the ball gown is 'a lovely young lady'.

Impressionable, Very Charming, Well-Bred.
Manners, Impressionism +2.

Zombie

Zombies take considerable punishment before they succumb to their injuries. If a zombie infects a human, that person becomes a zombie in a number of days.

Strong, Very Tough, Slow, Unpleasant, Ugly.
Hardiness +2, Biting.

Rabid Dog

Dogs sometimes defend their master against a zombie attack, taking a bite not meant for them. They are rewarded for their loyalty ... by death! When they find prey they howl to draw nearby undead.

Strong, Fast, Unpleasant, Ugly.
Tracking +2, Biting.

Ghoul

Ghouls are faster, more vicious zombies. Ignore the first wound they take in each round.

Very Strong, Tough, Fast, Unpleasant, Ugly.
Intimidation +2, Tracking, Clawing.



A lovesick youth carries his zombie-bitten friend.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE: A SETTING ON ONE PAGE

This campaign takes place in the world described by Shakespeare. A Moorish general sulks in Venice while lovers slip into the Athenian woods. Fair Verona is fair torn apart in the savage war between two families and Prospero waits for a chance – any chance – to reclaim the title and lands that are rightfully his. Nor is Prospero the only one with ambitions, for a hoary king plots to wrestle his kingdom from his daughters by war or murder.

ABILITIES (DISABILITIES): Strong (Weak), Tough (Sickly), Clever (Dense), Wise (Foolish), Agile (Clumsy), Fast (Slow), Charming (Unpleasant), Attractive (Ugly). Agile includes Dexterous in this setting.

RECOMMENDED SKILLS: Governing, Controlling Spirits, Gambling, Seduction, Befriending Animals, Athletics, Craft, Disguise, Manners, Lies, Gossip, Guns, Swordfighting, Daggerfighting, Axefighting, Dodging, Blocking, Intimidation, Seeing Things as They Truly Are, Foolery, Warcraft, Riding, Street-smarts, Sailing, Stealth, Woodlore, Knowledge of Distant Places.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

Tale of Woo

Othello, a charming general from Venice, is looking for a wife and the characters are all eligible young ladies or owe favours to those ladies. Though the ball is pretty and all its guests are civilised, some maidens will do anything to win such a blessed husband.

Something Rotten

A prince of Denmark, sick of the scheming and bloodshed of the Old World, plans to take his court – including the hapless characters – to the New World. The prince's loyal subjects must first convince the equivocating prince to settle on a course of action and then ensure that royal assassins, ghosts and scalp-hunting Indians do not divert him from his goal.

The Royal Succession

King Lear has had enough trouble with his three rebellious daughters, but now Britain seems to be suffering from a surfeit of princes: Edward, Hal and his irrepressible companion Falstaff, the Duke of Bedford and Pericles all claim to be next in line to the throne.

Sample Characters

Caliban

Very Strong, Very Tough, Ugly.
Woodlore, Blocking, Intimidation, Stealth.

Puck

Very Fast, Very Clever, Foolish.
Knowledge of Distant Places, Woodlore, Flight +2.

The Fool

Very Wise, Clever.
Seeing Things as They Truly Are +2, Foolery +2, Gossip.

Juliet

Very Attractive, Charming, Foolish.
Seduction, Daggerfighting +2, Capulet Secrets.

A Witch

Very Charming, Clever, Wise, Ugly.
Prophecy +2, Seduction, Woodlore, Intimidation.

