BASIC V2B

Tabletop Roleplaying System
By Bryant Baxter

Under Construction

Index

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Chapter 0 – Example of Play

Johnny is going to a popular nightclub and wants to get in without having to wait in that tiring line. Seeing the bouncer minding the line he walks up and tries to slip him a 50 dollar bill (but will it work?).

[Johnny attempts to "slyly manipulate" the bouncer – Johnny rolls 2D6 base dice + 1 bonus die from talents + 3 bonus dice given by the GM for slipping The Bouncer 50.00$ = base dice roll a 4 and 2 (no proficiency), bonus dice roll a total of 12 for a grand total of 18.]

[The Bouncer is never interested in letting people in and rolls 2D6 base dice + 1 bonus dice from talents for a total of 15 to defend. The Bouncer has no armour. Johnny deals 3 damage to The Bouncer]

Johnny *[,having dealt damage to the bouncer,]* cooly slides the money into his palm and is let into the club.

The club is as cool as advertized and pretty soon Johnny's eye is caught by a lovely lady sitting at the bar. Johnny slides up beside her and begins to lay on the charm

[Johnny now attempts to "casually seduce" the lovely lady – Johnny rolls 2D6 base dice + 1 bonus die from talents = base dice roll 6 and 5 (no proficiency), 6 explodes rolling 6, which explodes again rolling 3, bonus die rolls a 2 for a grand total of 22]

[The lovely lady doesn't get seduced easily and rolls 2D6 base dice for defence and has an armour total of 20 against social seduction (which is basically the same as casually seduce) for a total of 10 defence, Johnny deals 12 damage to The Lovely Lady but she spends 12 of her armour stat to negate it.]

Johnny *[, having not dealt damage,]* gains her attention and throws his seductive pitch but fails to garner her full interest.

The Boyfriend sees this transaction and becomes enraged at Johnny, stomps over and decides to pop Johnny in the beezer.

[Combat is getting complicated so both players roll "reflexive initiative", Johnny rolls 9 and The Boyfriend rolls 7 johnny goes first.]

[Johnny holds his action to see what the boyfriend does...]

The Boyfriend attacks Johnny with his meaty fist.

[Johnny, getting clever, decides to act at the same time.]

Johnny takes the opportunity to try to charm The Lovely Lady again while-and-by rolling with the punches, causing a stir, and making her boyfriend look like a chump.

[Johnny rolls an 18 to casually seduce. The Lovely Lady has 10 defence and spends her 7 remaining armour but still takes 1 damage]

[The Boyfriend rolls 20 damage to physically attack with Fist. Johnny has 10 defence and 10 armour from talents; Johnny spends all his armour and takes no damage.]

Johnny, rolling with The Boyfriend's attacks, gives the wink and gun to The Lovely Lady, who giggles at the attention. The Bouncer, seeing the scene grabs *[Grapple action success]* The Boyfriend *[who tries to press to escape but fails]* and throws him out of the bar *[press to throw him out: success]*.

Johnny, basking in the glory of social victory, spends the rest of the night with The Lovely Lady.

Chapter 1 - The Caste System

1.1 - Characters, Challenges and Capacities

A Caste character is, as an entity, capable of action and defined by some assumed principles (An inanimate object would also have assumed principles but is incapable of action). We define these principles not with numeric rules but with a pre-existing understanding of what occurs when the character happens into any given environment.

Additionally, Caste defines that every difficult scenario (known as a challenge) has similar principles.

Caste then defines the characters' abilities to avoid undesirable ends and, if able to act, expend energy in the form of capacity stats. These are meant to represent a character's / challenge's endurance and, for those who act, the ability to push themselves to success.

Gotta Have Character: In the Caste system, any single entity capable of action is considered a "character".

Take the Challenge: Likewise, in the Caste system any concept that would be difficult to achieve outright (including opposing another character) is considered a "challenge". (For example: appraising rare artifacts, picking a lock).

Nature of Being: All things in Caste (and any other system for that matter) are defined by their "nature of being". This nature defines how any specific thing, when deprived of any senses, theoretically functions and where or how it would be unable to interact with the physical, mental, and spiritual space in which it exists. It is a sort of catch all logic for every question that is not covered within the system's ruleset and is generated from description and player understanding of the thing itself. (For example: Though Caste nowhere says so: a human cannot breathe underwater, a big square block cannot fit in the small round hole, and vampires are hurt by blessed water.)

Naturally Unnatural Stuff: Generally speaking: the removal of any human weaknesses by being something inhuman is usually offset by some other factor (for example: the fire spirit can swim in lava but can die if it gets too cold). Being mindful of a non-human's nature of being can make for much more interesting characters and may be all that is needed to define them. Natures of a character or concept that can not be entirely taken for granted should be described on its description/character sheet under nature of being.

The Product of Consumption: Choices of diet; biological by-products such as poison, waste, or children; and other natural processes are also defined by nature of being.

Hazards: Often as a result of their nature of being a character will sometimes find themselves in situations where their environment works against them; these situations are called "hazards".

Capacity Stats: In Caste a "capacity stat" represents some sort of internal resource that can be used by its owner. It is a type of statistic that, in addition to keeping track of its total, records how much a character has spent of that statistic. This is usually done in the form of "current capacity" / "maximum capacity". Current capacity describes the remaining points left unspent and maximum capacity describes the total stat the owner has. (For example: if a character had the capacity stat "armour" at 14/30 they would have 14 remaining points of armour to spend from their maximum of 30.)

Armour up: Armour is a capacity stat that measures a character's resistance to successful actions from undesired sources. A challenge's armour is spent to reduce any eliminate any overflow damage applied from a successful action against them (see section 1.2 - Actions and the Check Roll). Armour of a given challenge is determined arbitrarily by the GM based on the tediousness of the task. For characters, it can also be attained by various other means such as talents and equipment (to be discussed later).

Armourous: All characters have, as a standard, 10 armour.

Essence: Essence is a capacity stat that measures a character's ability to push themself beyond their limit. It is spent in various ways and fully replenishes whenever a character has had a chance to rest.

The essence of PC: All characters have, as a standard, 10 Essence.

1.2 - Actions and the Check Roll

Here we explain that characters can take actions, that these action options are defined by a character's nature, and how those actions are organized using verbal descriptions called "castes".

The Caste system uses this method to allow players the freedom to chose their own skill actions rather then being pigeon holed into a small group of traits that have to accommodate an uncountable array of options. Further, because the system does not generally allow castes to overlap, the Caste system creates an environment where players must choose between specialization and generalization such that no choice produces a character that is actually more powerful then another.

This section also defines how actions will often be restricted for various reasons to either impede or give characters more specialization. Restrictions were designed in a non-negative way in order to allow characters to create easily manufactured flaws for themselves (and others) and be rewarded for these flaws in a way that is difficult to abuse.

Finally, this section covers the main mechanical nature of the system and its means of dealing with chance. Caste uses multiple sources of 6 sided dice in various ways to accumulate a large total which is compared to the challenge and determined if success occurs. When success does occur the succeeding strike mechanic is / was designed to allow a character to briefly take the role of GM and give their character the much desired limelight.

I am an Actor: In Caste any character, as a standard, can perform an uncountable array of "actions". An action is some mobile, thoughtful, or social function that can occur as a result of a character manipulating their own self in order to achieve some outcome. This, of course, implies that without certain understood traits, defined by their nature of being, a character cannot act.

Humanity at Best: A character's nature cannot allow that character to perform actions outside the realm of a human (such as fly) without additional means attained through various sources (such as talents or equipment).

The World in Castes: The Caste system organizes all actions by giving each action a "caste". A caste is a [descriptive clause]+[verb] combination that defines the nature of the action. Examples include: physical attack, computer hacking, heraldic thought.

I Like Castes: Castes of the same nature whose [descriptive clause] +[verb] combination is different are treated as being the same caste for all relevant situations (For example: "deftly hiding" and "personal sequestering" would, for most conceivable purposes, be considered the same caste of action).

Effective Management: Each individual numeral that the Caste system uses to determine the successful outcome of an action or how the action can be applied is called an "effect".

Restrictions: Many actions (among other things) in Caste will be further defined by one or many "restrictions". In Caste a restriction is defined as: A specific non-negative situation under which an entire entity's (action) effects will be relevant (for example: physical attack -with sword-). Restrictions are made by the player when it becomes necessary to produce one.

Don't Take me for Granted: Restrictions that modify an entity cannot already be inherent to the entity (for example: computer hacking -with computer-); nor can they be a universal trait taken for granted by the setting or players (for example: physical attack -while the earth is round-).

Don't be Negative: Restrictions that imply a lack of penalty (such as "while well rested", or "while free to move") are not valid.

Preconditional Aftershock: Restrictions can affect the period before or after the action takes place (for example: long recharge: requires 1 round to pass before the action can be used again)

Stacking the Deck: Some types of restriction (generally ones that use numbers) can be cumulative such that when taken multiple times they become more and more cumbersome (for example: deals 1D6 physical damage to actor). This is called "stacking " a restriction.

The Rule of 1, 5, 10, 20: When applying multiple of the same restriction that can stack (for example: "+1 turn to Cooldown") any bonuses granted to the entity through restriction only apply on the first, the fifth, the tenth, and the twentieth instance of that restriction. Bonuses that become more restrictive in reverse (such as requires reload action after x turns) work with the first feasible restriction starting at twenty and progressing through the number order in reverse.

Action Satisfaction: In Caste when a character wants to perform an action they must: declare the caste of action they are going to use, the target if necessary, the desired outcome (which must make sense with regard to the action), and whether any restrictions are being applied to the action.

Challenge Accepted: If the action is determined to be a challenge, the acting character must defeat that challenge in order for their action to be successful.

Safeguard: A character who is being acted against may always choose to defend. A defence is considered "active" if that character is choosing to defend while also being properly aware of the action against them.

Base Dice for Damage: To defeat a challenge a character must deal one or more damage to that challenge without it being defended. As a standard; all Caste characters, when performing any action, get two "base dice" of 1D6 damage to deal that much to their challenge.

Loaded to Explode: Base dice "explode" when a given die rolls 6+ (6 or more). This means that whenever a base die explodes it takes its current total, rolls another die which can explodes in the same way, and adds that roll to its total (repeating if the die explodes again). The final total counts as the number rolled for that one die.

Base Dice for Defence: All characters (and challenges) also gain two 1D6 damage base dice when performing a defensive action. Defensive base dice are always assumed to roll 5 and will negate that much of an opponent's incoming damage.

It's a dud?: Defensive base dice never explode.

Bonus Dice: Characters and challenges can receive bonus dice of 1D6 damage to their actions from various sources (for challenges this represent the difficulty of the challenge assigned by the GM). These dice are treated just like base dice (for attack and defence) but do not explode.

Get Stacked: All of an action's relevant dice (bonus and/or base) gained from a character's various sources (all situational, talents and equipment) are all added ("stack") together when performing their chosen action.

If You Want These Lumps: Any time a character would need to roll 5 bonus dice, that character may instead group those die rolls into a single "lump" roll. The lump die is rolled instead and its result now becomes the value that each of those 5 bonus dice receive.

All the Right Type: Each bonus die must be labeled with a "type". A type is an indicator of the nature of the bonus die's damage and becomes important when comparing to certain restricted defences. A sword, for example, may have the type "slashing" for its dice, implying how the sword operates. Likewise a character's skill at climbing might grant him "skill" type damage for their respective dice.

I Like Types: Just like castes, eerily similar types are treated as being the same type. (For example "slashing" and "cutting")

The Story Bonus: Actions by characters are entitled to a number of bonus dice, granted arbitrarily by the GM, and based on the quality of the proposed actions description and/or additional content (such as dialogue) accompanying the action. This is called "The Story Bonus".

Quantifying the Story: GM's should give out between 1D6 and 5D6 [story] bonus dice based on the following rubric:

> *1D6* – The character added some extra description beyond the basics and/or added some dialogue.
>
> *3D6* – The character has added exceptional description or some compelling new dialogue.
>
> *5D6* – The character has added both of the above and the additions have greatly improved the experience of the players.

Hindering: A character may chose to "hinder" another character's action using their own chosen action provided it is capable of doing so. "Hinder with [action]" is its own caste of action (seperate from the chosen action itself) that subtracts any overflow damage (damage in excess of the to-be-hindered character's defences) from that to-be-hindered character's total.

Hinderception: Defend against "hinder with [action]" is also its own caste of action.

Succeeding Strike: When an action is successful, the acting character makes what is called a "succeeding strike". It is at this point the acting character may re-describe their action, elaborating the exact outcome, and giving it any desired additional flourish up to what is the maximum possibility of the action. For example: using acrobatic maneuvers to avoid buzzsaws will not generally allow a character to destroy the buzzsaws but will allow the character to maneuver in such a way that they land right where the turn off switch is and look damn cool doing it.

Hazard Pay: Characters or challenges that find themselves within a hazard automatically suffer the hazard's effect. This is not an action and characters do not get to defend. Bonus dice and armour whose castes are relevant apply their effect against the hazard (for example: defence against physical attack may help against a pit of spikes but will not help against a raging fire).

Swooning: Any successful physical assault against a character does not automatically kill the target; instead the defeated character is "Swooned". Characters who are swooned are unable to act and are, for the most part, completely immobile. Depending on the nature of the succeeding strike made against them the swooned character may make a natural recovery, but generally they have suffered a mortal wound and will die without medical aid.

Die Die Die: Assaulting a swooned character is generally very easy and results in the death of the assaulted character.

OBLITERATION: When an action is successful such that the defending challenge has suffered more overflow damage than they have [total defence bonus from base dice] + [any armour points the challenge has spent this turn against that caste of action] the acting character has "OBLITERATED" the challenge. In such a situation the acting character may make a succeeding strike that goes beyond what is generally possible with the action (but not beyond reasonable natural law) provided they can explain how it was accomplished. For example: acrobatic maneuvers to avoid buzzsaws can destroy the buzzsaws with the right description).

Just Die: Characters who have OBLITERATED another character need not limit themselves to simply swooning the defeated character (explode his head with your fist if you want!).

Module 1.2.1 – Simplicities

The Simplicities Module was created as a way to define both brutally difficult tasks and a character's absolute mastery of any given skill. Mechanically speaking, it also serves as an alternative mechanic to the standard dice bonuses and can make game-play MUCH faster.

Simplicities are a module rather than part of the core system for two reasons: First because they are subtractive (they remove numbers rather than add them) and second because they require extra steps before a die roll to accommodate them. In short: The simplicities module is somewhat cumbersome for newer players but adds a new dimension to the game proper and is often used in other modules that eliminate dice all together.

Simple is...: At times both characters and challenges will be faced with circumstances where their actions (or defenses) are seen as particularly easy. In these situations a character or challenge is given a "simplicity" to that action.

Hardly Ineffective: A simplicity is an indirect bonus granted by situation and is not an "effect" and cannot be modified/enhanced as such.

As Simple Does: An entity with one simplicity reduces its challenge's (opponents) total base and bonus dice rolled by ½ rounded up. A second simplicity eliminates the opponents dice completely. Further simplicities add an additional bonus die (of a justifiable damage type, chosen/created at time of action) to your roll.

Cross Cannibalism: Simplicities between opposing entities cancel each other out (one for one).

Essentially Simple: A character may spend 1 essence to negate a simplicity for that action.

1.3 - Status Effects

In this section we explain that status effects exist, to whom they can be applied in an action, that actions that apply them apply all status effects they produce as a single blob, how a status' potency defines a status' duration by determining how long they endure against breakdown and finally that breakdown occurs when doubles are rolled on base dice and that it reduces all of a status' potency.

The Caste system chose the breakdown mechanic over individual status durations for two main reasons. First, to eliminate cumbersome bookkeeping and second, the breakdown mechanic creates a sense of tension in each base die roll, ultimately making the die rolling system mechanic into a more interesting ordeal.

Status Effects: In Caste there are certain actions that, in addition to damage, produce a "status effect". Status effects from an action are bonuses or penalties applied without the action having to be completely successful. Actions apply their status effects to their chosen target if their defence is breached (even if armour was spent to negate overflow damage) and persist until they are removed.

Target Locked: The target of a status effect is either the actor or the target of the action and is determined when the source of the effect is created.

The Full Monty: All individual status effects to be applied from a single source are accumulated and applied as a single lump status effect upon its target each time that source would apply status effects (for example: "Bloody Fire Attack" causes a "bleeding" and "on fire" status effect when status would be applied. When this happens the target receives a single "bloody fire" status that applies both as a single status effect. Every time "Bloody Fire Attack" applies status a new "bloody fire" status is added to the target).

Potent Status: Status effects will sometimes be classed by "potency". A status' potency defines how long a status will endure over time. Standard potency for most status effects is 1 and should be noted and altered when appropriate. When a status' potency is less than one the status is lifted.

No Loitering: A status effect that no longer provides any bonus (capacities spent etc...) is removed.

BREAKDOWN: Unless otherwise stated in a status' description, whenever a character rolls doubles on the first base dice rolled in a turn, each status effect affecting that character must remove from themselves the doubled number in potency (for example: two 4's rolled means 4 potency). Characters who take no actions (or for some reason are not rolling two base dice) still roll their two base dice for the purposes of the breakdown rule. Outside of battle it can be assumed status effects will fall off automatically after about a minute (10 turns).

Potency Breakdown Example: *Plague has a potency of 5, haste a potency of 2; a breakdown of 3 occurs removing three potency from plague, leaving it at potency 2 and 3 from Haste, removing its potency, and lifting the status. Later, a breakdown of 4 occurs, meaning that the two remaining potency is removed from Plague and the status is lifted.)*

Keepin' it Together: A character may spend one essence to, when breakdown occurs, reduce the potency removed from a given status effect by one. Any status that provides bonus essence can never be saved from the breakdown rule.

1.4 - Time and Space

In this section we define Caste's Turn. The turn is a somewhat unique method of accounting for both time and distance. In terms of time a turn is about 1/10 of a minute and with regard to distance it is an ambiguous amount that can be traveled by an average person in that time.

We chose this method, though seemingly complex, for a few reasons: the primary one being that even in situations where we were using definitive distances, this method of spacial bookkeeping was subconsciously being applied anyway through the use of arbitrary distance judgments by the GM. The other reason was that, using this method, a GM did not have to really account for various hindrances of terrain with hard numbers but rather simply say "it will take 2 turns to move there".

Also we set in no unclear terms that multiple actions are NOT allowed!

Turns: The Caste system is organized into a series of "turns" (when necessary). A turn is used to define both lengths of time and distances of "range".

Turn of Time: With respect to time, a turn is approximately six seconds.

My Action: A character can only perform one action per turn.

Turn of Range: Caste defines a unit of range by the total distance that can be traveled by an average character during one turn of time. Range 0 is considered melee distance, and Range 1+ describes the number of turns it would normally take to reach that objective.

But... I'm a numbers guy: In situations or with players that can't handle more abstract concepts like those defined above: a turn of range is approximately 33meters or 100ft.

Movement: A character, as a standard, can move 1 turn of range during each turn of time. This value is defined as their "movement". During a turn characters may move in addition to performing their chosen action.

Move actions: Movement actions that are OBLITERATED without a complex succeeding strike or otherwise deemed insignificant do not count towards a characters use of action that turn (for example: picking up a pencil, or OBLITERATING an acrobatics action to avoid those buzzsaws.).

Hastes: A "haste" should be given for every situation that occurs where a character would receive a bonus to the rate of their action. For each haste a character has to their action, that character gains a bonus of 1/3 to the rate of that action (or the total die roll in certain situations such as reflexive initiative).

No You Can't: Multiple hastes to perform extra actions are <u>never</u> possible.

Slow at Fractions: In general, haste bonuses to movement are rounded down to the nearest whole. In situations of consistent, uninterrupted movement, fractal bonuses may accumulate from turn to turn until they complete a whole.

1.5 - Basic Combat and Special Actions

Caste handles combat in a pretty standard way: initiative, then actions in turn (round robin style) until combat ends. Unlike some other systems Caste sets initiative only once at the beginning of combat and allows players to manage their turn order by holding action. Doing this allows freedom to combo attacks and more easily create strategies between players.

Where Caste generally differs from other systems is its grappling/press system. This system states, more or less, that when you start grappling somebody you can then press the grapple to do more stuff or to escape, that both grapple and press are different actions, and you can't perform other actions while in a grapple. Caste chose this system of mechanics because it makes the understanding of the process easy, allowing a full array of grappling actions without individual rules for each. Grapple and press being separate was a choice made for balancing reasons (as well as some practical considerations) as grapples effectively halt another character's ability to respond outside the grapple mechanic and so requires twice the investment to be fully effective.

Initiative: When a complex combat situation first begins, Caste organizes each participating character into their "initiative" order so that they may take their actions one at a time. This is achieved by each character performing the "reflexive initiative" action, applying any difficulties, then ordering the character's from highest damage first to lowest last. This does not ever use up a characters action.

My Turn: A character, when it is their turn to act, can both move (+ move actions) and perform one action.

Not My Turn: A character may always act to defend against an action even if it is not their turn or they have acted already this turn.

Ending Turn: The turn officially ends when all participating characters have acted and effects resolved. A new turn is then started.

Holding Action: Rather than acting, a character can chose to "hold" their action and/or their movement to await a better opportunity. While holding and after hearing the actions of another character, the holding character may opt to go just before, or at the same time as, the acting character. At such time their new place in the initiative order is set and actions resolve as normal.

Rollerholder: Holding actions may continue through subsequent turns.

Grappling: All Caste characters, as a standard, can choose to engage in the physical attack action "grapple". Grappling is an action that includes the status effect "in a grapple" but has no direct effect for success and does not apply damage to armour. Holding equipment and encumbrance, among other factors, should apply difficulty to any attempt to grapple.

Hugs go Both Ways: Grappling characters who are successful in applying the status effect "in a grapple" are also immediately given the status effect "in a grapple".

Hey, I'm in a Grapple Here: Characters whom are "in a grapple" cannot perform any physical actions save for grappling press (or "press"). All characters, as a standard, can perform a press.

Can't lose the Grapple: The breakdown rule does not apply to the grapple status effect. It may only be removed using a press.

A Press-ing Concern: A press is an action that includes the status effect "applied pressure". Holding equipment and encumbrance, among other factors, should apply difficulty to any attempt to press.

Pressing the Advantage: A character who succeeded at the check to enter into the graple automatically gains two bonus dice to their next Press or defend vs. press action.

Pressure Guage: Characters who have contracted the "applied pressure" status effect are subject to one succeeding strike from the character who created that status. The "Applied Pressure" cannot be modified by any various means and is held in reserve by the status applying character until the press is used, the turn ends, or the conditions that created the press are no longer relevant. The succeeding strike from a press can generally re-position all actors in the grapple and can always include removing the "in a grapple" status.

Fleeing/Persueing: A character may opt to forgo their turn's action to run at full speed. Doing so earns the character a haste to their movement for that turn.

Module 1.5.1: Action Reaction

This module alters the basic combat system allowing for a more dynamic experience by putting more emphasis on characters' abilities to defend themselves from harm.

The reason that it is a module and not a part of the core system is that it, in many ways, requires a reverse way of thinking about combat situations that many players familiar with other systems find difficult to get used to. Also because it uses simplicities.

It's that Simple: This module employs the Simplicities module.

Fully Organized Battle

Hold the Line: All characters, regardless of their position within the order of initiative, are considered to already be holding their actions.

Action Reaction: At any time during the turn a character, even outside of their initiative order, may perform their movement and action normally. Movement and self-affecting effects from actions take place immediately as normal. Any effects that affect other targets or the environment do not manifest until the character's official turn to act.

Boom: Any rolls made to perform these actions carry over until that action properly manifests.

Artful Dodger: When moving to avoid an action and potential to escape harm is in doubt, apply a simplicity to the defence of the targeted character if that action could potentially be avoided by that character's maneuver.

First in Last Out: Once a character's official turn to move and act has passed they are considered to be holding their action once again.

1.6 - The Power of Essence

Here we discuss many of the uses for essence and how initiative determines conflict resolution with regard to simultanious essence spending.

Giving uses for essence outside of restriction costs and uses within other modules allows players to be more involved with their character's actions while also giving the Essence stat the ability to fill the Jack-of-all-Trades niche.

Overdrive: A player may spend as much essence in a turn as they please. These expenditures are non-reducible..

Temporal Essence: When multiple characters are spending essence simultaneously the character with the lowest initiative decides first how much they will spend followed by next lowest, etc. Same initiative means the defender decides first.

Hooper Nelson: A character may spend one essence before an action to add a bonus die to that action against a single target.

Break: A character may spend one essence to remove a level of potency from a status. If the status only has 1 potency remove it completely (This is not BREAKDOWN).

Second Wind: Once per turn a character may spend one essence to restore a base die roll (2D6, exp6) in armour when it first becomes their turn to act. Second Wind is a modifiable action.

Where's Waldo: Additional functions of one essence can be found in various modules.

Keepin' it Together: A character may spend one essence to, when breakdown occurs, reduce the potency removed from a given status effect by one. Any status that provides bonus essence can never be saved from the breakdown rule.

Chapter 2 – Creating a Character

2.1 - Creating a Character

The following is the step-by-step guide on how to build a character and quick aids to help players create the talents and equipment quickly.

Holy Sheet: The Caste character and their representative sheet contains a Name, Nature, Description (and Alignment), Armour, Essence, Talents, and Equipment.

Start With a Name: It is more important step in building a character is giving them a name. After that, a description of who they are and what they DO. This will allow a player to take direction and chose from the infinite options that are arrayed before them.

Basic Assumptions of Nature: It is assumed that your character will be a human with two arms, two legs, and a pulse. Any deviations from this norm should be noted in the character's nature of being (when applicable).

Beyond Nature: Any deviations that provide stats, access to beyond human castes of action. or bonus dice to actions must be defined using talents. (see module 3.3.3 – Natural Talents)

Dissin' the Scribe: After names and natures a character needs a description. Take an opportunity to generalize the starting direction of your character. Doing this will help ground you when you start buying talents later on.

Module 2.1.1 – Alignment

This module adds the 3 axis alignment to the character description as an additional way to describe your characters personality.

Three Axis: A characters personality can be roughly defined by three axis: Energy, Conformity, and Morality.

Energy: The energy defines a characters willingness to take action and consists of three positions:

Apathetic: Characters do little and require great motivation to act. Apathetic characters are the sort to suggest to others what needs to be done (or even suggest that somebody suggest something) rather than do it themselves.

Neutral: Neutral characters will take action to achieve things that they find important but little else.

Zealous: Zealous Characters will take the initiative and always attempt to move to leadership positions. They are driven towards their goals and often have the energy to take on the goals of others.

Conformity: The Conformity axis defines a character's willingness to follow an imposed order and consists of three positions:

Lawful: Lawful characters take great pains to follow the rules of society and will often take exception to people who don't. In places where structures may not exist the character will often erect their own.

Neutral: Neutral characters will obey the laws and follow them when it "works" for them but have no qualms about ignoring them when its inconvenient.

Chaotic: Chaotic characters don't subscribe to social laws, do what they think is the right thing in the most convenient way, and don't expect others to listen or follow any sort of structures either.

Morality: The Morality axis defines a character's moral adjustment and consists of three positions:

Good: You are a person of sympathy and empathy. Good characters desire the betterment of others and will act towards that end even if it comes at the expense of self.

Neutral: You are a person of general good will. Neutral characters will help others if it doesn't inconvenience themselves too greatly but likewise will exploit a situation when the gains are sufficient.

Evil: You are a person of contempt and self service. Evil characters act on their base desires and have no qualms with hurting or exploiting others for their personal gain.

Starting Armour: Characters always start with 10 armour. The effects of talents and equipment determine if you have more.

Starting Essence: Characters always start with 10 essence. The effects of talents and equipment determine if you have more.

Starting Points: A starting Caste characters generally starts with 15 character points to purchase their initial talents. The GM, of course, can change this number at the beginning of the game

Buying Talents: Each talent costs 1 character point. The process for building talents can be found step-by-step in section "3.2 – Let's Build Talents"

Starting Money: Caste characters generally start with 1000 monies to purchase their equipment.

Ignore the Minutia: When starting out, character purchases should be at base cost (ignoring markups, labour, etc...).

Building Equipment: As equipment costs are based on what the equipment does it stands to reason that it must be built before it can be purchased. The Process for building equipment can be found step-by-step in section "4.2 – Let's Build Equipment".

2.1.2 - Fast Talent Trees

This is a list of generic talents with built in generic restrictions to make character creation even faster. All you need to do is decide on the caste to be represented and write down the name of the talent with "(FT)" after to determine that it is using the Fast Talent tree. At the end of the talent list there is a formula to determine the total bonus received from the quantity of each talent you have purchased.

"XxX" = Chosen Caste

L0 - XxX Proficiency (FT)[Proficiency]
Description: Basic training in XxX
Effect: Base dice for XxX explode on a 4 rather than 6 (or, when defending, opponents first explosion is cancelled).

L1 - XxX Mastery (FT)[Mastery]
Description: Advanced training at XxX.
Restrictions: Must still have remaining essence capacity.
Effect: +2D6 [skill] damage to physical attack

L2 - XxX Overdrive (FT)[Core]
Description: Able to push yourself to focus harder on XxX.
Restrictions: Must still have remaining essence capacity, 1 turn cooldown.
Effect: +9 essence to XxX actions.

Note: The following talents use the "additional talent types" module

L3 - XxX Refinement (FT)[Abstract]
Description: when focusing, XxX actions are ingrained into your core being.
Restrictions: Must still have remaining essence capacity, 1 turn cooldown, apply cost (1 essence) for XxX action.
Effect: +simplicity to XxX actions.

Bonus Totals:
L0 = Proficiency;
L1 = +2D6 x (# Taken) [skill damage];
L2 = +9 x (# Taken) essence;
L3 = +1 x (# Taken) simplicities.

2.1.3 – Fast Equipment Armoury

This is just a small generic list of the most simplistic types of equipment to make character creation even faster. All you need to do is decide on the name of the Article and the caste that the numbers are applicable to.

"XxX" or "YyY" = Chosen Caste

Basic Gear

Small [NAME]
Effect: +2D6 [TYPE] damage to XxX
cost: 200 monies (20 monies if consumable)

Medium [NAME]
Effect: +5D6 [TYPE] damage to XxX
Cost: 500 monies (50 monies if consumable)

Large 2 hander [NAME]
Effect: +10D6 [TYPE] damage to XxX
Cost: 1000 monies (100 monies if consumable)

Armour

Light [NAME] armour
Effect: +30 armour to XxX
Cost: 300 monies (30 monies if consumable)

Medium [NAME] armour
Effect: +60 armour to XxX
Cost: 600 monies (60 monies if consumable)

Heavy [NAME] armour
Effect: +100 armour to XxX
Cost: 1000 monies (100 monies if consumable)

Explosive

Small Splash [Name]
Restrictions: Indiscriminate blast.
Effect: +2D6 [TYPE] damage, +2 targets
Cost: 325 monies (33 monies if consumable)

Big Splash [NAME]
Restrictions: Indiscriminate blast.
Effect: 5D6 [TYPE] damage, +5 targets, Range 1
Cost: 1025 monies (103 monies if consumable)

Multi-function

Small [NAME] Multi-tool
Effect: 2D6 [TYPE] damage to XxX, 3D6 [TYPE] damage to YyY
Cost: 500 monies (50 monies if consumable)

Big [NAME] Multi-tool
Effect: 4D6 [TYPE] damage to XxX, 6D6 [TYPE] damage to YyY
Cost: 1000 monies (100 monies if consumable)

Chapter 3 - Talents

3.1 - Concept

Talents are truly the heart of the Caste system's character generation. When players have a character point to spend on their character the player will be spending that point to create another talent for the character.

This section defines a talent, that it always costs one character point, how the talent's effects are lumped with similar talents to produce one source of effects, and the step-by-step process of how to actually create that talent from scratch.

Caste's talent system was chosen over a tabled leveling system for its fluidity as well as it's more frequent and smooth improvement curve. The effect point system is accompanied by the restriction limits per level mechanic and were chosen in consort with each other to simplify the talent creating process. Together they aim to provide a wide array of choices while also productively limiting player options for lower level talents (thus balancing the strength of casual players vs. restrictomancers).

You've Got Talent: In Caste, the strengths and abilities that define a character's uniqueness are exemplified by their "talents". Talents come in various types with differing effects that give your character bonuses to doing the things they do.

Training Up: Talents are acquired by characters through the spending of "character points". Character points are are simply a count of how many talents you can purchase and are acquired via two methods: Character creation (starting characters are generally 15 points), and in-game rewards (Which are given by the GM).

How Much is That Talent in the Window: All talents cost one character point to acquire.

The Source of My Talent: Bonus dice from talents which share the same Caste and restrictions count as coming from a single source. (For example: "Gunner" using [physical attack] with [gun] as its caste and restriction will be from the same source as "pistoleer" which employs [physical attack] with [gun]. It will not share a source with "gun-slasher" that uses [physical attack] with [sword] and [gun] as its chosen caste and restrictions.)

3.2 - Let's Build Talents:

Because talents come in a nearly infinite variety, it is the job of the character owner to create these talents when they are purchased and record them upon their character sheets.

This section goes through the talent creating process step-by-step.

Producing a talent requires the following steps:

The Lazy Way: If you don't want to read through the step-by-step of how to build a talent you can simply use section "2.1.2 – Fast Talent Trees" as a template to quickly create talents.

Cashing In: First you need one character point to spend. If you do not have one, find a way to get one. You only need one per talent.

Do or Do Not: Now that we have a character point we can build a talent. As all the possibilities are before us, we need to determine what exactly our goal is for this talent and/or what we want it to do.

Casting in Stone: We can then take our new-found talent concept and decide whether or not it will be given a Caste (The [Descriptive Clause]+[Verb] to which the talent is associated). Giving the talent a caste will limit the scope of its effect to only that caste of action but will broaden your options with respect to the types of effects that can be taken.

On the Level: Next we need to figure out what level we should make this talent.

Elevator – Going Up: Level starts at 0 and goes to 10.

Level with me: A talent's level is decided by the talent creator at creation and is a determinant of how many restrictions that talent can take. A TALENT MY ONLY HAVE AS MANY RESTRICTIONS AS ITS TOTAL LEVEL.

Restrict to win: For every restriction within a talent, that talent gains an effect point.

Restrictmas Bonus: Effect points are accumulated and spent on the effects choices listed in section 2.3 – Talent Effect Store.

The Missing Link: Talents higher then level 0 that can't link to other talents are going to cause penalties to any actions they are modifying during the game (see section 2.2 Linking and Talent Trees).

Broad Specialization: Now that we have determined the talent's level, we get to choose restrictions

Restriction Recap: A restriction is a specific non-negative situations under which an entire talents effects will be relevant (for more information re-visit section 1.2 – Actions and the Check Roll).

The Rule of 1, 5, 10, 20: When applying multiple of the same restriction that can stack (for example: "+1 turn to Cooldown") any bonuses granted to the entity through restriction only apply on the first, the fifth, the tenth, and the twentieth instance of that restriction. Bonuses that become more restrictive in reverse (such as requires reload action after x turns) work with the first feasible restriction starting at twenty and progressing through the number order in reverse.

Sample Restrictions (REMEMBER: You can make your own!)

Only when X: The action is only effective when used in a specific situation.

Material Component [type]: The action requires a specific reagent of no less than 1 monies to function. The reagent is consumed each time the action is performed.

Focus [Item]: The Action requires another article of equipment to function of no less than 100 monies.

X-Turn Reload: After so many uses, the action requires a complete turn's movement OR an action to be spent in order to be effective again. (Stacking works in reverse 20-10-5-1)

Long Reload +1: If the "X-Turn Reload" restriction was taken, the action is complex and requires an additional action of finicky reloading process/maintenance to make it ready for effective use again.

+1 Turn to Cool Down: The action requires time after use (and maintenance) in order to become effective again.

Fails on 2 (4,6,10): The action is pretty unstable and fails to be effective if base dice roll a 2 or less. Stacking this effect adds a +2 (on the 5th), then +4(on the 10th), then +8 (on the 20th restriction) to the number necessary for failure.

Lethal: Only for actions that are able to kill. The action has little finesse, it cannot reduce the lethality of an obliteration, the damage of a strike, or whether an attack swoons or not.

Essence Focused: Actions of this nature are difficult to use and require the character to have spent at least 1 essence that turn without effect.

Attunement: This action is particularly complex and requires the devotion of a permanent Essence to be effective. Attuned essence counts as used up if un-attuned. Attuning essence is an action that takes 8 hours.

Backblast: The action is unstable and causes 1D6 automatic overflow physical attack damage to the user.

Bonus Round: Now that we have our talent, we get to add our effect points. The number of restrictions we took determines how many effects we get to add. See "Section 3.4 – Talent Effect Store" for the list of effects.

The Caste Bonus: If your talent is level 1 or greater and has a Caste of action you automatically gain an effect point. Nice!

The Price of Progress: Each effect has a cost indicating how many effect points are required for you to purchase it for your talent.

Starting at your roots: Certain effect choices will require that the talent have a caste. If this requisite is not met then you cannot choose that effect.

Level 0 Choices: Level 0 talents, having no effect points, may only choose one option designated as a "Level 0 choice". Higher level talents must spend bonus points on the effect when described in the cost section of any given effect choice.

Cost: Now that effects are chosen we determine and take note of the talents cost (if any). Only in certain instances such as restrictions (or modules) will some talents have a cost. When this is so, the character using the talent must expend its cost for the talent to be effective that turn.

What's in a Name: Finally, we must decide what we should call the talent. Generic names like "X" proficiency or "X" mastery are more than suitable for basic talent choices. Flashy sounding ones are way cooler for unique and complex talents.

Hello World!: Look you have just finished your talent... if you are a new character only 14 more to go!

Structure in Summation

Name: This is the name that you have given your talent. [this may also be a good place to put the talent's level.]
Description: This is a brief description of the talent in your words. This description may be relevant in judgment calls concerning when this talent is relevant (and able to contribute its effect).
Restriction: These are the restrictions on the Talent.
Effect: This is the compilation of caste and effects that you have chosen for this talent.
Link: This is an indication of which talent this talent was linked from (when applicable. See section 2.2 – Linking and Talent Trees).
Cost: This is where you list any costs (generally essence, components, etc...) needed to activate your talent.

3.3 – Linking and Talent Trees

This section is likely the most problematic and cumbersome section of the Caste book. If you grasp these concepts then you will ease through any other.

In this section we discuss that talents can and must be linked together to avoid penalty, that they link though their caste and by sharing restrictions, that purchasing higher level talents requires a broad foundation of other talents and that one cannot link high level talent to much lower level talents.

We also tell you at the end that you can just throw those guidelines away and take a penalty.

Mostly these linking rules were chosen to create a natural progression to powerful talent options. We also allow players to ignore these requirements to allow for unique character archetypes that may not have such smooth progression curves.

Link to the Past: One of the major foundations of the Caste system is its use of talents and the linking of one talent to another. As was previously mentioned, a talent's level represents the its inherent difficulty and what sort of knowledge is required to understand that talent. A talent link represents a character's current knowledge (an existing talent) acting as the foundation for newly learned skills (the new talent).

The Talent Tree: By connecting one talent to another (and again to yet another talent, ad infinitum,) you have created a "talent tree".

There are Rrrules: The purchasing of any talent beyond level 0 (Which does not need to be linked) requires that characters meet all the following rules before that talent can be considered "linked":

Figure 3.3.1 - Talent Linking Visual

Talent Linking Rules

Branching the Link: A talent may only have one link from another talent to itself, but may have unlimited links from itself to other talents.

PK Linking: Linked talents must share a caste (or lack of caste) AND half (rounded up) of the lower level talent's restriction choices used to acquire their effect points.

The Pillar: A talent may only link from other talents of one level lower or greater (for example: a level 4 talent may link from a talent of level 3 or greater.)

The Speed Bump: A character may only create a link to a talent whose level is no greater than 5 times the total number to talents that character possesses. For example: Linking to a level 0 talent would theoretically require a total of 0 talents, level 3 would require 15 talents, and level 8 would require 40 talents, etc...

The Wall: Characters may not link more talents of a given level then they have talents of a lower level. For example: A character cannot have five level 2 talent links without having at least five level 1 talents.

The Chain: A talent can only be linked from a Level 0 talent or another talent that is linked.

Optional Rule – Shrubbing: A character may, if desired, ignore all the Talent linking rules and simply purchase the talent. Talents purchased in this way can be linked properly when the linking rules are met. Using a talent purchased in this way adds 2 un-removable bonus dice to the defence of the challenge (10 defence) per level of talent. This penalty can be reduced only if the talent could theoretically be linked via the "PK linking" rule (ignoring the other rules in this case) to a properly linked talent. In such a situation the penalty is reduced by 2 bonus dice per level of the properly linked talent.
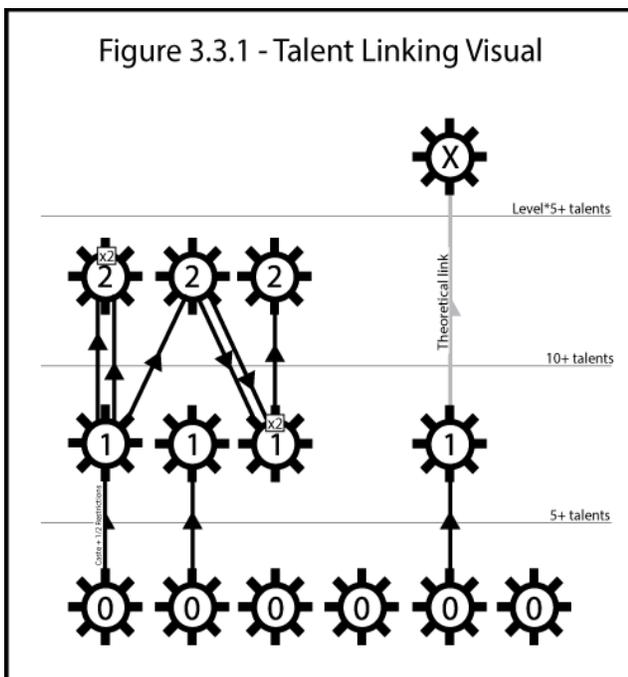
3.4 - Talent Effect Store [Basic]

This section provides the talent effect choices available to players when making their talents. Basic" simply denotes that it is the core Caste choices and does not include any other talent options from Modules.

Remember the Caste Bonus: If your talent is level 1 or greater and has a Caste of action you automatically gain an effect point.

Proficiency Effect

Explanation: A talent effect that exemplifies more than just a basic understanding of a concept.
Effect: Base dice explode on a 4+ rather than a 6 when performing the described action. For defence actions: negates the attacker's first die explosion.
Cost: Level 0 choice only, requires caste.

Example:

Climbing Proficiency [Level 0]
Description: Fully trained in the art of climbing deftly with the right equipment.
Effect: Base dice explode on 4 when one can climb deftly.

Language Effect

Explanation: A talent that exemplifies one's ability to speak or be literate in a language.
Effect: The Talented character may speak or be literate in a chosen language.
Cost: Level 0 choice; *1 effect point:* literate and spoken.
Level: 0

Example:

Tourist French [L1 - Language]
Description: The ability to speak and read french in a way that is both time consuming and frustrating for all parties.
Restriction: use takes twice as long.
Effect: Speak and read french;

Core Effects

Explanation: An array of talent effects that exemplify just about anything it wants.
Effect: One of either: +1 essence, +1 armour
Cost: Level 0 choice, and x2 value with caste. *1 effect point:* x2 value and for essence x3 value with caste, or x5 value for armour effect with Caste.

Example:

Jack-of-all-Trades [L0 - Core]
Description: Your pretty good at anything when you put your energy into it.
Effect: +1 essence.

Gun-Kata [L2 - Core]
Description: When focused you are adept at predicting bullet trajectories and avoiding harm.
Restriction: With guns, attackers must be visible.
Effect: +10 armour and +3 essence to physical attack.

Mastery Effect

Explanation: A talent that exemplifies one's level of specialized skill.
Effect: +1D6 [type] damage bonus die to the described action.
Cost: 1 effect point, requires Caste.

Example:

Dragon Slayer [Level 1]
Description: You have mastered the sword's effectiveness against dragons.
Restriction: With Swords
Effect: +2 bonus dice (+2D6 damage) for physical attack.

Armour Effect

Explanation: A talent that exemplifies one's ability to optimally use one's robust defences.
Effect: When actively defending, doubles available armour capacity from one defined type of equipment, or all instances of a single talent. This effect never stacks (you can never double an armour bonus twice).
Cost: 2 effect points, requires Caste.

Example:

Leather Armour Proficiency [Level 1]
Description: You are exceptionally well versed in the optimal use of leather armours.
Restriction: usable with leather chest wear
Effect: All available armour capacity is doubled when actively defending vs. physical attack.

Profession Effect

Explanation: A talent that exemplifies a panoply of skills in a field of study.
Effect: Base dice explode on a 4 rather than a 6 when performing any caste of action within a described field of study / job. Defencive actions negate the first die explosion of any attackers.
Cost: 3 effect points, requires caste.

Optional - Simplenatural: In campaigns where there may be supernatural actions but no modules are being used, the profession effect can be used to describe a character's supernatural abilities and grant them access those special castes of action. In such a case, the profession's normal bonus would not apply to any affected caste (as its already doing enough by granting access).

Example:

Blacksmith [Level 2]
Description: Has learned the blacksmith's trade and, with tools in hand, can perform its tasks with professional skill.
Restrictions: Requires Blacksmith tools worth 100-500 monies.
Effect: Base dice explode on a 4 rather than a 6 when performing blacksmithing actions. Attacker's first die explosion is negated when performing blacksmithing action to defend.

Profession Mastery Effect

Explanation: A talent that exemplifies a mastery in a panoply of skills in a field of study.
Effect: +1D6 [type] damage to all castes of action within a described field of study/job (which contains the required caste).
Cost: 2 effect points – when linked/paired with a Profession Effect, 4 effect points – With no link. Requires Caste.

Example:

Fencing Mastery[Level 1]
Description: You are a master fencer and able to use its many arts and styles.
Restrictions: Requires Sword
Effect: +1D6 experience damage to all Fencer actions.

Module – 3.4.1 - Special Actions

This is a module that gives characters talent options by allowing signature "Special Actions" and helps create characters with Anime-like special attacks and moves that will add a level of dynamism to any setting.

The Module was not added to the core rules because not every game needs these sorts of character's.

Global

Additional Talent Types: This module works best with, but does not require, the Additional Talent Types module.

Natural and Supernatural Talents: Special Actions do not apply to natural, supernatural or other talent types that require the mandatory use of essence.

Special Actions

This ones "Special": When creating a talent which has benefits for applying a restriction a character may designate their talent as a "Special Action".

Special Declaration: Special actions (Unlike normal talents) do not provide their bonuses to actions unless the character using the talent declares that that special action is being activated.

One Action, One Cost: Characters may only use 1 special action per turn. Activating a special action costs 1 essence. This cost can not be reduced.

Restwinktion: "When I've activated a special action" or similarly vague restrictions are not viable (though "when i have activated -specific action-" is viable).

Triple Trouble: Actions designated as special receive for each restriction three effect points.

Ta-Ta-Ta-Talents: Talents designated as Special Actions may, at the characters whim, permanently increase their talent level provided the newly increased talent has a link from its relevant talent tree. Upon increasing their level the talent may take additional restrictions up to the amount allowed for talents of that level.

Using only a fraction of my power: Restrictions and subsequently the effects provided by those restrictions are 100% optional. Restrictions and effects to be used by a character are determined at the time of action.

When Everyone is Special: A character may only purchase one special action talent for every ten non-special action talents they already own.

Examples:

Galvanic Strike [Level 2]
Description: Harnesing the powerful electrical forces of the Electromagnetism to create a piercing electrically charged Fist.
Restriction: Requires Gylectro Bracelet, This + Gylectro Bracelet is not optional
Effect: +3D6 electrical damage to physical attack with fist, +1 target.
Link: Gylectro Mastery
Cost: 1 essence

Bootytown Slyde [Level 4]
Description: Innate power is drawn from ambient sexyness to increase ones power through seductive dance.
Restriction: No Caste, must be in an attractive state, must have members of the opposite sex in presence, requires successful dance action, must be visible to onlookers.
Effect: +24 essence;
Cost: 1 essence

Module 3.4.2 - Additional Talent Types

Remember the Caste Bonus: Remember: if your talent is level 1 or greater and has a Caste of action you automatically gain an effect point.

Meta Effects: Meta-effects are effects that modify and generally enhance other the effects within an action. They can be added to your talents by buying an effect type that lets you chose a meta-effect.

Rigid Reality: Generally speaking, meta-effect's do not allow for actions that lay outside the realms of natural physical laws (For example: adding +1 range to a sword swing). Be sure to follow the guidelines of your setting and restrict appropriately so as not to be forced to restrict at time of action (For example: Uses ammo: Sword).

Basically nonvolatile: When modified by meta-effects base dice count as simply 1D6 damage. Any additional values beyond the first roll are not applied with respect to the meta effect. For example: a maximized base die rolls a value of 6 even if it rolled a 4. Any additional values from exploding (perhaps as a result of the 4+ roll) are added to the maximized value (6).

Meta Effect List

Add Status: Add status that either allows an (non-add status) effect to re-apply itself each turn or adds a level of potency to an existing status.

+1 Range: Add one turn of range to the effects of an action.

+1 Target: Apply an additional target to be affected by effects of the action.

-1 Essence Cost: Reduce by one the essence cost of an effect's action.

Ignore Restriction: Ignore one defined restriction imposed on an action.

Swap: Grant each of two chosen (non-Swap) effects within the action the option of being exchanged for a single effect (defined at talent creation) and chosen from already existing effects within the action or another meta-effect (Swap cannot be chosen as one of these effects).

Multiball: All non-base die effects are applied one-by-one against individual targets as the caster sees fit. With the exception of "+1 range" all meta-effects must be applied to each effect individually (Even if they wouldn't normally do so.) when the talent is created. Base dice apply to each affected target normally.

Better Luck: Chose an effect: If the challenge roll to use the action is unsuccessful in applying that effect, the actor may roll damage again, applying the chosen effect if this new damage roll is successful. Only one roll is required per round of multiple 'Better Luck' effects activating simultaneously.

Critical Gamble: Choose an existing effect or (non-Critical Gamble) meta-effect. When performing the action if a base die explodes you may apply that chosen effect 2 more times. Effects that require definition must be defined at talent creation. You may apply this effect instead with three exploding base dice for x4 effects or with five exploding base dice for x10 effects.

Maximize Effect: Choose an existing effect or meta-effect die roll. It now produces the maximum number possible and does not require a roll.

Lucky: Up to two effect dice may be re-rolled.

Easy: A single chosen effect is granted an individual +5 bonus to overcome defence penalties on its actions check roll.

Replication: Multiply the dice roll of a chosen effect point by a factor of one (ex: D6x2, D6x3,or D6x4). Replicated effect dice cannot be re-rolled or otherwise modified.

Charging: The actor, rather than performing the action proper, may instead declare that they are charging the described action. Charging an action is a standard challenge whose caste is different than performing the action proper. Successful charging adds a status that applies all the action proper's current potential effect points to the next use of the action proper. Performing any non-movement action (other than charging or activating the action proper) or any succeeding strikes that chooses to disrupt the effect, removes the charging status effect. Each subsequent charging action after the first adds an additional bonus die to the challenge's

defence.

Concentration: While the character maintains concentration all of the talent's non-status adding effects persist beyond their normal expiry (completed effect or breakdown) refreshing automatically each turn as if they were a status. For each maintained concentration all challenges receive a simplicity against that character. Concentrating while concentrating is a challenge.

Additional Talent Types List

Style Effects

Explanation: an effect that exemplifies one's ability to specialize actions to a specific style.
Effect: The action gains a meta-effect. This effect does NOT stack with talents using the same restrictions of the same level.
Cost: 3 effect points, requires Caste

<u>Example:</u>

Shield Wall Formation [Level 2]
Description: Aid yourself and a nearby comrade in their defence with wall of solid shield.
Restriction: Requires Shield, Ally must be at range 0.
Effect: +1 Target to Hindering Physical Attacks
Link: Shield Mastery

Abstract Effects

Explanation: An effect that exemplifies and defines the nature of ones near supernatural skill in a chosen action.
Effect: Provides either a simplicity or a haste to the action based on a qualitative description when relevant.
Cost: 4 effect points, requires Caste

<u>Example:</u>

Sirens Voice [L3 - Abstract]
Description: You speak with the charm of a siren.
Restrictions: Men only, Requires voice, Requires prolonged exposure (1 turn cast)
Effect: +1 simplicity to -sultry- seduction.
Link: Whispering Seduction

Abstract Profession: Similarly one can also take Abstracts that cover the same panoply of actions as Professions, providing its bonus to all actions within the field; such a talent is a Level 5 talent.

Debilitating Effects

Explanation: An effect that exemplifies a characters ability to disable an others abilities through their action.
Effect: The affected target suffers the status effect "Lock: add <restriction> to all castes of <X>" which adds a restriction, defined at talent creation, to all castes of action directly affected by the described result of the users action. A debilitating effect may only be used in situations where a status could be applied if overflow damage could be done normally. Choosing to apply a debilitating effect means that the action will apply no overflow damage if successful.
Cost: 5 effect points; +2 effect point: add another restriction to the debilitating effect, +1 effect point: add potency to the status of the debilitating effect. Requires caste.

<u>Example:</u>

Great Crush! [Level 5]
Description: A brutal smash renders one useless against physical attacks.
Restrictions: Requires great-maul, 1-5 turn cooldown. requires 1 essence be spent on action, only usable to disable defensive actions.
Effect: Add status: "Lock: add 1 turn cooldown to applicable castes of action defined by the successful physical attack", potency +1.
Link: Maulapaluza

Presser Effects

Explanation: A talent that exemplifies a fancy flourish that can control the situation.
Effect: Applies an Applied Pressure (press) status to the target, allowing the actor to control the situation in a way defined by this effect. A presser effect may only be used if overflow damage would be done normally. Choosing a presser effect means that the action will apply no overflow damage if successful.
Cost: 4 effect points: Presser effect with penalty of 15 to the action; 5 effect points: Presser effect with penalty of 5; 6 effect points: there is no penalty. Requires caste.

Breaking Peoples Shtuff: A presser effect can be used to break a defined type of equipment if control method permits and the action obliterates the target. Rather than using their on defences the defender of such an action gains a number of bonus [durability] dice equal to the equipments monies value divided by 100 and rounded down. (see Chapter 3 - Equipment)

<u>Example:</u>

Knockdown! [Level 4]
Description: With a swing of the legs you can knock down your opponent and control his fall.
Restrictions: Must use legs, Target must have legs, Must aim for legs, must be able to strike all legs in one attack
Effect: Apply Press to target of successful Physical Attack to "knock them down". Action has a penalty of 5.
Link: Whirlwind Roundhouser

Countering Effects

Explanation: An effect that exemplifies ones ability to capitalize upon weak assaults.
Effect: Provides either another movement or the use of a defined action for the character upon defending against a hostile type of action (from a source unrelated to the character) that fails to succeed. Only one move effect and one extra action effect can be used per failed action. All necessities for the action must be ready.
Cost: 6 effect points: Add either movement or extra action. +2 effect points: add the missing movement or extra action to this effect. Requires caste.

<u>Example:</u>

Mobile Counter Strike [Level 7]
Description: Your martial skills allow you to deftly pounce and capitalize on the inexperience of the foe.
Restrictions: Must be freehanded, must be holding action, must have studied opponent for at least 1 turn, must successfully discern weakness, requires 1 essence to be spent on counter
Effect: Counter using movement and Physical Attack against failed physical attack;
Link: Tacticians Master Fist

Hobo Counter: As an alternative to the standard countering strike effect, a player may opt to substitute the failed physical attack with skipping their move or action (whatever is employed in the effect) on their next turn to act simultaneously to their aggressor (meaning they could potentially avoid an attack before it were to officially take effect, making an action roll unnecessary).

Module 3.4.3- Supernatural Talents

The Supernatural module is in many ways THE most important module in Caste with regards to allowing players to create and codify nearly any character they want. This module heavily increases the talent selection options and is meant to allow players to transcend the normal physical reality of their setting and craft a near infinite array of custom built spells.

The effect list itself has been chosen arbitrarily and balanced through trial and error. That being said, if you can't do something using this list, we highly encourage you to create your own effects and place them into the supernatural effect list.

With such a vast array of options placed before a talent creator it's only natural that there will be some very powerful combinations. As a result we have devoted many of the rules in this module as a response to most of the exploitative combinations that players would create.

Obviously because magic is not always in a settings this module is not a part of the core rules

All the Talents of the Rainbow: This module uses the additional talent types, Natural Talents, (see Module 2.3.4 – Natural Talents) and Simplicities modules.

Explanation: Supernatural talents exemplify any action that leaves the realm of natural law and begin to tap into secret sources of power. Unlike most other talents, supernatural talents do not define enhancements to existing castes of action but rather complete actions of their own that a character would not have been able to perform otherwise.

Unequal Treatment: When performing supernatural talents, each talent should be treated as its own unique caste of action (meaning that other talents may chose individual supernatural talents as their chosen caste of action). Broad terms that exemplify many sources of supernatural action (such as against "magic", "psychic", "elemental" etc... with their categories dependent on the setting) are permissible when referring to these supernatural talents indirectly (such as defend against "X")

Just a Reminder: Restrictions that modify supernatural talents (directly or indirectly) cannot be the same (or eerily similar) to any restrictions on the talent they are modifying as they are inherent to the action.

Requirement: Before purchasing a supernatural talent, it is required that characters take a profession talent which accurately encompasses your talent's exact field of supernatural action (for example: Necromancer, Fire Bender, telepath, super technologist). This is often called an "Entry Talent". The entry talent does not grant proficiency to supernatural talents but instead will be the initial link for its affiliated supernatural talents and their subsequent talent links.

Sweet Single: Entry talents grant proficiency (standard to the profession effect) to mundane actions that would fall within the purview of knowing and invoking the type actions defined in the entry talent. (for example: Fire Bender might have bending theory, knowledge fire, and fire making, among others.)

Double Dud: Taking the entry talent a second time does NOT grant proficiency in all supernatural actions that said profession might encompass.

SPK Linking: Supernatural talents are not required to have the same caste or any of the same restrictions to be linked from another talent. They do however require a practical relationship between their causes and results. For example: "Fire Blast", a talent that shoots a gout of flame for damage, could link to "Rocket Burst", a talent that moves you quickly using a rocketing gout of flame, because they both share a practical cause and effect. Conversely ice, or other non flame, based talents or talents that might use fire in completely different ways, such as using it to summon moths, would not be linkable because they do not share a practical cause and effect relationship.

Effect: Supernatural talents perform an array of supernatural effects (See List of Supernatural effects below) chosen by the creator of the talent. These are then assembled and described according to the creators desires and the boundaries of the chosen effects.

Base Dice for No damage: When checking for the success of supernatural talent challenges, base and bonus dice (unless specifically noted to apply when status is applied) only use their values for the purposes of applying the talent's status effects. (more acutely: determining if the supernatural talent is successful and not what it does.)

Choice Mastery: A bonus die purchased using the mastery effect or an equipment option may, as an alternative, apply damage (of a type already present among the talent's effects) when status is applied.

Guide - How to Damage: A character wishing to create a physically damaging spell that employs base and bonus dice to damage like a standard physical attack would be required to take the meta-effect "enhance-action" [Physical Attack]. This would, of course, make the action a physical attack challenge rather than a magical one.

Rules for Supernatural Effects

Maintain Purity: Supernatural Talents may only take supernatural effects as their effect choices.

From these Hands: The base range for all supernatural talents is 0.

Stop the Apocalypse: Regardless of the maximum range of the talent, supernatural actions can only affect targets within direct unobstructed sensory range of the caster (or theoretical sensory range of the spell) and targets with whom the caster has a direct sympathetic link (such as a lock of hair or personal affect).

Everybody Gets One: Just like other non-level 0 talents with a caste, supernatural talents automatically have 1 effect point before restrictions are chosen.

Knowledge is Power: Effects of equal (or lower) effect cost to the talents level have their effect cost is reduced to 1.

Effect minimums: Supernatural talent effects cannot be lower than level 3.

Sneak Those Effects in there: Unless otherwise stated: All effects chosen are applied when status effects are applied.

Spell Targeting: Supernatural talent effects can be described to target other supernatural talent effects at the instant they are being deployed. Supernatural status effects may be targeted at any time. Spells (supernatural talent actions) and statuses, by their nature, are separate from the caster or the target upon which they are applied and thus do not defend themselves. When targeted in this way they offer 0 resistance (no dice, no armor). Supernatural talents cannot affect mundane actions or status' in this way.

Summoning Creatures

Creation Status Effects: Effects that produce something from nothing, such as summonings or creation effects, are treated as status effects applied to the created object(s).

Stacking Dolls: Summoned creatures cannot summon other entities of greater point cost or with higher level talents.

For Great Justification: All talents purchased for summoned creatures must be justified via the materials used to summon them (rotten wood doesn't become diamonds), personal understandings of the summoner (one cannot create knowledge one doesn't know), or the creature itself (summoned badger is … a badger!).

Summoning Sickness: Summoned creatures act the turn after they are summoned. Conjured damage hazards (such as fire) begin applying hazard the turn after they are conjured (if they are still capable of producing hazard).

Conjuration

Weightless Conjuration: Producing or manipulating objects of no or hardly definable weight (such as fire or smoke or steam) it is assumed that each 10 kilos can, at best, cover an area of group size (roughly ¼ of a single unit of range).

Hazardous Materials: When conjuring damaging hazards it is assumed that each 10 kilos/litres produces a maximum of 1D6

damage of the appropriate type (and depending on how sparsely the hazard is arrayed can just as easily produce none).

Going Infinite

Cage the Wambo: Because Caste relies on players to assemble pre-made and player made effects, there will certainly be situations where effects combine to create unbelievable results. As such: **A**ny supernatural effect combinations or recursions that consistently grow at some sort of geometric rate (the effects accumulate at a higher rate each turn) or could theoretically go infinite must have major setting specific consequences (BOOM?) or simply not work (preferably for setting specific reasons).

Option: The Rule of Three: Rather than not work, any combinations that would meet the standards of the "Cage the Wambo" rule function only for three repetitions or, if there are no repetitions, for three times the number of effects taken to perform the action.

Cost: 1 essence.

Buying Beef: The talent creator can add 1 essence to the cost of the talent. Doing so allows another effect point via restrictions.

Extra Lean: The talent creator can have the talent take an extra turn to execute. Doing so allows another effect point via restrictions.

Examples:

Cone of Cold [Level 6 - Supernatural]
Description: Drains heat from an conic area in front of the Talent user.
Restriction: Verbal, Requires Free movement, indiscriminate [Cone],
Focus: Icy Sphere 2,000 monies [100-500-1,000-2,000 monies],
Requires 1 hour magical study in morning.
Effect: +5d6 cold damage, Targets +3, +1 range
Cost: 2 essence, +1 turn cast time

Suggestion [Level 4 - Supernatural]
Description: Impose a reasonable suggestion that will be followed.
Restrictions: Verbal, Target must understand chosen language, Material Component: pinch of incense, deals no damage.
Effect: Add status: Suggestion, +2 potency, +2 range ;
Cost: 1 essence

Perfect Translocation [L8 - Supernatural]
Description: Move instantly to another destination anywhere in the world. (Spell charging is automatic until destination is within range.)
Effect: Extended Teleport, +1 Extended Range x7, Charging ;
Restrictions: Verbal, Requires free movement, Self only, fails if characters accumulated weight is greater then the actors weight plus what they can lift over their head, deals no damage.
Cost: 8 essence

Perfect Translocation [Level 8 - Supernatural]
Description: Move instantly to another destination anywhere in the world. (Spell charging is automatic until destination is within range.)
Restrictions: Verbal, Requires free movement, Self only, fails if characters accumulated weight is greater then the actors plus what they can lift over their head, deals no damage, character must know the target location in detail.
Effect: Extended Teleport, +1 Extended Range x5, Charging
Cost: 1 essence

Supernatural Effect List

Variable Cost Effects

Meta effect: Meta effects, when applied to supernatural effects, may only modify effects of equal or lower effect cost. The talent creator may thus chose to take a meta effect at any effect cost desired.

Meta-Effect "Enhance Action": This supernatural talent's effects are added to existing effects when performing a defined caste of action. Only one enhanced action may be activated in a turn and counts as that character's action when enhancing movement or defending. Enhance action's effect cost is equal to the highest effect cost among other chosen effects.

Meta-Effect "Subtle Mix": This supernatural talent's effects can be activated discretely only while performing a defined caste of action. All targets must be able to fully understand the action being performed (for example: A talent using dancing would not work on the blind, nor would songs to the deaf). Subtle mix's effect cost is equal to the highest effect cost among other chosen effects.

Dispell: Nullify all of a defined category of effects imposed by supernatural talents of equal or lower effect cost within range (for example: 'Dispel Minor Magical Might' of Level 4 may nullify all physical attack bonuses gained by supernatural effects of effect cost 4 or lower). Alt: A defined category of status effects imposed by non-supernatural talents (For example: "Sutchure Wounds": Dispell bleeding effects imposed by mundane sources). The effect cost is equal to the level of this effects talent.

Prolong: Enhance an effect such that breakdown can only occur once per day. For talent creation purposes only this effect's cost is equal to the chosen effect's cost +3. No matter what Talent effect is chosen this Effect is never a Meta-Effect. If this effect is taken upon itself breakdown will not occur.

Extend: Enhance an effect such that Range is extended from Turns to hours. For talent creation purposes only this effect's cost is equal to the chosen effect's cost +3. No matter what Talent Effect is chosen this Effect is never a Meta-Effect. If this effect is taken upon itself the range is extended to unlimited.

Widen: Enhance an effect to change the Target from a single Target to group. A guideline for the area size is about ¼ of a single unit of Range and is indiscriminate of friend or foe. For talent creation purposes only this effect's cost is equal to the chosen effect's cost +3. No matter what Talent Effect is chosen this Effect is never a Meta-Effect. If this effect is taken upon itself the area is widened to full range.

Broaden Effect: Enhance an effect such that their definitions are broadened to include all similar Effects (example: 'Create Water' would become 'Create Liquids'). For talent creation purposes only this effect's cost is equal to the chosen effect's cost +3. No matter what Talent Effect is chosen this Effect is never a Meta-Effect. If this effect is taken upon itself the effect is broadened to any substance the effect could have produced.

New Created Effect: An effect of potency relative to the cost of effect chosen, precedents set by the system, and approved by the GM/playgroup.

Effect Cost 3 Effects

Empower Capacity: Add status that grants one individual 5 armour or 1 essence for/against a defined caste of action.

Damage Capacity: Deals 1 damage to a specified capacity (usually essence) when a status could be applied.

Manipulate Base Materials: Create 10 kilos/litres of a defined non-valuable substance. Alt: add status that allows one to "magically" displace of 10 kilos/litres.

Simple Illusion: Create a defined simple illusion that affects one sense. (simple meaning that the illusion unchanging once initiated.)

Damage: Produce an individual +1D6 source of damage of a defined type and representing a physical, non-supernatural, caste of action (generally physical attack). This effect is treated as a bonus die to perform the action to be applied when status would be applied.

Healing: Restore +1D6 armour capacity.

Detect Trait: Add status that allows one to detect a defined hidden personality trait in persons or objects; alt: defined traits within conversation. (for example: sense evil, detect lying).

Summoning from the Natural: Summon a pre-defined, non-unique, creature (of no more then 3 points) who is native to the immediate area (such as a raven in a forest), or whose existence can be defined by ready materials (such as bones for an animate skeleton), that will act under your control. This effect can be used in conjunction with itself at talent creation to summon larger and more powerful creatures. Creatures without basic anatomical traits (such as muscles, or ability to hear) must spend talent points (generally natural talents. See: Natural Designate) to represent their unnatural existence.

Cure Swoon: Cure a character of swooning by bodily damage (not the product of a swooning effect).

Effect Cost 4 Effects

Buff/Debuff: Add status that grants a target a bonus die or subtracts a bonus die to a caste of Action.

Mass Buff/Debuff: Add status that grants D6 targets +1 or -1 to a caste of action.

Supernatural Action: Add status that gives the target access to a defined caste of action ([Descriptive Clause]+[Verb]) which may lay outside of the targets nature. This new caste of action need not conform to natural laws and its existence may render the use of others unnecessary or provide rough dice to their use.

Backdoor Entry: Characters who have an abstract talent using a logically similar caste of action do not need an entry talent to purchase a talent with only this effect (for example: Abstract to "High Jumping" could get "Leaping Flight"). Such a talent if taken will automatically have the "self-only" restrictions and the "Enhance Action: Chosen caste of action + restrction" or "Subtle Mix: Chosen caste of action" meta-effect.

Moderate Illusion: Create a moderately complex illusion that that affects one sense and can change if a certain requirement defined by the caster is met.

Force Suggestion: Add a status that imposes a suggestion (action, emotional response etc…) to a Target that will be followed unless ultimately against their scruples.

Paralysis: Add a status that applies a restriction to a specific caste of action.

Dampen/Magnify Damage: Add a status that reduces or increases by D6 the damage taken by a caste of action.

Effect Cost 5 Effects

Damage-Obscura: Produce an individual +1D6 source of damage of a defined type and representing any non-supernatural caste of action (such as computer hacking). This effect is treated as a bonus die to perform the action to be applied when status would be applied.

Summoning from the Essence: Conjure from nothing a pre-defined, non-unique creature (of no more then 3 points) whose existence within the setting is assured (such as a Bear, or a Djinni in magical settings) that will act under your control. This effect can be used in conjunction with itself to create larger and more powerful creatures.

Manipulate Semi-Valuable Substance: Create 10 kilos/litres of a defined semi-valuable substance (including crafted materials of moderate value like swords). Alt: add status that allows for the displacement of 10 kilos/litres. Using this effect to disarm an opponent would be treated like an attack against weilder.

Slumber: Add status that renders one Target unable to move or act for what could be hours (Check for breakdown every 5 minutes). This effect is ended if the target is hurt, heavily jostled, or appropriate similar action is taken. The target is not Swooned.

Negative Polymorph: Removes an instance of a defined progressive natural talent and alter the target to exemplify the change.

Positive Polymorph: Add status that purchases an instance of a defined progressive natural talent and alter the target to exemplify the change.

Teleport: Move instantaneously from one point to another point within 1 turn of range ignoring normal obstacles.

Effect Cost 6 Effects

Mind Read: Add status that allows understanding of inner secrets. alt: read thoughts of an individual.

Charm: Add status that forces a hostile Target into becoming friends or acting against his companions.

Manipulate Precious Materials: Create 10 kilos/litres of a defined valuable substance (such as gold). Alt: add status that allows for the displacement of 10 kilos/litres.

Conjure Structure: Create a structure roughly the size of 3 people or alter an area of a certain type of simple material of that size.

Supernatural Abstract: Add status that grants a beyond realistic description to the use of a non-supernatural action. In addition to this benefit the character gains a simplicity or a haste to the caste of action.

Transmogrify: Add status that alters a bodies nature to be akin to a defined non-valuable substance without impeding that characters ability to act (though it may impair their ability to interact with their surroundings while in the altered state).

Effect Cost 8 Effects

Kill: Instantly kill a target.

Planeshift: Move instantaneously from one point to a corresponding point in a psudo or pocket dimension such as a setting specific spirit realm or hell plane.

Supernatural Profession Abstract: Add status that grants a beyond realistic description to the use of all non-supernatural actions described by a profession. In addition to this benefit the character gains a simplicity or a haste to the caste of action in that profession.

Greater Transmogrify: Add status that alters a bodies nature to be akin to a defined valuable substance without impeding that characters ability to act (though it may impair their ability to interact with their surroundings while in the altered state).

Effect Cost 9 Effects

Mindslave: Enslave a target indefinitely.

Resurrect: Resurrect a 'killed' target.

Effect Cost 7 Effects

Swoon: Instantly 'Swoon' a Target or afflict them with an ailment of similar power (such as paralysis, or comatose state.) such that they could be restored with proper care but if left alone may eventually die.

Complex Illusion: Create a complex illusion that affects one sense, whose motives are defined by the caster and that can perform complex processes (such as holding a conversation).

Create Structure: Create a structure of approximately the size of a small cottage or alter an area of a certain type of simple material of that size.

Summoning from the Void: Conjure from nothing any pre-defined creature (of no more then 3 points) that will act under your control. This effect can be used in conjunction with itself to create larger and more powerful creatures. Creatures without basic anatomical traits (such as muscles, or ability to hear) must spend talent points (generally natural talents. See: Natural Designate) to represent their unnatural existence.

Effect Cost 10 Effects

Time Warp: Travel 1D6 Turns backwards or forewords (direction chosen at Talent creation) in time (With reference to yourself.)

Erasure: Remove one target completely from all of space and time. As if he had never existed.

Wish: Expend an unspent character point and create the effects of any talent that can be created using the Caste system and the games defining modules.

Rejuvenate: Alter target's form to the age where their species is at its prime. subject ages normally from that point afterward.

Planeswalk: Move instantaneously from one universe to another ignoring normal obstacles.

Eurika: Add status that allows the gain of 1 talent, to be spent as if a character point was being spent.

Module 3.4.4 - Natural Talents

The natural Talents module is Castes way of codifying and discriminating between the special traits that that certain creatures have without relying too heavily on a creatures nature of being.

Natural talents are generally more powerful than standard talents and should not be given out freely.

Restrict ME more: Restriction on natural talents can be chosen to restrict the character with the talent rather than the action it is modifying. This is should generally be used to describe the repercussions for the character with that natural trait.

One Time Offer: Can only be purchased at character creation with GM approval or granted by GM in game.

Progressive Natural Talents

Explanation: A Full Talent that exemplifies the benefits and drawbacks of a creatures mundane natural features. A Talent must be designated a Progressive Natural talent when being created and follows the guidelines below:

Nature Alteration: Progressive Natural Talents can and will often alter the characters nature. These changes must be described when the talent is created. An excellent guideline for the amount each talent changes a character is by cumulatively applying ½ again what the character already has (For example: A character is roughly 6ft tall. Taking "Large" would make them 9ft., then taking "Large" again would make them 13ft etc...).

Ground Floor, Restrictomancy Dept.: Progressive natural talents may take as many restrictions as they desire, are always level 0, may gain one effect point by applying a caste to the entire talent, may take both casted and non-casted choices, and may choose from any (Non-Supernatural) effects available.

You've Run Out of Options: Progressive natural talent restrictions are not optional when performing relevant actions.

Naturally Superior: All bonuses are applied to all relevant situations where the feature would be useful.

Naturally Cumbersome: All bonus dice are applied as a penalty (bonus dice to the challenge) for all relevant situation where the feature would be a hindrance. Other types of effects each grant the lesser of their armour bonus or 10 armour to the challenge(s).

Example:

Natural Armour [Level 0 - Progressive Natural]
Description: From thick hides to adamant like skin.
Effect: +10 armour vs physical attacks, x2 time to recover "Natural Armor" capacity.

Super-Natural Talents

Super-natural talents are created in nearly the exact same way as supernatural talents save for a few differences noted below:

No Bonus: Super-Natural talents do not get an effect point automatically.

Restrict 'em while They're Down: Super-Natural talents must take one restriction and gain no effect point for doing so.

Essence Freebate: Super-Natural talents may take one effect of effect cost equal to the talents level or below for free. Doing so increases the essence cost by the talents level.

Supernatural Costs: Super-natural talents have their essence cost reduced by its level if the entity has enough talents to potentially link the talent (via the Speed Bump rule). Additionally essence spending is optional.

Penalty, No Penalty: Super-natural talents incur a challenge (if the action is not already a challenge), and grants two bonus dice to the defence of that challenge (+10 defence) per talent level. This penalty (and any self incurred challenge) is ignored if the entity has paid the essence cost (or if there is no cost).

The Rule of ON/CAST: When creating a super-natural talent you must define whether the talent is: ON, meaning the effects of the talent are always in effect and automatically refresh if status fades but cannot be used as an action and will not stack with itself; or CAST, meaning the talent must be used like any other supernatural talent. If it is not addressed it is assumed to be CAST.

Pay ON Demand: Effect designated as ON incur challenge when activating and take costs when the character decides to attempt the challenge.

B-roken E-asily S-ystem M-echanics: A character who uses supernatural talents to summon a creature with Super-natural talents must pay for all non-designate super-natural talent cost reductions applied though that creatures (or any additional creatures produced by that creatures) actions from their own essence pool.

Example:

Medusa's Gaze [Level 10 - Super-Natural][ON]
Description: The gaze of the Medusa that turns all who see it to stone.
Effect: Widen - Swoon (Turned to Stone), Widen – Force Suggestion (Revulsion) ; *Restrictions:* Targets must see face, reboundable (with mirror).
Cost: 0

The Killing Condition

Explanation: The Killing Condition is a highly useful and special type natural talent that easily defines races or creatures that are of particular difficulty to kill. Creatures with regeneration, impenetrable skin or villains that just won't die make prime candidates for the Killing Condition.

Effect: Any creature with a killing condition can/should not be killed by normal means, sometimes with repercussions for failure, and must be defeated by an appropriately described succeeding strike. This condition must be defined when the Talent is made.

No Stacking The Killing Condition: There are three types of killing condition talents. Only one of each type may be taken per entity.

Type 1 (I Will Return): Without meeting the appropriate condition the talent holder is defeated but will rise again in due time. The nature of this 'resurrection' varies from creature to creature (examples include Liches, Death Knights, or Trolls).

Type 2 (No Man of Woman Born): Without meeting the appropriate condition the talent holder cannot be swooned nor killed and all succeeding strikes fail (with an appropriate re-write by the creature).

Type 3 (REVENGE!): When swooned without meeting the appropriate condition the talent holder initiates and automatically succeeds a counter whose effects are defined at talent creation and purchased like any supernatural talent.

Level: NA, The killing condition is outside the balancing scheme of the game and should only be used for special creatures or acquired as long term role-play rewards.

Chapter 4 - Equipment

4.1 - Concept

Another major plank of the Caste system is its equipment generation mechanics. Here we explain that equipment exists, that there is standard equipment and trinkets, that they can be created, that doing so involves purchasing effects to represent their primary function, that more effects mean bigger equipment, and that equipment can be restricted for more cheaper effects that don't increase size. We also explain how a player can craft equipment step-by-step.

We also mention that "monies" is the caste money denomination.

Stuff Matters: In Caste, the tools and objects people use to achieve greater ends are called "equipment". When used or worn, pieces of equipment add their effects of their defined action.

Suit up: Equipment can be found, built, or purchased by characters in game through various means.

Equipment Source: Each article of equipment that provides bonus dice counts as a separate source.

The 1 Weapon Rule: When performing or defending against an action, a character may only choose the effects of one of their held equipment per target. For example: a character with a sword and a gun can strike a melee foe with the sword and, provided they have +1 targets, can strike a ranged foe with the gun that turn.

The 2 Weapon Rule: Each weapon counts as an individual source of bonus dice. If, while using two weapons, one weapon's dice are negated, the two weapon user may opt to use the other weapon's bonus dice instead.

4.2 - Lets Build Equipment

Because equipment comes in a nearly infinite variety, it is the job of the players to create these equipments and catalog them on their character sheets. Producing equipment requires the following steps

The Lazy Way v2: If you don't want to read through the step-by-step of how to build equipment you can simply use section "2.1.3 – Fast Equipment Armoury" as a template to quickly create equipment.

Tools vs. baubles: These steps concern themselves with tools that provide benefit when performing some action. For things that only have a superfluous function we shall leave their basic value and function to their nature and to the whims of the players.

Whats it gonna DO?: The first step is deciding what the equipment is and does. This might be as simple as a sword that slashes enemies with physical attacks, or a computer that is functional in an array of computational jobs. This understanding of what you want will be the foundation for the rest of the process.

What Is IT?: The next step is taking note of what the item is. Be detailed enough to give a general sense of the equipment, such as its size, and features. For example: calling a giant super heavy custom firearm just "gun" is not really appropriate but "The Kingslayer" would be.

Coding the Gear: Now we chose the numerical effects the equipment has. To do this we need to first determine what caste(s) of action (the [descriptive clause]+[verb]) the equipment would modify. Next we must choose if and how the article of equipment would be restricted (Specific non-negative situations under which the equipments various effects will be relevant), the benefits of these choices being discussed later. Finally we choose a number (greater than 0) of effects from the Equipment Effect List below.

Effect Cost: For each effect chosen the monies value of the equipment is increased by 100 monies.

And What exactly are Monies?: "Monies" is simply a generic name used to describe the value of any given equipment. It could just as easily be called dollars, or gold, or any other currency when playing.

Size Does Matter: For each chosen effect the size (or in some cases the complexity) of equipment is assumed to increase.

The Human Body: As a standard a character can carry (or use) 5 effects within each hand, and 10 effects on the body (optionally: 4 effects on the torso, 1 on each arm, 1 effect on the head, 1 on each leg, 1 for boots). Additionally characters generally can carry 10 more effects un-equiped and worn on their persons.

Body assumptions: It is generally assumed (and sensible) that the effects on body equipment are used to bulwark defensive actions.

Equipment Effect List

Damage bonus: +1D6 [type] damage to a caste of action.
Armour bonus: +10 armour against a caste of action
Essence bonus: +2 essence for use with a caste of action.
Range bonus: +1 range to the equipment's effects, must add restriction "Uses Ammo: [type]" with no bonus*.
Target bonus: +1 targets to the equipment's effects.

*Restriction - Uses Ammo [type]: The equipment requires/uses a

specific ammo per target to function. The ammo cannot be itself unless your being forced to purchase the restriction with the +1 range effect.

The Powers of Specialization: If the item creator opted to restrict the item they may, for each effect given by restriction (or group of restrictions when stacking), chose one of the following options:

1UP: Add an extra effect at no extra cost or increase in size.

Tweak: The creator of the equipment may opt to make this restriction optional such that, if applied, grants a trinket style effect (see *Trinkets* below).

Knock off: If only one effect has been chosen, the equipment creator may ignore the cost of this restriction and also reduce the equipment's cost (before special costs are applied) by half, cumulatively, rounded up. (For example: 100 - 50 - 25 - 13 - 7 - 4 - 2 - 1).

Restriction Cost: For each restriction that would grant an effect, the monies value of the equipment is increased by 25 monies.

Remember 1, 5, 10, 20: *When applying multiple of the same restriction that can stack, any bonuses granted to the entity through restriction only apply on the first, the fifth, the tenth, and the twentieth instance of that restriction.*

Special: Finally, if we're making some sort of special or masterly crafted equipment, we can choose talents for that equipment. Talents on equipment are treated like a character's own talents when they are using that equipment.

Cost: The equipment's cost is equal to 25 monies per restriction, 100 monies per effect (at this point apply any "Knock off" modifiers), then 1000 monies +1000 monies per level of talent chosen.

Consumables on the Cheap: Making equipment which is consumable (is depleted upon use) reduces its cost to 1/10 (including special costs).

Rough Dice: "Rough dice" are semi-arbitrary bonus dice that are applied to actions when using equipment for purposes other then that which was intended for the equipment (for example: using a knife to pick a lock). In such situations the GM makes a judgment call as to whether the equipment will be helpful at all, if it would be so, they arbitrate the number of bonus dice received. Generally one bonus die for equipment of small help, two for equipment of moderate help and three for equipment of substantial help.

Trinkets: Trinkets are articles of equipment that are too small to take up considerable space on the body (such as rings, necklaces and the like) but still provide minor bonuses. Trinkets are created and priced per effect just like any other equipment except they may only produce a +1 armour bonus (rather than +10), requires 2 effects for +1 damage bonus and requires, +5 effects for +1 essence, and 10 effects to produce any normal equipment effect. 10 purchased effects on a trinket take up the size of 1 effect on standard equipment. Trinkets can not apply the "tweak" rules.

Structure in Summation

Name: The name of the equipment.
Description: A brief description that should indicate its size (one handed, light, two handed, large, etc...).
Restriction: A listing of its restrictions.
Effects: A listing of its chosen effects and related castes.
Special: A list of the talents that the equipment has and what those talents do.
Cost: Its cost based on the effects, restrictions, and talents chosen.

4.3 - Crafting Equipments (In Game)

In this section we outline that characters can craft any equipment; that the time it takes to do so is based on how valuable the equipment is; that you can craft consumable equipment at a fraction of the cost; how they can acquire a workshop, and that workshops are like giant communal equipment for performing actions; that hastes increase the rate of crafting by a multiplier; and how you can apply talents to equipment to make it "special".

The Act of Crafting: Characters who choose to fashion things from baser materials are considered to be crafting. Crafting is performed like any other action but also adheres to the following guidelines:

You Need the Stuff: In order to perform the crafting action the character must have the base materials required for the construction of the equipment. This is generally half the effect cost of the equipment

Things Take Time: The crafting action for a character takes 8 hours.

Make Haste: Each haste a character has going into a crafting challenge increases all damages that pierces the challenge's defence by 1/3 of the remaining total rounded up. For example: A character deals 32 damage to a challenge with 20 defence. The remaining 12 damage adds 1/3 of that total per haste for a total of 16

Fractional Crafting: If a character achieves succeeding strike with fewer dice, the crafting time can be reduced by the fraction of dice that remain out of the total. For example: with 8 effect dice a character succeeded after 4 dice are rolled then the crafting time is reduced by 1/2 or 4 hours)

Splitting my Attentions: Adding multiple targets to crafting actions does not apply effect dice to the extra targets as normal but would eliminate any penalties for working on multiple projects simultaneously.

Stubborn Thing: The armor of the crafting challenge is equal to the monies value of the to-be-crafted equipment.

Custom is Finniky: Crafting equipment with restrictions adds a base die to the defence of the challenge for each restriction.

Workshop Bonus: A workshop, which can be built like any other equipment, provides the characters with a working environment whose effect bonus can be used as a substitute for carried equipment and maximizing a characters potential bonus. For example: a character using tools that provide 3D6 damage to the crafting action can take 7D6 of the Workshop's 20D6 effect bonuses, allowing them their full 10D6 worth of effects they can carry/use.

Special Equipment: Each talent on an equipment and every level of those talents adds two base dice to defence, 1000 armour to the challenge, and 100 monies to the cost in materials. The monies value and armour is reduced by 1/10 for consumables.

Ya Gots ta Know: A character must have unrestricted access to the talent they wish to craft (usually by having the talent). Additionally a character cannot craft more instances of a talent upon an equipment then they have access to that talent. For example: character cannot craft x5 sword mastery talents on a sword if they only have x1 sword mastery talent.

4.3.1 - The General Theory of Labour and Wages
This section extrapolates (with a few liberties) and lays out the basic value of unskilled and expert labour.

Ready to work: As a baseline, assuming a static economy, unskilled labor is worth 10 monies per 8 hours of work.

Big Money $killz: Each talent that gives a bonus to the crafting is worth an additional 3 monies.

Specialist Labour: Talents used for crafting talents onto equipment are worth 3 monies per talent necessary to have that talent linked with no penalty (aka: 15 per level).

Example

A character wants to work his trade and make armour with a level 1 talent. He has x1 L0-proficiency, x2 L1-masteries, and has access to the level one talent. His labour would be worth 10 [base] + 9 [bonus providing talents], +15 [it takes 5 talents for required the Level 1 talent]. His total labour value is 34 monies per 8h)

Module 4.3.2 - Technology and Eras

This module can be employed to better define progresses in the types of equipment that exist and their effects on less advanced equipment.

Simplicities: This module uses the simplicities module.

Equipment has an Era: This module adds "Era" to the structure of an Item. Alternatively it can simply be explained in the description.

The Five Ages: There are five eras to which an equipment can belong. In order from lowest to highest these Eras are:

Stone Age: Wood and stone bound to make the most primitive tools.

Metal Age: Metal and Fire harnessed to make durable and effective tools.

Powder Age: Chemistry and mechanics create complex modern tools.

Energy Age: Circuits and light model advanced futuristic tools.

Cyclopean Age: Power and Knowledge form in unimaginable ways to create eldrich tools.

Damage & Defences: Equipment of greater era provide a simplicity for their users when against equipment of lower era.

My Hands: Unarmed actions are considered stone age effects. Succeeding strikes from grapples and rough dice are dealt with case by case.

Cost & Crafting: Crafting equipment using higher era tools reduces all of the challenge defences by 1/2 per era rounded up (it follows that within a higher era setting it can be understood that the cost of lower era equipment would be 1/2 per era as well). Crafting equipment using lower era tools increases all of the challenges defences by 10 per era (per level where applicable) (it follows that within a lower era setting it can be understood that the cost of higher era equipment would be x10 per era as well)

Module 4.3.5 - Magical Equipment

This module applies the supernatural talent rules to crafting equipment.

Expansion to Supernatural: This is an expansion to the Supernatural Talents module that clarifies how to craft and use magical equipments.

Crafting Supernatural Talents: Crafting supernatural talents on to equipment works in the same way as normal talents with the following exceptions:

Enchanting: In order to apply supernatural talents to equipment the character, their workshop, and their tools, all require a profession specifically for crafting talents of an exact field of supernatural action (usually defined by an entry talent).

Spell Copy: Having unrestricted access to another piece of equipment with the talent desired counts as unrestricted access.

Costs: Supernatural Talents and every level of those talents cost 1000 monies in materials (rather than the normal 100). Any foci must be applied to the equipment. 100 times the consumable material components required for the talent must be spent as well. Finally 5000 times the essence cost of the talent is added to the final cost (not included restriction specific essence costs).

Essential Devotion: While crafting the supernatural talent on to the equipment a talents essence cost must be devoted by each crafter from the beginning of crafting the talent until crafting has been completed or crafting fails. When that happens the resources up to the point of failure are lost.

The Rule of ON/CAST: When creating a supernatural talent on an item you must define whether the talent is: ON, meaning the effects of the talent are always in effect and automatically refresh if status fades but cannot be used as an action and will not stack with itself; or CAST, meaning the talent must be used like any other supernatural talent. If it is not addressed it is assumed to be CAST.

Using Supernatural Equipment

Proficiency: Unless a character has the same type of entry talent as the equipment's talent that character requires a Proficiency effect specifically for that item. Taking a proficiency in this way does not grant the standard proficiency bonus but simply allows the character to access all that items supernatural talent options (Proficiency to the individual castes of action will grant the normal bonus).

Proficiencies for Consumables: For supernaturally talented consumables proficiency effect can be broad enough to accommodate a wide range of similar items (for example: curative salves, spell scrolls, arcane grenades)

No cost: There is no standard essence cost for using an equipments supernatural talent (costs added from restrictions still apply).

Module 4.3.3 – Education

This is a module which better defines education and learning using the crafting rules.

Caste Education Defined: For the purposes of this module we will define education as the construction (learning) of new (non-natural if applicable) talents onto oneself and works in basically the same way save for the following points:

Workshop: In order to educate oneself one must have the tools to practice your future skills. Without a workshop to aid in crafting the talent all the challenge's dice are increased by x5.

Professor Book-Learning: Having some learning source such as a scroll or book with the talent (or sufficient quantity of them) or another character with enough talents who is willing to teach the talent for extended periods during the day counts as unrestricted access to the talent. Without a source of learning education is possible but with a challenge whose dice are increased by x5.

That's double multiples: x5 dices plus x5 dice equates to x25 defences, not x10.

Cost of Education: Barring any wages from professors and the use of a workshop the cost of crafting talents onto yourself is free.

Module 4.3.6 – Wonderous Inventions

This module applies Super-Natural Designate talents to mundane equipments for the purpose of creating the wondrous things made by the great inventors.

Natural-Designate: This module requires the Natural Talents module's Super-Natural Designate rules.

SCIENCE!: Natural-Designate's can be applied to equipment in the same way as any other talent. Character's can purchase natural-designates as a non-natural talent like any other talent. Designates purchased in this way are only functional when crafted into equipment.

Thinking Big: The costs of Natural-Designate are applied to a device as if it were being taken as individual effects on an equipment. Meaning for each 500 monies of the Natural-Designates cost (Generally a total of 4000 monies) the equipment size increased appropriately.

Special Case - Miniturization: A character may purchase the super-natural designate "miniturization". Each instance of miniturization applied to an equipment reduces that equipment's size attained by the "Thinking Big" rule by 500 monies. Miniturization does not increase an equipment's size.

Dumb Machine: Be mindful that equipment with just designates may not have everything necessary to be properly functional and may require a profession [The intended device] to be properly usable by a character. (For example: A flying machine with no steering, controls, etc. is pretty useless).

Really Wonderful: Wondrous machines must conform to the settings physical reality.

Module 4.3.7 – Legends and Titles

This module sets ground rules for a character acquiring fame and status by creating an invisible type of equipment that stays with the character and applies its effects always.

Forging a Legend: Titles and Legends are created exactly like equipment (and could theoretically be purchased at character creation) but are intangible, cannot be modified or altered, are always applying their effects when possible and cannot be controlled by the character who has them.

Their Knowledge is Your Power: Titles and legends only apply their effects when the holder of the title or legend is in a challenge with another character and that character is aware and recognizes the title or legend.

A Broad Tale: Rather than affect singular castes of action, titles and legends grant their bonus to all castes that can be reasonably affected by having the title or legend (exactly like a profession).

Fear is the little death: The type of damage bonus gained by titles and legends depends on how it affects the people around the title or legend bearer (generally morale, fear, rage, etc...).

They got Downs: If the target of the effect is hostile to the title or legend all bonuses are reversed (with applicable minimums such as range and targets being maintained).

Negative Nancy: Negative bonus dice are subtracted from the total bonus before any dice are rolled.

Example

Legend: The Dragon Slayer
Description: You are known for slaying the great and terrible dragon.
Effects: +2d6 to castes of action affected by "The Dragon Slayer"
Special: None (but I guess it could totally be possible... somehow).
Cost: 200 monies.

Chapter 5 - Putting it all Together

5.1 - GM Game Administration and Advanced Concepts
The following is a series of suggestions regarding handling certain basic and advanced concepts.

Autonomous Parts: Creating a single creature with individual autonomous parts such as a hydra simply requires each part to be written separately and the nature of each satellite part to be altered to accommodate the entity.

Mooks: There is a lot that can be done with the generic 15 points. In most cases the basic mook (aka: footman, henchman, red-shirt, extra) need never go beyond that.

Advanced Concept - The Turbine: (Assuming the supernatural Talents module is in use) An equipment that "turbines" is an article of equipment that makes a Talent action each Turn such that its effects are consistently being applied/re-applied and in some cases compiling. At a certain level of understanding of the players may begin to assume that the equipment itself is capable of using the action each turn and without cost (as it is an Equipment). It should be noted here that it is outside the nature of equipment to perform actions. If an equipment were made to be able to do so however it would require an array of talents that give it proficiency for itself, and an understanding of how to make any choices necessary for the use of these actions.

Flaws: Do not allow characters to receive extra points by applying or taking reverse Talents (or flaws). Have your players define the weaknesses of their characters by a lack of bonuses instead of a numerical penalty.

5.1.1 - General Theory of Existential Dooms

This section explains the method with which to arbitrate certain extended actions that may not be necessarily difficult but might be physically taxing and almost inevitably leading to failure in the long term. For ease of writing Crippling Exhaustion will be the working example.

Exhausting Work: Characters performing some physically or mentally taxing action where their physical endurance is in question should suffer a Crippling Exhaustion attack.

The Claws of Fatigue: Crippling Exhaustion is an attack like any other (base dice, no proficiency) whose success means that the character becomes incapable of performing the current action or any action of similar strain until capacities could be restored.

It Grows!: Every few turns (Determined by the GM but generally 5 or 10) The GM should enhance the description of the Characters sensations of Exhaustion to award the Crippling Exhaustion attack a bonus die (Using the Story Bonus). Once the the story bonus is maxed out (5D6) additional circumstance bonuses explained and awarded to the Crippling Exhaustion every few minutes (10-30 turns) game time (until about 10D6).

Other Monsters: Other castes of action, different succeeding results, and different time separators would be used to describe other similar but distinct forms of long term attacks such as consumptive starvation or suffocating drowning.
Simplicities: If simplicities are being used, add a simplicity to Crippling Exhaustion when the story bonus and circumstance bonus are each maxed out.

Example

Jody is running a marathon. After a few minutes of running fatigue is setting in.

The GM attacks her with Crippling Exhaustion and gets an 8 (*rolls base dice [6],[2]; Jody is proficient in defending vs. Crippling exhaustion so negates the first explosion*)

30 seconds later (roughly 5 turns) Exhaustion strikes again, sweat seems to roll of her brow (+1D6 story), rolling a 12 (rolling [5][5][2]) dealing 2 damage which Jody negates using her armour.

Time has passed and Jody has been spending essence to keep Exhaustion from overtaking her, Sweat pours off her, her shirt is soaked, her body aches and her mind is begging her to stop the madness (+5D6 story), Her shoes don't seem to be on as tight as she likes and the ground is slightly uneven (+2D6 circumstance). This time for sure fatigue would take her. Just as Crippling Fatigue would strike that mortal blow Jody crosses the finish line and takes a well deserved rest.

5.1.2 - General Theory of Casted Damage

This section goes into some basic attack castes and tries to disambiguate certain common types of damage. This is mainly useful in determining the sorts of defenses a character will have against hazards.

The Flavours of Damage

Often, sources of damage, generally from hazards, are not accompanied by a proper action (and in turn, no caste). In such a case it is proper to define what caste the damage would have sprung from if it were some sort of acting character producing it. The following are the most common sources of damage that can generally swoon characters:

Physical Attack: The physical attack caste is probably the most common and meant to represent a physically definable source dealing physical damage to a target. Things like spike traps, crushing walls, impacts, stray bullets are examples of these. The outcome is almost always swooning.

Elemental Attacks: Elemental attack caste is meant to represent physically undefinable, environmental sources dealing physical damage to a target. Things like fire, poison gas, and steam. The outcome is almost always swooning but could be sickness or other horrible stuff.

Suffocation: Drowning and inhalation damage can be done using hazards but are more appropriate in using The General Theory of Existential Dooms.

Magical Attack: In applicable settings magical attacks represent physics breaking, quazi-physical or non-physical actions generated by any given magical spell. See Supernatural Module (or whatever magical module being used) for details. The outcome is unpredictable but usually produces a status effect (which could be a different type of hazard damage!!!)

Example

Gregory falls into a pit of red hot scrap metal. Landing on the metal causes 10D6 [Stabbing] Hazard damage. The spikes, it is determined, would do physical attack damage. Luckily Gregory has a large shield and the skills to use it. Together both the shield and his talents give a defence of 15D6 to physical damage. Gregory is safe!

But, the pokers are red with heat, and as a result cause an additional 5D6 [heat] elemental damage. The heat itself is definitely a non-defineable but physically damaging elemental attack. His shield is useless against elemental attacks and he has no talents for defending against elemental attacks. Gregory thus takes the full 5D6 damage. I hope he's okay!

5.1.3 - The General Theory of Loyalty and Charm

This section lays out how to handle characters trying to subvert characters under the thrall of other entities. For ease of writing this module will only cover that topic but it should be noted that these concepts could be applied in any situation where the effects of a characters actions may linger on their target (examples might include hiding things, creating a puzzles and riddles)

Leaving My Mark: Characters that are seduced, mediated, charmed etc.. are marked as under the social control of the succeeding character. That succeeding character will be referred to as their "master".

A Man of Many Masters: Characters may have multiple masters.

Mine Mine Mine: Characters attempting to apply social control over a character with a master, such that the control interferes with the masters control, must overcome not only the social defenses of their target but also skills used by the master to initially charm the target as well. Both both the masters and the targets bonuses are treated as defenses against the social action being taken upon them.

Example

Joline wants to haggle with the shop-keep but the shop-keep's wife is a powerful influence and a skinflint.

Because of this the Shop-keep's wife would be considered "his master". This means Joline has to defeat the shop-keep defence against haggle + whatever stat that his wife's employs to influence her husband.

(As an aside it would be well serve a GM to take note of when/if Joline does defeat the shop-keep but not his wife and alter the way the shop-keep reacts accordingly.)

5.1.4 - The General Theory of Lights and Lines

This theory lays out how light sources, piping, and electrical lines can be defined and priced using the standard equipment rules.

Supernatural Module: This general theory takes precedence from the Supernatural module.

Light

Basic Assumptions: In the same way that a sword does not roll to see if it can still produce bonus dice when used, equipment whose constant function is "crafting" something does not roll base dice to perform actions. Though if the action is a challenge they would still have to overcome the challenges base dice to defend.

Radiance: A bonus die (1D6) to the caste of action "craft light" that exceeds it's challenge of crafting the light produces a "10 kilos/litres" unit (referred to now as a "unit") of light.

Gimmie Five: For ease we can assume these bonus dice always roll 5's (like defending would).

Setting the difficulty: It would be determined by the GM what the difficulty to craft light would be in any given situation or any given method. But having an equipment that, by its nature, requires the burning a fuel would likely (for most reasonable GM's) create a standard difficulty situation (base dice only). In said situation the first unit of light would be produced after the 3rd bonus die.

Luminance: Each unit of light radiates outward 1/4 turn of range.

How Bright You Are: Assuming (arbitrarily) that perfect daylight is 10 light units we can now get a sense of how bright 1 light unit is (1/10 daylight).

Stacking Light: A source of light crafting will maintain its full units of light intensity at its epicenter but for each quarter range away from the epicenter the light dims by one unit. (this means that 5 units of light will radiate 5 units at the first 1/4 range and 1 unit at the 5/4 range)

Other applications

Pipes and Lines: Just as we are able to assume a 1D6 bonus die can produce 10 kilos/litres of light. We can likewise infer that a bonus die to "move X" can move that type of material in the same way. Each bonus die to "moving X" that exceeds any difficulty would allow us to move 10 kilos/litres (or 1 light units, or by inference [again] 1 essence point) of that material the distance of 1/4 turn of range.

Not-Robots: These movements would have to be predefined as something like piping or power lines because it is not in the nature of inanimate things to make decisions about where or how to travel.

Example

Candle
Description: A wax cylinder surrounding a textile wick.
Restrictions: Material component: fire, Long cast [1 turn], long-term consumable, stoppable [Swift gust of air], stoppable [indelicate movements]
Effects: +3D6 [combustion] damage to craft light
Cost: 16 monies

Chapter 6 - Modules

6.1 - The What, Why and how of Modules

The What: A "module" is a package of additional optional rules that help integrate a play mode, a setting, or a mechanic into the Caste system's structure.

The Why: Alone, Caste is little more then a rubric for playing a game. It is not the game itself, nor does it try to be. It is a framework from which games can be devised, modulated and then integrated into the system. It is the hope that Caste will, one day, consist of thousands of different modules allowing groups of players to play an enormous variance of games and settings without having to learn a new, over-complicated, and restrictive system every time.

The How: For the most part creating a module is rather arbitrary, though a good module will incorporate and balance with existing rules and precedents while keeping itself brief.

The Parts of a Module

Here is a general structural guideline to creating a module that can help readers understand where the changes are occurring:

Module - Name: The name of the module which can give an idea of what it does.
Synopsis: A brief synopsis of what this module does, the how, and the why.

Ogranization: A decent rubric for organizing rulings is as follows:

Global: "Global" is a good header to use for core system alterations/additions, setting specific rulings, and declaring other modules that this one uses.
Talents: For talent rules changes.
Equipment: For equipment rules changes.
Character - Type: For changing the rules for a certain type of character race, class, specie or just character creation in general.

6.2 - Basic module making/balancing Tips.

Simplicity of Globalism: It is the experience of this designer that if everybody has equal access to a mechanic that mechanic becomes difficult to imbalance. If you're applying global rulings, don't be afraid of game imbalance.

Imbalance is Sometimes Good: Sometimes a setting has character types or aspects of the game which are designed to be stronger than other aspects of the game. When creating settings where this is the case, game balance should not be too grave an issue. With that said; it is a sort of Caste art form to add or restrict mechanics to the structure in order to achieve the right feeling of imbalance that properly defines the game. This might require a little practice or even some play testing.

World Restrictions: No two settings or genres are quite the same and very few would use all the variations that can be attained in the Caste system. It is up to the module creator to define the setting they are creating by restricting the world. Feel free to add or remove any part of the system or its core modules. Everything you remove allows the world you are defining to treasure the remaining parts that much more; allowing pieces that don't fit in the setting diminishes the rest of the pieces that do. Be mindful of this and define your setting as exactly as possible.

Steal and Re-use: Before you start making your module, take a look at some of the other modules around the community for already existing mechanics that you would/could use in yours. There are numerous generic modules that could easily be placed in a variety of settings and pilfering, at least the basics, of their work will save you a lot of time and effort.

6.2.1 – The General Theory of Scaling

The General Theory of Scaling is the concept module that allows you to create abstract things like cities, battleships, and gods with the same system used for standard characters.

Stack the Scale: All the suggestions listed take into account that scaling can be applied multiple times and as such can apply the bonuses based on differences in scales between two entities.

Convert or Die: The key to creating a scaled entity that is capable of interacting with other entities outside its scale is to understand that conversions will be made from the standard Caste character. The following are common conversion methods and suggestions:

(Sidenote) Nature: The nature of the Scaled entity, for the most part, would be no different from a standard character save that in addition to it's inherent nature it would reference the scaling module chosen to represent that type of entity.

Armour: Entities of higher scale generally represent Armour in a different way than the regular caste character. As such, when interacting with characters of lower scale, the scaled entity might not take damage in the same way as the lower entity. For things like villages or mega-corporations these armour might simply represent their population (individually per armour or in clusters of people per armour) which might need to be defeated individually (or en masse) for the lower entity to affect the greater. Alternatively armour might simply be a multiplier representing some outragiously large entity (Godzilla?) which would be cumbersome (or silly) to create using the standard system alone.

Essence: Essence generally becomes used to describe, for the scaled entity, something other than simple effort or energy. It might represent, in the case of a city or village, the total assets at its immediate disposal whose expenditures are converted appropriately based on its scale. In supernatural terms scaled essence might mean that the entity has essentially unlimited essence to spend, its total only a rubric for how much can be spent each turn. Likewise it might represent simply how much is available for supernatural effects at its scale.

Action: Action between two entities of the same scale will usually work exactly like any standard challenge. Between entities of separate scales it might be determined that the higher scaled entity gains some bonus (I like using a simplicity) representing its advantage of multitude (in the case of a entites consisting of multiple smaller entities) or its omnipotence (in the case of gods or uuber monsters).

Delay: Sometimes, specifically for multi-person entities, actions take longer and, as such, it is a good idea to set how long it takes for a specific scaled of entity to act against a lower scaled entity. x100 turns (roughly 10 minutes) per scale is a pretty good rubric depending on where the scale begins.

Sub-actions: Because some scaled entities are conglomerations of individuals it might be more prudent, when lower entities are acting against larger multi-person scaled enities, to use individual scales to arbitrate the lower entities actions and be mindful of it with respect to the higher scaled entity.

Damage: In most cases damage can be handled by a multiplier and/or applying a few meta effects to the action (whether the effects are optional or not is another story) with higher scaled entites doing more damage and in some cases in a bigger area or against more targets at once. (x10 damage, +x10 targets or all attacks strike every target in range 0{+1 per additional scale} are good examples)

Range: Scaled entities are often quite a bit larger and it is thus a good practice to think of range as a distace equivilant of their size to what 1 turn of range is to a standard scaled character. (a person is what? 5ft of direct influence and turn or range is 100ft. A towns direct influence is 100,000 feet in diameter so a turn of range is 2,000,000 ft or roughly 600 kilometres or 375 miles)

Talents & Equipment: Talents and equipments can often represent things other than an individuals experiences such as, in the case of multi-person entities, connections or the resources at their desposal. In some cases talents may require a location to represent the asset.

Final Note: Scaling is a concept that is both vague in its rules and useful when applied correctly. It can make tedious tasks simple, dramatically speed up cumbersome encounters and drastically speed up character/entity creation as well as codifying the numbers behind normally vague concepts. Applying the scaling concepts require patience, testing, and a mind for both balance and flavour but once mastered will greatly expand your ability to codify interaction between entites with much less arbitrary justifications.

Example: **Module 6.2.1.1: Guilds, Cities and Worlds**

Keep it Simple: This module employs the simplicities module.

Nature: A Guild is a conglomeration of individual characters and performs actions only through the actions of its many members using this module as a rubric for multi-person actions.

Raising the Scale: For each scale the entity becomes a conglomeration of the entity of the previous scale (guilds are people, villages or corporations are guilds, nations are villages, continents are nations, worlds are continents etc...)

Armour: Each point of armor represents individual members loyal to the guild such that if any are still around the guild still exists. Failure to OBLITERATE a guild will cause various outlying members to assume now vacant positions of power in due time if properly sustained.

Essence: A guilds essence represents the resources at the disposal of the guild as a whole (such as indirect contact with allies and such) when dealing with entities of lower scale each essence should count as a pool of 100 essence that can be spent at a rate of the guilds maximum essence per turn.

Action: A guild gains a simplicity per level of scale above its target.

Delay: A guild takes x100 turns to perform an action against an entity of lower scale. (a Turn time is x100)

Damage: Guilds deal x5 bonus dice in damage per level of scale above their target.

Range: The turn of range for a guild is x100.

Talent & Equipment: Talents for a guild are acquired in the same way as a normal character but represent either universal training for the guild (meaning the talent applies to all entities of one scale lower) or a tangible advantage for the guild at their scale. In both cases it must be represented by some location or tangible influence.

A.0 - Cheat Sheet

A.1 - A Re-visit of the Rules (in Brief)

This is simply an abridged refresher of the main Caste rules.

The Sum of Men: Characters in Caste consist of a nature, a few stats that dictate the capacity of their personal resources, a catalog of their chosen talents, and a list of their equipment.

The Essence of Armor: The two stats that characters in Caste have are armor, which is spent to cancel damage dealt to them, and essence, which is used to perform special action and/or enhance mundane ones. Characters start with 10 of each.

A Caste of Thousands: All actions are organized by a [Descriptive Clause]+[Verb] combination called a "caste".

Acting in Uniform: All castes of actions are performed in the same way: declare the action, roll, and add up appropriate dice sums (two base dice which "explode" on 6 [roll again, add new result, repeat if 6 is rolled] and any extra bonus dice from various sources). Defence uses the same structure but all dice are always considered to roll a flat 5. A defence "roll" is subtracted from an attacking character's attack roll (only a specific defence against a particular caste of action can be used to defend against that caste of action).

Status Effect: Sometimes characters can get or deal out status effects. Actions that can apply status effects apply them if the defence is breached (even if the defender's armour is spent to negate the remaining damage). All status effects have a number called potency and stay active until this is lost. This occurs naturally when breakdown occurs: a character rolling doubles on their base dice removes that much potency from active status effects on them.

Time and Space: In Caste time is measured in Turns (which are 6 seconds) and space (range) is measured in Turns of Range (which is the average distance traveled by an average person in the span of a turn [approximately 33meters or 100ft])

Organized Combat: When necessary GM's can organize a big mess of actions by having players roll the "reflexive initiative" action and organize the order of actions from highest to lowest. Each players' turn consists of movements, and one action.

Grappling: Grappling is a special action with special rules. In summation: a player attempts to grapple, if successful both the grappler and the target can no longer do anything but "press". Successfully pressing allows the presser to do something to the other grappler and/or escape the grapple.

Talent Template: Talents, which are purchased with character points, are complex and need to be discussed in their own section. The following is a summation of talent structure:

[Level of Talent] - Talent Name - [Effect types chosen]
Description: What this talent does in words.
Effect: System specs chosen for the talent.
Restrictions: The restrictions chosen for the talent (if any)
Cost: Any costs associated with the talent.

Equipment: Equipment, which is purchased with monies, works under a similar template as talents and also needs to be properly discussed in its own section.

A.2 – Glossary

This is a list of terms often referenced in the caste book and its modules.

Basics

Nature: The (unwritten) understandings that define what happens to a character in any given environment.

Caste: [descriptive clause]+[verb] that describes an action.

Restriction: A specific non-negative situation under which an entire entity's (action) effects will be relevant.

A Turn: ~6 seconds and/or 33 meters (or 100 ft). Players generally can only move 1 per turn.

Dice

D6: a 6 sided die. Multiples are denoted as XD6 (X being number of dice).

Exploding Dice: Roll again and add that to the roll. If that die explodes: repeat.

Base Dice: 2D6 that explode on 6.

Proficiency: lets base dice explode on 4 rather than 6. Defensive ones negate the attackers first explosion.

Bonus Dice: extra D6's to performing the action. All bonuses stack.

Capacities

Restoration: Capacities generally restore after safe and extended moments of rest and relaxation.

Armour: Spent to reduce damage.

Essence: Spent to expend energy.

Status Effects

Status Effect: A lingering effect that is applied if the action was successful before armour is spent.

Potency: Determines how long a status lasts, is reduced by breakdown.

Breakdown: When base dice roll doubles all status effects on the actor have their potency reduced by the number that rolled double.

Popular Actions

Reflexive initiative: The caste of action that you roll to determine who goes first in complex situations.

Physical Attack: the caste of action for doing any type of physical harm.

Grapple: if successful you and your opponent can do nothing but perform a grappling press.

Grappling Press: Success means you can apply an "applied pressure" status effect that lets you change the situation and perhaps have hazard damage applied to your opponent.

Etcetera

Combat Actions: A character, when it is their turn to act, can both move (+ move actions) and perform one action.

Talents

Haste: Having a haste increased the rate/total of a movement based or extended time action by 1/3.

Talent Level: a talents level determines how many restrictions you can take. Each restriction lets you get an effect point.

effect point: effect points are accumulated with restrictions and used to by effects for a talent in the "Talent Effect Store".

Expanded Cheat Sheet

Simplicity: first simplicity reduces dice pool by ½, second negates it. Additional ones add a bonus die.

Meta Effect: Effects that alter other effects.