EuLabRPG: EUropean LABoratories of Role-Play Gaming to promote school social and emotional culture

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WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME

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What is a Role-Playing Game

It is a playful activity, in which players play the role of fictional characters (Role), who experience and progress through stories and adventures in fantastic worlds. Fantasy, improvisation and personal initiative (Play) let the story develop and evolve in a flow. Rules (Game) make the experience fun, helping players to solve uncertain and adrenaline-pumping situations (such as duels, daring escapes, evading threats and so on).

Roles

Usually, a game group consists of a minimum of three people, up to a maximum of seven. In order to start a game (sessions), players must establish which role they will play:

- **Game Master (GM)**: Only one participant plays the role of the GM. His role is somewhere between a storyteller and a referee. He describes the environments in which the story takes place, plays the inhabitants of the game world (Non-Player Characters or NPCs), brings to life the challenges the players face and tells what happens when the players interact with these elements. If the actions taken by the players are risk-free, he tells what happens; if, on the other hand, the action is likely to fail or generate an unforeseen event, the GM uses the rulebook to make Tests, asking the players to roll the dice. The success or failure of these Tests leads the GM to change the course of the story
- **Player**: Each Player plays a Player Character (PC): one of the protagonists of the story. Players describe how their PC acts in the scenario proposed by the GM and give voice to the dialogues and interactions. The actions of the PCs can make each story truly unique: if the GM describes a rough mountain crevasse, it will be up to the players to tell how their PCs attempt to overcome the obstacle. The beauty of managing a PC is also to see it grow and evolve over the course of the story: expectations, motivations, emotions and uncertainties make each PC unique and memorable

What to do to make the game fun?

Although it is a game of fantasy and imagination, there are some good practices that each participant must keep, so as not to spoil the collective fun:

- **Respect the GM's role**: A player cannot say 'I open the door and behind it I find the artifact I am looking for', because then he is describing both his action and its outcome at the same time. Instead, the player should describe the action ('I approach and try to open the door') and the GM the outcome ("The door opens with a creak. Beyond the threshold it is dark and you see nothing. What do you want to do?").
- **Respect the Player's Role**: A GM might say 'you see a guard stealing from an innocent, this makes you very angry'. This is not correct, because the Player should be free to decide what the

emotional reaction of his PC is. Also, the GM should never describe or say what a PC does instead of his Player.

- The GM does not play against the group: Even when interpreting the threats and difficulties the PCs face, the GM does not play against the group. On the contrary, he tries to make the story interesting and to challenge the PCs. It is important that the GM explains this concept to his Players. Dialogue between GM and Players is important, as interesting stories can arise from their collaboration.
- **Metagame**: This term usually refers to the use of a game strategy, which makes use of information that is external to the game itself. There is a difference between what a Player knows and what his character knows. You could hear something while your PC it's not in the Scene. In that case, you shouldn't use that information. However, not all Metagame is detrimental to the game, but it depends on the context: for example, in an educational use of the game, to help players to find parallels with reality, in order to help them to solve a difficult situation of their Characters, may be acceptable and desirable.

What do you need to play?

If you play all together around a table, you will need at least three six-sided dice (D6), if possible of three different colours, a Character Sheet for each player, pencils and erasers to update the sheet and to take notes. If you play online, you will use a video call app: you will need a good connection, microphone, headset and webcam to make the experience easier. Character Sheets are replaced with digital sheets in .PDF format. Dice are rolled using a Dice Roller, i.e. an app for rolling dice.

Rules Summary

What is a Test?

There are actions whose outcome is not a foregone conclusion and whose failure may give rise to unforeseen situations. In such cases, players can make a Test by rolling three 6-sided dice (3D6) and checking the result (see below). Each time they have to roll the dice, players describe their actions and the resulting Approach: how they decide to act. Do they want to play smart or act on impulse? Speak to the heart of the interlocutor or excite those around them?

Approaches

Each Approach involves one of the five Stats possessed by each Wanderer. These are social and emotional skills, which describe how the Wanderer behaves. Each Stats has a numerical value: this is a reserve of points (pool) that the Player may spend after making a Test, to modify the result obtained. The points spent can be refreshed at the end of a session or by using the Characters' Skills.

- Ardour: Acting on impulse, with eagerness and vigour, driven by emotions. This can be verbal or physical impetuosity, as in the case of a confrontation with an opponent.
- Cunning: Acting shrewdly and quickly, exploiting weakness and distraction of the other person. This may be agility and physical quickness, but also quick thinking and improvisation.
- Empathy: Evaluating or judging a situation or person, understanding his feelings. It allows one to understand motivations, moods, body language and the unspoken.
- Passion: Helping others, at the expense of one's own well-being. It's used when someone speaks from the bottom of his heart or to defend someone in combat.
- Will: Demonstrating tenacity and resistance against adversity. Useful to appeal to one's own energy and inner strength.

How to make a Test

The Player describes his actions, which determine an Approach, then he rolls 3D6 of different colours. Before he rolls, he decides which ones is the Destiny Die, the Setbacks Die and the Opportunities Die. Once the dice have been rolled, first you read the result of the Destiny Die: with an Even result you only look at the Setbacks Die result; with an Odd result you only look at the Opportunities Die result.

- Setbacks Die: in addition to the normal Successes or Failures, this Die adds additional setbacks, forcing players to change strategy, developing adaptability.
- Opportunities Die: it provides additional opportunities. PCs can obtain more info's or support to reach their goal or conclude their task.

The scheme below represents the Dice results:

Setbacks Die

1: Failure

2-3: Failure with Setback

4-5: Success with Setback

6: Success

Opportunities Die

1: Failure

2-3: Failure with Opportunity

4-5: Success with Opportunity

6: Success

How to change the Dice result?

Once the player has rolled the dice, he may spend points from the Stat chosen with the Approach to change the final result of the Die. For each point spent, the final result of the Setbacks or Opportunity Die is increased by one (1:1 ratio). For example, if the result on the Opportunity Die is 1 (Failure), Matthew spends 1 point from the Ardour Pool to turn the 1 (Failure) into a 2 (Failure with Opportunity).

What are Strong and Weak Point for?

Each PC has one Strong and one Weak Point (called Quirks), indicated on the Character Sheet. Once per session for each of his Quirks, instead of making a Test, a player may decide to:

- Play the Strong Point: to get a Success with Opportunity.
- Play the Weak Point: to get a Success with Setback, regaining the use of a Skill he has previously used.

Regain Skills

Each Skill can be used a maximum of three times per session. You can refresh the uses at the end of a session, or using **Weak Point** or other game conditions.

Success

The action succeeds and the PC achieves his goal. The GM tells what happens and describes the outcome.

Setback or Opportunity

The GM describes a complication or an advantage that enriches the outcome of the action. For example, a 'Failure with Opportunity' means that the action fails, but the GM brings into play an element previously ignored by the Player, but that can be helpful.

Failure

It represents a serious consequence. Based on the Approach, the PC who failed suffers either a Physical Condition (e.g., Dislocated Ankle) or a Mental Condition (e.g., Humiliated), invented by the GM. A PC may have a maximum of 4 Physical Conditions and 4 Mental Conditions (some Skills can increase this limit). If he exceeds this limit, the PC dies. Some Skills let you remove the Conditions.