

Valherjar: The Chosen Slain

Introductory Rules



Overview

Welcome to *Valherjar: The Chosen Slain* and our introductory rules for the AOR Gaming System. Within this PDF you will get a quick glimpse at the meat and bones of the AOR System, so new players can get a feel for the basic mechanics of the system and existing Narrators have a simple resource to share with players in their games. Please note that this is not designed to be a comprehensive view of the AOR System and is missing a number of aspects included within the *Valherjar: The Chosen Slain* Core Rulebook. It also lacks any story or character information and so will not be enough to play with on its own. If you would like to try an actual sample of play please see the *Valherjar* Quick Play Demo on our website (<http://www.gmpress.com>).

The Purpose of Roleplaying Systems

Regardless of what roleplaying game you play or what system it uses, the purpose of those rules are twofold. The first is to add an element of dramatic

chance to a gaming experience, and the second is to give a neutral way for both players and Narrators to resolve those dramatic chances. This, essentially, means that in those times when a character attempts an action with an outcome decided by a mixture of skill and luck the game's system is employed to determine the action's success or failure.

This is not to say, however, that a system ever needs to be used or that the rules it provides are set in stone. Regardless of whether you are playing *Valherjar* using the AOR system, or something of your own device, we would strongly encourage you to use the rules of the game only so much as they benefit and enhance your gaming experience. It is entirely possible that a number of actions characters will perform can be automatically successful, automatically fail, or have whatever dramatically appropriate outcome the Narrator sees fit. It is also encouraged that each individual gaming group modify or create rules to make their gaming experience as personally rewarding as possible. Thus, try and view the mechanics included in this book as guidelines rather than rules, and never consider them to be inflexible or required.

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The AOR Gaming System

Game Monkeys' AOR Gaming System is based on fluidity of action and realism, and is designed to bring a fast paced and authentic feel to your game's action. Using the AOR System, players will resolve all aspects of their actions on a single roll of three 6-sided dice, and play will progress quickly through round after round of politics and combat. It is designed to be fast, exciting, realistic and brutal (the average character life expectancy will be much shorter than with many other roleplaying systems). It also maximizes player control and pressure, with a revolutionary system for allowing them to decide how exactly their character's action is resolved.

AOR System Basics

Designed to provide a simple but functional tool for resolving and determining the effects of character actions, the AOR System utilizes a very basic combination of character statistics and random dice rolls to create results. Its use requires that a player participate in a **Test** to determine if an action succeeds or fails. In these Tests players combine their character's **Attributes**, or inherent abilities, with their **Skills**, or learned talents, and then add the random element of a dice roll to create a **Target Roll**, which is then compared to a **Target Number** to determine success.

Tests

Much like any magnificent movie, novel or fable, the heart of any great gaming experience is conflict. The tension associated with the encountering of conflict and the drama of its resolution is the backbone of good storytelling, and any *Valherjar* Operation or Campaign should be rife with surprising and uncertain clashes.

To resolve these events *Valherjar* employs a system involving Tests to determine the event's outcome. To perform a Test, players combine a character's appropriate Attribute and Skill rating with any potential environmental modifiers and the random element of a dice roll. That total is then compared to a Target Number, and its success or failure is determined by the result.

The Target Roll

The Target Roll (abbreviated **TR**) represents a character's attempt to perform an action in game. A Target Roll is composed of a dice roll, plus the character's Ability, plus a modifier based on their Skill, and is compared to either a Target Number or another

character's Target Roll to determine the action's success.

Target Numbers

When a player declares that their character intends to perform an action, the Narrator will assign them a Target Number (abbreviated **TN**). That Target Number is composed, at the Narrator's discretion, of a number of factors including the action's overall difficulty, any environmental factors (such as blinding light or lack thereof, high winds or unstable ground), and any direct opposition to the action (from a character making attempts to resist, defend themselves, or taking cover from an attack).

Difficulties and Modifiers

The default Target Number for dramatic actions (typical player performed actions) such as shooting a gun in combat or driving a car at high speeds can be modified by both external and internal factors. Slippery floors, high winds, injury and a number of other issues can all affect how difficult the action is to perform. These are applied as either positive or negative modifiers that make the action easier or more difficult respectively.

Attributes

Characters in *Valherjar*, like any person in real life, are a complex mesh of both natural talent and learned abilities. **Attributes** represent the former in that equation, the natural and instinctive strengths and weaknesses that a character is born with and grows through a lifetime's worth of development and experience. They represent a character's inherent ability and are used as the base to which skills and other learned talents are added.

Valherjar uses two sets of Attributes, one Primary and one Secondary. Each set of statistics serves distinctly different purposes, but both act as defining characteristics.

Primary Attributes represent the core, raw and inherent factors that govern every action — physical, social, mental and emotional — that a character attempts. They are the key qualities in determining how effective a character is, and are used in every action a character performs.

Secondary Attributes also represent innate abilities, but are derived from combining Primary Attributes. Unlike Primary Attributes, they are not used directly in Tests but instead act as defining characteristics for ancillary traits.

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Primary Attributes

The AOR System uses eight primary Attributes to create the physical, mental and emotional make-up of a character. Each Attribute represents a specific category of physiological effectiveness, and they can be used in conjunction with a Skill rating to determine the character's overall effectiveness in performance of that type of task or on their own for a picture of the character's raw ability.

Dexterity (Dex)

Paul watched absently as the muzzle of his rifle rose and fell hypnotically in time with his breath and vibrated softly to his heartbeat. Down the line of the barrel, some 850 yards away, was his target and in his very unprofessional boredom he alternated between glancing at him through his 20-power scope and painting little pictures in the air with the muzzle break. He knew the signal and was on guard for it, but he'd been in this same hide for almost 13 hours and bugged if he wasn't bored out of his skull.

Then, abruptly, it happened and he snapped to attention. The Hersir plant meeting with the target accepted a small plain envelope from one of the target's bodyguards, slid it into his suit's breast pocket, and tapped it twice. As the Hersir turned to get into his limo Paul brought the rifle to a near statuesque steadiness, focused all of the muscles in his lower arms and hands into position and centered his world on the Garm. He flexed and then relaxed his eye around the scope, took in a slow, smooth breath, and exhaled, reciting the mantra that guided his hands: "sight alignment, breath control, trigger squeeze."

Touted by world-class marksmen, racecar drivers and video game players as the most critical of Skills, Dexterity represents a character's fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. It is the Attribute used for any activity that requires manipulation with the hands or fingers and is applied to activities such as shooting, driving and lock-picking.

Agility (Ag)

The entry was dark, near black, and made moreso by the transition from the noon-day sun. Jesse gripped the longsword tighter than was healthy, but it gave him comfort as he stood just inside the doorway waiting for his eyes to adjust to the light. His left hand snaked out, trying to touch the wall that he hoped was just beyond his shoulder, and that's when he saw it — a flash against the darkness, the reflection of the open door off the wetness of a bright yellow eye.

Instinctively he slid back and swung the blade, drawing his elbow to the inside of his body and his hand,

palm up, across his torso in a rising 45-degree arc. The steel made solid, biting contact as it hit scaly flesh, but the momentum of the creature's leap was too strong and their bodies collided in the darkness. Winded from the impact and pitching backwards out of control, Jesse released the sword hilt and pivoted his weight. As they rolled to a stop in the light of the entry, he was straddling the monster and driving his elbow into the side of its snout over and over again.

The cornerstone of gold medal athletes and martial prowess, the Agility Attribute governs a character's nimbleness, grace, balance and adroitness. Applied to such activities as martial arts, melee combat and gymnastics, Agility is the Attribute used for most physically active Tests.

Strength (Str)

He could see the group screeching to a halt before him, and if he'd had the oxygen left in his lungs he'd have shouted "What the hell are you doing?!?" Instead, he slowed to a trot and wormed his way through the crowd. The throng, still naked except for the surgical robes they had managed to find on the way from the holding cells, were enraptured in cries of alarm and panicked mewings as the foremost repeatedly pounded with futile fists and jiggled the knob of the steel fire door. Locked despite a "Must remain open during business hours" sign, the door loomed impenetrable before them and seemed to seal the small group of human guinea pigs in their doom.

Absently, Michael stared into the empty breach of his shotgun, wishing pointlessly for just one more round to blow the lock. That miracle failing to materialize, he told the huddled mass to back away, handed one of them his shotgun, planted his foot, and spun low and hard into a thrusting side kick. The door shuttered, a concaved dent appearing where his foot impacted, and he cursed to himself.

He was strong enough to get through it, no doubt about it, but it was going to take time — and he could only pray that they had enough to spare.

Vitaly important to more than just body builders and fitness gurus, Strength is a measure of a character's total body power for lifting, towing, pushing and carrying. It is essential in determining the amount a character can be encumbered with and how much unarmed and melee damage they inflict.

Endurance (End)

It had been a long, hard walk up 18 flights of stairs and the thrashing, whining ball of effeminate punches and kicks thrown over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes wasn't helping any. Periodically a stray blow had caught Kip in the head or groin, but truthfully, he didn't mind

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all that much. The asshole pusher he was carrying wouldn't tell him where the shipment was coming in, hadn't believed him when Kip threatened to crush the little shit like a bug, and so this gem of an idea inspired by an old Frank Miller comic book had suddenly popped into his head.

So after a quick and disabling bash to the side of the guy's neck, Kip had grabbed him fireman's style, kicked in the office building's back door, and was now huffing his way up. Finally hitting the roof, he booted the access door open, giggled like some kind of homicidal schoolgirl, and trotted to the building's edge on now surprisingly light feet.

By then the pusher had gotten his wits back and was about to make a good show of it when suddenly one hand tightly gripped his ankle and another grabbed his groin. He heard a huff of both exertion and glee, then found himself thrust out over the ledge and hanging facedown, looking at a 200-foot drop.

Sweat beading on his face, Kip smiled, nodded and whispered to himself, "What do you know, the scream is worth the work."

Though most directly applied to a distance runs and withstanding consistent physical exertion, Endurance represents more than just a character's cardiovascular health. It also includes their potential for receiving punishment and maintaining stamina. Essential to anyone who anticipates prolonged activity or extensive effort, Endurance is directly applied to Tests involving physical fatigue and to determine health-related secondary Attributes.

Intelligence (Int)

There was a pattern here — she knew it! The problem was finding it.

Pauline again scanned the papers spread out on the table before her and cursed under her breath. More than 40 hours of inspecting the parking garage inch by inch with all manner of high-tech gadgets — days spent reviewing surveillance tapes, suspect trails and the persistent hacking of the Aganti Corporation's firewalls and passwords to monitor for any kind of unusual activity — had not gotten her any closer to figuring out how, and why, people were disappearing from their parking garage. Initially she had thought it was a plot by the corrupt bastards who composed Aganti's corporate management, but now she wasn't so sure. The whole company was scared shitless by whatever was happening, and the execs did not seem to be exempt.

She leaned back, ran her hands roughly through her hair, and exhaled in frustration, her breath ruffling the papers and sliding them on top of each other — and that's when she saw it. The locations of the abductions

had all occurred in an angle stretching through the floors and leading to a small equipment locker, unnoticed and barely marked on her blueprints, stuffed away in the lowermost southeast corner of the garage. She was right, there had been a pattern, and now she knew exactly where the victims were being taken.

Including all forms of knowledge and analysis, Intelligence is directly applied to any Test or Action that requires intellectual thought. Used in activities ranging from solving enigmas to programming computers, Intelligence indicates the character's overall intellectual capacity.

Perception (Per)

Larry spotted the darker-than-normal shadow under the table as soon as he walked through the back door, even in the darkness of the kitchen. He made note of it, positioned himself so that he could keep his peripheral vision on it as he hung his keys on the wall hook, and started towards the sink. Whoever it was had been watching him long enough that they knew he would come in through the back door and likely thought he'd follow his usual pattern of going straight for the home-office computer down the hall. The juke to the sink was to buy time as his mind desperately raced over his options.

He grabbed a mug off the novelty tree on the counter, opened the fridge door towards the intruder to mask his actions, and felt a wash of energy as his Runes came to life. Below the fridge door, across the kitchen, he could now see a thick leathery foot jutting from beneath the table and decided to hedge his bets. He grabbed the frame and pulled hard, bringing the refrigerator down across the kitchen floor, and bolted for the broadsword above the hearth.

Perception represents a character's total awareness of the world around them and includes their ability to see, hear, smell or sense items that are of interest or out of place. It is used any time a character wishes to pick out a path to move stealthily, notice occurring events or gather environmental information.

Charisma (Char)

Though the room didn't actually come to a stop when she entered, Cheryl knew that most of the eyes had turned to meet her and that her next few movements would be critical. She entered gracefully, seemed to nod and smile at no one in particular, and flowed in among the partygoers. She sauntered to her target, moving delicately through the crowd, and made direct eye contact with the man at the center of the room.

She paused just long enough to make sure he (and the three women fawning over him) were sharply aware of her presence, then interrupted him with a gentle clearing

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of her throat. "I think now would be a good time for you to join me for a drink, Monsignor O'Riley."

The women, offended and appalled, murmured questions and challenges amongst themselves. Each wondered who the newcomer was, but none were brazen enough to confront her directly. She, in turn, smiled knowingly at O'Riley and waited. It only took two breaths for him to respond, "Ladies, if you'll excuse me..."

"Cheryl." she said lightly

"...Cheryl and I must make a trip to the bar."

Far more than mere physical beauty, Charisma represents the overall allure and appeal of a character and their presence. While a high Charisma can indeed indicate an attractive or even beautiful character, it may also demonstrate a particularly charming personality, an enthralling aura or a simply likable demeanor.

Will

The knife was surprisingly shiny in the dim streetlights and shook visibly in the young man's sweaty hands. His stance was low, but obviously more suited for running than fighting, and Constance couldn't help but laugh a little under her breath. He mistook the laughter for some kind of whining fear and was somewhat emboldened by it.

"Your money, bitch!" he choked out, "Give me your money or I'm gonna cut you!"

Her eyes flowed up his arm from the blade, across his acne-ridden face, and locked firmly with his own. In that brief moment there was a battle, so subtle he may not have even been aware it occurred, that was over before it began. She relaxed, drew her hand from her pocket, and extended it as she spoke. "No, I like my money and think I'll keep it. But I'll make you a different deal instead. Give me that knife, and promise me you'll be in school tomorrow, and I won't turn your knees to powder and make you spend the rest of your life selling food stamps from a wheelchair."

He gazed at her, slowly shrinking beneath his black baseball cap turned sideways, juvenile little brain desperately trying to figure out what had gone so horribly wrong, then dropped his knife and ran.

A combination of mental tenacity and capacity for quick thinking, Will represents a character's overall intellectual alacrity and steadfastness. Governing resolve, speed of thought, and indomitableness, Will indicates how difficult a character is to intimidate or outthink.

The values associated with each Attribute not only express the character's relative ability but are

also the actual ratings used when performing a relevant Test. Each Attribute is typically rated on a scale of 0 to 6 to determine its potency and acuity.

At a rating of 0 an Attribute is considered underdeveloped and below average. This means it is not a legitimate contributing factor to a performed action's effectiveness and does not enhance a character's attempt at a Test. A character with a Dexterity of 0 tends to have "stiff hands" and is likely to drop things or have difficulty with things requiring fine motor skills. An Agility of 0 indicates a clumsy character who is heavy on his feet and slow. A Strength rating of 0 means that a character is exceptionally weak and muscularly underdeveloped. A character with a 0 Endurance will be easily winded and fragile. A 0 Intelligence belongs to a character who is slow-witted and dense. A Perception of 0 means a character is unaware and fairly oblivious to their surroundings. A Charisma rating of 0 means the character is not particularly likeable and is generally unappealing. Finally, a character with a Will of 0 is easily pressured and decidedly unassertive. Character's with an Attribute rating of 0 may, at their Narrator's discretion, be prohibited from performing, or receive additional penalties when attempting, actions dependant on that Attribute

Ratings at 1 are considered the universal average in the AOR System and will be the bulk of a mundane character's Attributes. A rating of 1 gives a character reasonable Perception, Intelligence, and Dexterity. It means that they can manage basic feats of balance and Agility, maintain Endurance to sprint short distances or combination walk and jog approximately a mile, and have the Strength to bench press 150 pounds, or carry a 30- to 40-pound load without exceptional struggle. Character's with an average Charisma are basically likeable but unremarkable, and an average Will means they are grounded but are still vulnerable to peer and social pressure.

Attributes rated at 3 are considered extraordinary and are indicative of professionally elite abilities. It is also the highest rating that a starting character in the AOR System may have. A Dexterity of 3 would belong to a precision stunt driver or Special Forces sniper. A champion martial artist or Olympic gymnast has an Agility of 3. Marathon runners have a 3 Endurance, PhD research scientists have an Intelligence of 3, and Charisma of 3 makes a character exceedingly likable, a natural center of attention and easily memorable. With a 3 Perception characters are aware of subtle and easily missed details or movements; with a 3 Will they're

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inspirational and extremely difficult to dissuade; and with a 3 Strength a character can bench press 400 pounds and comfortably carry more than 100.

Ratings of 4 belong only to “adepts” or exceptionally gifted people, and effectively represent the maximum of human potential. Ratings of 4s may indicate record breakers and historically remembered masters of their abilities.

Among the Valherjar, where it is not uncommon to find characters who have trained for several hundred years or are magically enhanced, ratings can reach 5 or even 6, but this is well beyond mortal capabilities.

Secondary Attributes

The Secondary Attributes included within the AOR System combine Primary Attributes to create essential character information that, while not used directly as the basis for Tests, are essential to giving a broader picture of your character’s effectiveness and well-being.

Initiative Base (IB)

The most arbitrary of all the AOR Attributes, Initiative Base acts as a gauge for how inherently fast a character is to act and at what rate they process information in high-stress conditions. It is used as the basis for determining the timing and frequency of character actions, and is derived from their Intelligence, Agility, Will and Perception.

Health

Based on a combination of Strength, Will and Endurance, Health represents the general condition a character is in and how much abuse, damage and fatigue they can endure. It is recorded in check boxes on the character’s sheet, and characters suffer penalties as they take damage and becomes wound, or overexert themselves and becomes fatigued. There are two measures of Health; Fortitude and Vitality. Fortitude governs physical injury, as from falls or attacks, while Vitality indicates the character’s level of general weariness and exhaustion.

Luck

The hallmark of gamblers, con men, explorers and adventurers throughout history, the Luck Attribute represents that inexplicable dash of good fortune that has let the auspicious occasionally escape peril. Luck both serves as a relative quantifier for how randomly fortunate a character is as well as allowing them to “cheat” certain encounters to produce a more desirous effect.

Skills

Where Attributes represent inherent abilities in broad fields of scope, **Skills** quantify very specific learned talents and knowledge that a character has spent time to acquire. Each Skill further refines and defines a character’s strengths and weaknesses, but is only relevant to a very specific task. They are applied exclusively to Tests that involve their use and thus are much more finite in scope than Attributes, but are significantly easier to advance. Their ratings apply directly to relevant Tests and will prove to be one of the most defining aspects of any character. There are 32 default Skills in *Valherjar* and space for an additional one of your own design listed on each character sheet.

Along with the Skill name and description, a number of defining factors are also listed. Immediately below the Skill name is the standard Attribute used when Testing with that Skill. Next there is a default modifier that is added to any Test in which you’re using a Skill that your character is not proficient in. Finally, there are options and details for Specializations.

In the AOR System, Skills are individually rated in a manner virtually identical to Attributes, and most of the same rules apply. A Skill rated at 1 is considered average, at 3 is expert, and at 4 is effectively the mortal human maximum. Valherjar and other supernatural creatures can gain Skills at ratings of 6 or more.

Also listed with each Skill are descriptions of character proficiencies at “average,” “exceptional” and “expert.” These descriptions are meant to be used as comparative references only and correspond to the relative proficiencies. Thus, an average Skill rating would be 1, an exceptional rating would be 2 or 3, and an expert rating would be 3 or 4, while a 5 or 6 would represent supernatural talents.

Specializations

When a character becomes professionally proficient in a Skill, having a rating of 3 or higher, the character gains access to Specializations. They gain one Specialization automatically when their rating reaches 3 but can also acquire more through spending Veteran Points (see Veteran Points later in this chapter for more details). Each Specialization gives the character a specialized ability within the Skill and can often provide additional modifiers to Skill use.

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Actions and Tests

AOR Tests at a Glance

1. Declare the action to be performed
2. Roll 3D6
3. Arrange the dice into a D6 Action Opportunity Roll and a 2D6 Target Roll within 3-seconds
4. Add the character's relevant Attribute and an appropriate Skill to the 2D6 Target Roll
5. Compare the total Target Roll (dice roll plus applicable Attribute and Skill ratings) to the Target Number and determine Degrees of Success

The AOR System is designed so that characters may perform actions and make Tests with a combination of simplicity, maximum player control and frenetic pacing. It uses a number of factors that are unique to the system and allow for fast and exciting gameplay.

All Tests in the AOR System are resolved using a single roll of 3 six sided dice (3D6). Of these three dice, one should stand out by size, pattern or color as being different than the other two. This is critical as the odd dice plays a vital role during Test resolution.

To begin a test the player will declare the action and its intended effect to the Narrator. He then rolls 3D6 and arranges them into both a 2D6 Target Roll

and a single D6 Action Opportunity Roll (AOR) in any manner he sees fit and at his total discretion. The Target Roll is compared to a Target Number and is used to determine if the action succeeds or fails, the AOR determines the action's speed, and the odd-colored die, called the **Effect Die**, determines how effective the action performed was.

Actions

Meaning more than just a physical motion, the term "action" is used to describe any complex activity that a character attempts to perform within the context of a dramatic moment. Shooting at an enemy, seducing an information source, making a mad dash across an alley opening, intimidating a snitch, leaping a crevice, hacking a computer or solving a trigonometry equation are all examples of actions. With each action a character attempts, a number of factors enter into play. What is their innate/inherent ability level? How skilled are they in its performance? How difficult is the task in general? Are there any adverse conditions affecting them? Once the action is declared, and the contributing factors are determined, the player rolls his dice.

The Target Roll

Once the three dice are rolled, two of them, strictly at the player's discretion, are separated for use



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in the Target Roll. The total value of these two dice is combined with the character's relevant Attribute and Skill ratings, along with any additional modifiers, and the total becomes the Target Roll (abbreviated **TR**). The Target Roll is compared to the Target Number to determine the action's Degree of Success.

Target Numbers

Target Numbers represent the relative difficulty of an action and indicate the total number that a Target Roll will have to meet or beat in order to be successful. Assigned by the Narrator and modified through a number of factors, Target Numbers (abbreviated **TN**) will range from 6 to 20 depending on the complexity, desired effect and opposing factors of the action.

The default Target Number for any dramatic action is 12. We use the term "dramatic action" as it is meant to include the actions that a typical heroic character will wish to do over the course of a normal game, such as firing a gun in combat, picking a complicated lock, hacking a computer or using Magic

Other tasks of varying difficulties have different standard Target Numbers. As a general rule, each time an action becomes considerably more difficult it requires an extra 2 points to succeed, while each time the action becomes easier it loses 2 points from its difficulty. This concept is known as the Degree of Difficulty, and may range considerably depending on the task being performed. Some standard examples for each Degree of Difficulty are as follows:

Easy:

Target Number of 6

An easy task is a near-daily activity that is only typically Tested when a character is distracted or otherwise lacking focus. Examples include navigating a cluttered floor or operating a TV remote control.

Simple:

Target Number of 8

A simple action is an activity that is accomplished nearly daily, but that requires a level of attention to ensure its completion. Examples could include backing out of a driveway or using a padlock.

Routine:

Target Number of 10

Routine actions are activities that characters typically accomplish but still have a reasonable chance of failure. Shooting a gun at a firing range or sweet-talking a person who has no reason to help you are routine challenges.

Dramatic (Standard):

Target Number of 12

The typical difficulty in *Valherjar* Tests, dramatic actions are easy, simple or routine activities that are performed under stress, or that a normal person would have a moderate chance of completing in any circumstances. Shooting a weapon in combat, using keys to open a lock while being chased or lying to gain information are examples of dramatic challenges.

Challenging:

Target Number of 14

A challenging action is one in which a normal person has a high chance of failure but that is fairly standard for a professional in the field, such as weaving through traffic or arguing a losing position in court.

Exceptional:

Target Number of 16

Only possible by someone exceptionally proficient in the activity, an exceptional difficulty could include shooting a weapon accurately at its maximum range or hitting a major league fastball.

Heroic:

Target Number of 18

Heroic actions are the performances that even experts brag about and are viewed on as impossible by anyone not both incredibly gifted and professionally skilled. Inventing a form of cold fusion or driving 100 mph in rush hour against traffic could be heroic events.

Nearly Impossible:

Target Number of 20

Impossible for the normal mortal doesn't always mean impossible for a Valherjar or their supernatural enemies, and tasks with this difficulty would appear as nearly magical to anyone viewing them. Impossible actions could be shooting down a plane with a rifle or landing on your feet after a 10-story fall.

These numbers are entirely at the Narrator's discretion, however, and players are encouraged to avoid assuming the Target Number they need to succeed. It is entirely possible that when performing an action, players will have not accounted for various known or unknown factors. These factors, called Modifiers, can affect the difficulty of the action a number of ways (both positively or negatively) and are added (or subtracted) from the Target Number. Some examples of Modifiers are listed below

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Common Modifiers

Action being performed in high winds, in rain, on slick surface	TN +1
Character is crawling or in other disadvantageous position	TN +2 to +4
Character is moving excessively or is on an unstable surface	TN +2
Character is under extra pressure	TN +1
Other characters are helping performing character	TN -2 per character
Target is caught unaware or is blindsided	TN -2 or -4
Target is immobilized	TN -2 or -4
Target is in heavy cover (3/4 of the body covered)	TN +4
Target is in partial cover (1/2 of the body covered)	TN +2
Target is laying prone at a distance	TN +4
Target is partially concealed (obscured from view)	TN +1 or +2
Target wants to cooperate	TN -1 or -2
There is bad, distracting or insufficient light	TN +1 to +6

Degrees of Success

Each point by which a Target Roll beats a Target Number represents an increased level of accomplishment in performing the action and counts as a Degree of Success (abbreviated **DoS**). Degrees of Success allows both players and Narrators to determine not only if the action succeeded or failed, but by what margin.

During play both Narrators and players should use Degrees of Success as a quintessentially defining factor for action outcome, and a number of game mechanics will incorporate DoS during their resolutions (most notably when determining an attack's damage).

A Target Roll that has no Degree of Success (and so is even to Target Number) is considered performed at the minimum and is a bit stodgy in its accomplishment.

A single Degree of Success (1 more than the Target Number) indicates a respectably successful action. Other characters will look on the activity as being completely accomplished.

Two Degrees of Success (+2) represent a task accomplished perfectly. There is little room for debate or dissatisfaction with the performance of the action.

Three or four Degrees of Success (+3 or +4) represent an exceptionally performed task and one worthy of praise. You have not only done what was expected of you but also improved on the process or gone the extra mile to smooth out any rough transitions.

Five or more Degrees of Success (+5 or more) represent an artistic brilliance in the task, which is to be held up as an example of maximum accomplishment.

The Action Opportunity Roll

For each Test a character participates in a player rolls three dice. Two join with a character's Attributes and Skills and become the Target Roll to determine if the action succeeds or fails. The other, also chosen at the player's discretion, becomes the Action Opportunity Roll (abbreviated AOR) and represents the dedication a character has to accomplishing the action quickly, the overall speed of the action and the likelihood of a character getting additional actions within the Round.

In play the AOR will serve two distinct functions. First, it will determine how fast relative to the character's maximum speed the action occurs. Whether the action is swinging a broadsword or hacking a computer, an AOR of 6 indicates the character's maximum focus on speed, while a 1 demonstrates a decided lack of relative speed on the action. Narrators should implement this effect in game (for example, forcing a character who scores low on their AOR to take significantly longer than normal to pick a lock or hotwire a car). Secondly, in combat or other situations in which characters are all vying for the fastest actions, the AOR is added to a character's Initiative Base to determine their total Initiative. This determines what order within the Round the action occurs and can be critical in a combat situation.

The Effect Die

The final aspect of resolving an AOR Test lies in the single distinguished die among the three: The Effect Die. During the rolling of a Test the special properties of this dice are ignored (it can be used as either a Target

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Roll or an AOR with no restrictions) but once an action is determined to have succeeded the Effect Die comes in to play. It is designed to determine the basic effect of the action and adds a final bit of luck and chance to the equation.

The Effect Die, much like the Action Opportunity Roll, can serve two distinct purposes. First, it demonstrates the relative effect of the action and indicates the action's outcome in a vacuum. Secondly it combines with the action's Degree of Success to determine the action's absolute resolution. This gives a wide range of possible effects for even the simplest of actions and allows for a considerable depth in its resolution, and thus can have a profound impact within the game. It could mean, for example, that a gunshot was placed straight and true, right on target, but happened to miss any vital internal organs and so did minimal damage. Or it could mean that a hacker flew by a computer's encryption but unfortunately missed some vital information during his search.

Opposed Tests

Most of the time a character performs an action it will exclusively involve their roll against a Target Number to determine success or failure. Even though many of these actions will have effects on other characters, they still rely exclusively on that player's roll and the character's attributes and skills. Performing standard attacks (such as shooting or stabbing a person, for example) are not Opposed Tests even though they directly affect another person.

In some instances, however, Tests can be directly opposed by another character, and the formula for their resolution changes slightly. In the event that two characters are in direct opposition to each other, then the resolution is determined by who succeeded more. These actions can be directly opposed (such as when two characters are arm wrestling) or indirectly opposed (such as when a character is trying to sneak quietly and unnoticed past a set of guards).

To perform Opposed Tests, both players make a complete Target Roll for their characters, including all modifiers, and compare the results. The highest Target Roll wins, and the difference between the two becomes the Degree of Success. Note that all standard modifiers still apply (though they may not apply to all participants equally) and if the action would still require a Test if unopposed, then the Target Roll must also beat the appropriate Target Number to succeed.

Finally, in certain cases there are Automatically Opposed Tests. Generally this occurs when one character is attempting to perform an action on or

against another character who will naturally and automatically try to resist it. In these cases the Automatically Opposing character (the one whom the action is directed towards) gets a free Target Roll for their Opposed Test (one that is independent of their Action's TR). This is done to allow a character a natural chance of resistance without distorting their intended action. In these cases, for ease of tracking the multiple effects occurring, it is suggested that each player have an additional 2D6 available to make this simultaneous roll without disrupting their action AOR and Target Roll.

So, for example, let's say Tyler and Ryley are both rushing to be the first through a door. Because they are both in direct competition of a single goal the Narrator decides it is an Opposed Test. They both declare their actions and make Athletics Tests as normal, but then compare the totals. Whoever scores highest manages to get to the door first and the difference between the two is the Degree of Success.

If, on the other hand, Ryley wanted to sneak up on Tyler and take him unawares, the Test is resolved slightly differently. Because Ryley's ability to sneak quietly will be directly contrasted with Tyler's ability to hear/detect him, the action will still require an Opposed Test. However, since Tyler won't be spending his action to try and detect Ryley, and will instead be using his innate awareness passively, the Narrator may decide it is an Automatically Opposed Test. In this case, Ryley will be declaring his action and resolving his Stealth Test normally, but Tyler will be given an automatic 2D6 + Attribute + Skill Target Roll and will not have to use a declared action within the Round.

Attribute Only Tests

In certain situations it may not be appropriate to add a Skill Rating to an Attribute during a Test. To preserve equity in these situations, it is recommended that the Narrator either allow the player to double the relevant Attribute Rating or lower the Target Number required by 2 (one full difficulty level).

Automatic Success and Failures

In addition to the standard system used for resolving Tests there are three other results the dice themselves can impart on the action: Automatic Failure, Critical Failure and Critical Success. An Automatic Failure is a roll that will not allow the action to succeed, while Critical Success and Critical Failures are rolls that produce extremely dramatic situations.

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Critical Success: When all three of an action's dice are rolled as 6s (both Target Dice and the AOR), it is always considered a Critical Success, a successful action with a minimum DoS of 2. With a Critical Success a character can accomplish an action that might normally be impossible (within reason, of course), and it should be roleplayed as a considerable and noteworthy action.

Automatic Failure: Should the two dice of a Target Roll be composed only of 1s, or total 4 or less when added with the Attribute and Skill being used, the action automatically fails. This effect is regardless of the total after modifiers and is included for any type of action the character may be performing.

Critical Failure: A roll producing three 1s is the antithesis of a Critical Success. Where a Critical Success guarantees success of an action, a Critical Failure not only guarantees failure but also indicates failure in a dire or even catastrophic sense. A Critical Failure could indicate a character losing their footing and falling, a sword breaking or a gun jamming or exploding.

The 3-Second Rule

The AOR System is designed for a combination of speed and realism and incorporates a number of

facilities designed to enhance its gameplay. One of the rules we suggest, but that is by no means required, is the use of a 3-second time limit for players to arrange their dice. Once any players acting have declared their action, the Narrator tells them all to roll simultaneously and slowly counts to three. By the end of the three-count players must have their dice arranged and distinctly separated on the table. This adds a strong element of pressure to the gameplay, maintains a fast clip of play and prevents more methodical gamers from performing long calculations to determine what arrangement would be best. Characters whose players fail to arrange their die within the limit "seize up" under the pressure of the moment and fail to perform any actions that round.

We feel this 3-second rule helps represent the real-life stress of a dramatic environment, forces players and characters to make imperfect choices and "best guess" actions and enhances gameplay considerably. Of course, if members of your group resent the pressure or are not capable of managing their actions within the three seconds, the time limit can be extended or eliminated.

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Example of Play: Performing an Action

Narrator: The footprints lead around the corner and then stop at the base of a 20-foot-tall broken wall. You can't be sure, but the odds are whoever you're following climbed it.

Sarena: I'm going to pause for a second to catch my breath and examine the wall. What's it made of?

Narrator: Mostly old cinder brick and very decayed mortar. It is eroded and battered so that the edges protrude at irregular angles.

Sarena: Enough for me to be able to climb it?

Narrator: It will be difficult to find perches deep enough for your fingers and toes, but you're pretty sure you can make it up.

Sarena: Great. Then I'm going to holster my pistol and climb.

Narrator: Okay, climbing is an Athletics Skill Test, so make your roll.

Sarena: All right, my dice rolls are 3, 5, and 4. I have a pretty good Athletics Skill, and I need to get up this wall as fast as I can and stay on this person's trail, so I'm going to use the 5 for my AOR and the 3 and 4 for my Target Roll. I add my Athletics Skill Rating, which is a 3, and my Agility Attribute Rating, which is a 2, to my Target Roll Dice for a total of 12. So my total Target Roll is a 12 and my AOR is a 5.

The Narrator then evaluates Sarena's rolls for the task of climbing the wall. First she compares Sarena's Target Roll of 12 to the difficulty of the climb, which she determines is a typically dramatic difficulty action, and so is a 12 Target Number. That means that Sarena will succeed, but not with much of a margin of success, and a 3 on her Effect die clenches it. Then the Narrator looks at the AOR, which is a very respectable 5, which means that even though she just barely managed to find the right perches and grips, Sarena will be making good time up the rock face.

Narrator: So after stopping for a quick breath and running your hands over the rough wall, you feel around for a perch and then start climbing your way up. The climb is tough, but you have a surprisingly easy time finding places to grip as you go. At a few points you're worried your fingers might give out, but you make great speed up to the top.

Combat

AOR Combat at a Glance

1. Narrator announces beginning of a Round
2. All players declare their actions
3. All players simultaneously roll 3D6 for their actions/attacks; adding 2D6 to their Attribute and Skill Ratings to create a Target Roll and using 1D6 as their Action Opportunity Roll and adding it to their Initiative Base
4. Actions occur in order of Initiative

The foundation for violent conflict within *Valherjar*, the AOR System uses a very simple combat system that is designed to emphasize player choice and swiftness of action. Combat occurs within the course of Rounds, arbitrary junkets of time in which characters take actions. Almost all characters within the scope of a combat will be allowed to perform at least one full Action (consisting of one Free and one Complex Action) per Round. More advanced characters may be able to act two or even three times.

A **Free Action** is an activity so uncomplicated that it simply should not, within dramatic purposes, have any significant chance of failure. We keep track of them only because they have a noteworthy effect on other events occurring, and because a character is only allowed a limited number of them in any given moment. Some examples of Free Actions include moving up to a character's Agility Rating in feet, changing facing, and dropping a weapon in hand.

Complex Actions are Actions that are difficult to accomplish, requiring significant concentration, and thus either necessitate a character focusing only on that action for the moment or that may have a reasonable chance of failure. Complex Actions are the core of what these rules are designed to address and will make up the meat of any dramatic event. Weaving a car through tight obstacles, shooting at an opponent, throwing a desperate punch, parrying a sword strike, running up to twice a character's Agility Rating in yards and attempting to hurl magical lightning would all be examples of Complex Actions.

At the start of a Round all players will declare the intended Actions (Free and Complex) for their character. Once all Actions are declared, all players roll and are allowed to arrange their Action dice (the Target Roll and the AOR) as they see fit. Actions then occur in order of Initiative, with characters who act sufficiently quickly being eligible for additional Actions, which are rolled immediately upon

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completion of the last action. When all characters have resolved all of their Actions and the Round ends, a new Round begins.

Rounds

Though real life combat occurs as a constant flow of actions and events, *Valherjar* breaks periods of time in which combat or other intense action occurs into Rounds. Each Round represents the period of time in which each character involved in the combat is allowed to perform at least one, and up to three, actions. Typically a Round represents approximately 3 seconds of in-game time, but this is flexible and arbitrary. The length of a Round can be expanded or shortened to best suit the current play.

Declaration

At the beginning of any combat Round all characters involved declare their actions. During this declaration players indicate, in as specific and dramatic a fashion as possible, what it is their characters are doing and what the intended outcome is. Remember that the more vivid the description, the more exciting the roleplaying experience will be, so players should avoid bland descriptions such as “I shoot him.” Instead they should elaborate to make the moment as realistic as possible, saying things such as, “I swing around the box, scan the area, and decide that Thomas is the best target. So I draw my front sight down on him, grin and pull the trigger”. Players will quickly find that the more intricate the explanations, the more fun and dynamic playing will be.

In the event that order of declaration matters (such as in a player vs. player situation), players declare in ascending order of Initiative Base (the character with the lowest Initiative Base declaring first, then the next lowest, and so on). Typically, however, this will not affect the game overall and so Narrators are recommended to use whatever manner suits them best.

Regardless of the order in which actions are declared, at any point before the dice are rolled for the Round a character may discard their intended action to defend themselves instead. At no other time, however, may a character’s action be changed once declared.

The Roll

Once all actions by all involved characters are declared, all players pick up their dice (3D6), and on the Narrator’s command they simultaneously roll and begin arranging them into their Target Roll and AOR die. Typically, the Narrator should allow 3 seconds

for the dice arrangement to occur, counting slowly out loud down from 3 (although more time can be allowed at the Narrator’s discretion). If any player has not finished arranging their dice by the end of the count their character is considered to have “frozen” in the moment, marred by indecision, and they do not get to perform any action that Round.

This is designed to emulate the real life pressure the character would be experiencing and simulates the limited window a person has to make decisions in combat. A player’s failure to arrange their dice in time translates into their character overthinking their options in the moment and represents the indecisiveness that can occur in high stress situation. In this Round they have “choked” and fail to perform but may act again as normal next Round.

Initiative

Not all characters in a combat Round act with the same speed or the same number of times. To represent this, *Valherjar* uses a concept called Initiative to determine both when, and how often, a character’s actions occur.

Each character has a Secondary Attribute called their Initiative Base. This represents their innate action speed and how fast both in mind and in body that character is, and functions as the foundation for the actions they will perform in combat. When the character performs an action their Action Opportunity Roll is added to their Initiative Base. These two numbers combined become the character’s total Initiative and determine when their action will occur within the Round.

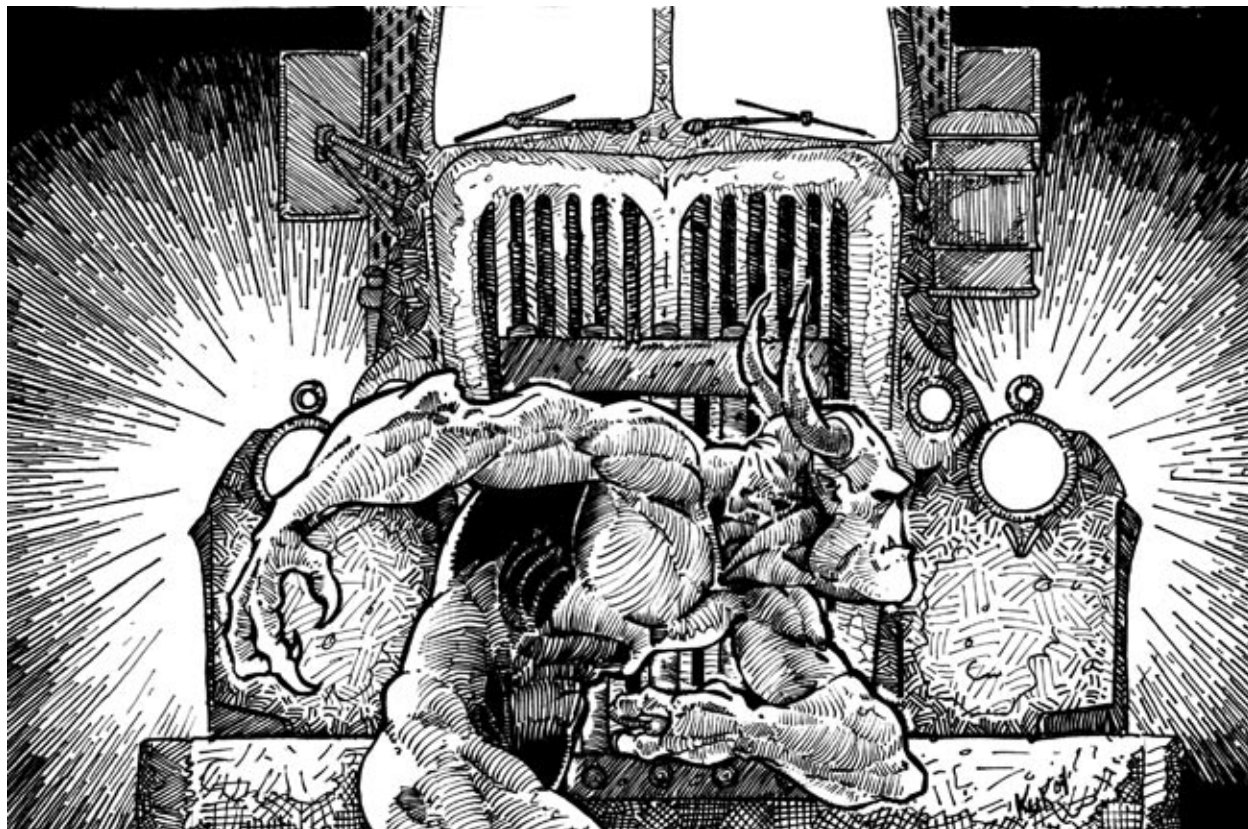
Once all players have declared their character’s actions, made their Target Rolls and determined their character’s Initiative, action proceeds in descending order from highest to lowest Initiative. For example, if Patti, a character involved in a gunfight has an Initiative Base of 8 and rolled an AOR of 4, her actual Initiative would be 12 (8+4). If within that Round the other characters participating had a 14 Initiative and a 9 Initiative, Patti would go second. The 14 would go first, then Patti’s 12, then the 9.

This order is most easily determined by having the Narrator begin counting down from the highest possible total Initiative for the characters involved and to continue until all characters have had their actions. When the Narrator reaches a character’s Initiative, their action occurs.

Actions are considered to occur sequentially and are resolved immediately at their Initiative levels, with ties occurring simultaneously. Thus, the effects of an

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action at a given Initiative level effect all actions that occur after it, without the later performing characters being able to adjust their actions in any way.

Multiple Actions

Skilled or lucky characters may find themselves in the position to perform more than one action in the 3-second period of a Round. In short, this allows any character whose first action Initiative is 10 or higher to act twice, and a characters whose Initiative is 14 or above to have the potential of acting three times.

To determine if a character gets a second action, once their existing action is resolved, subtract 10 from that action's total Initiative. If this result is 0 or higher, then this number becomes their new temporary Initiative Base and a second action can be performed. It is declared and rolled immediately, before the Round continues.

This second action functions exactly as their standard resolved first action, with the new AOR being added to the new Initiative Base to determine the second action's total Initiative, and it is inserted into Round as normal. When the Narrator calls out that second action's Initiative, it occurs as any other action would.

Once that second action is resolved, the same process can be repeated again to potentially give the character a third and possibly even a fourth action. Each time, once the action is complete, 10 is subtracted from that action's total Initiative, and so long as that sum remains greater than or equal to 0, it becomes a new Initiative Base and another action can be performed.

AOR Penalties

A number of actions, especially weapon attacks, can suffer AOR Penalties. There are several reasons why actions may have penalties, ranging from the inherent time the action takes to complete to the recoil or balance of a weapon when used. Regardless, any situation that causes an AOR Penalty does not deduct it from the first attack or action, but instead subtracts it, in addition to the standard -10, when determining the character's new Initiative Base for any additional attacks that round. For example, if a character makes an attack with a weapon that has an AOR Penalty of -2, to determine their second attack's new Initiative Base they would subtract 12 from their current Initiative rather than the standard 10.

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Example of Play: Initiative within a Round

Let's create a mock Round using three characters: Geoff, Charles and Steven. Geoff's Initiative Base is 8, Charles's Initiative Base is 7, and Steven's Initiative Base is 6. The three characters are all at a firing range trying to see who can hit their target the most times in 3 seconds (one Round).

Each character declares shooting at the target for their action and then rolls are made simultaneously. Once everyone's dice are arranged, Geoff has rolled a 3 AOR, Charles a 2 AOR, and Steven a 6. When these Action Opportunity Rolls are added to the character's Initiative Bases we find that Geoff's first shot has an Initiative of 11 (8 IB + 3 AOR), Charles has a 9 Initiative (7 IB + 2 AOR), and Steven has a 12 (6 IB + 6 AOR). Steven goes first, Geoff second and Charles third.

Once Steven's action is resolved, he then determines whether or not he can make a second action. He subtracts 10 from his current Initiative, finds that he can indeed make a second attack with a 2 Initiative Base (12 Initiative - 10). He immediately declares a second shot at the target and makes his roll. This time he rolls a 2 AOR, and so his second action will occur at a 4 Initiative (2 Modified IB + 2 AOR).

Geoff takes his action after Steven's first action. Once Geoff's action is resolved, he also determines whether or not he can perform a second action. He subtracts 10 from his Initiative and finds that he can indeed perform a second action, this time with an Initiative Base of 1 (11 Initiative - 10). He immediately declares and rolls his second attack, this time rolling an AOR of 3. This gives him a total Initiative of 4 for his second action (1 IB + 3 AOR).

Charles's initiative was 9, lower than Steven and Geoff's first actions, but higher than their second actions, and so is resolved next. Once his action is resolved, he too checks to see if he can perform a second action. Because his new Initiative Base would be below 0 (9 Initiative - 10 = -1), he can not perform a second attack and must be happy with the one shot he got.

At a 4 Initiative, Geoff and Steven's second actions occur simultaneously. Neither is eligible for a third action because the 10 subtracted from their current Initiative puts them well below 0.

Notes from the Developers The Intent of the AOR System

The Action Opportunity Roll aspect of our gaming system may prove to be a bit confusing, especially to veteran roleplayers, as it is a decided departure from how Initiative and actions are handled in most roleplaying games. We had several goals when designing the AOR System, things that we felt a game's mechanics should address, and these mechanics are the culmination of considerable research and discussion on how best to incorporate them. We offer some insights here to help you gain a better appreciation of the intent of the system, and to aid you in understanding why the mechanics occur the way they do, so that you may more easily adhere to the spirit of the rules.

The first concept we wanted to address is the simple fact that in combat, there's never enough time to do everything you want to. More often than not you are given a choice between trying to line up the perfect shot or getting that shot off in the time allotted to you. In this respect the AOR System offers a balance between the two concepts. As players make their action rolls they will likely see an imperfect arrangement of numbers and will be forced to decide what matters more to them: taking their time for the best chance of a hit, getting the shot off as fast as they can or a balance between both. We feel that players being able to arrange the dice as they see fit maximizes their involvement in that decision making, while the time limit to make those decisions forces them into a hectic and imperfect pace.

The second thing we really wanted from our system was to give a more skillful character a better chance of acting faster within the Round and having additional actions, but not guarantee them an arbitrary number of multiple actions. This balance is represented with the application of a character's Attributes and Skills to the Target Roll. Imagine that two totally different characters, a veteran and novice, make identical three-dice rolls. The veteran will have more leeway in arranging lower valued dice since there is a better chance that they will succeed or manage a second action anyways despite a poor roll. The novice, on the other hand, must use higher rolls more sparingly, often being forced to choose between a successful action or a quick one.

Finally, we wanted the game to have an energetic pace. We felt too often that countless die rolling and plodding Rounds broke up the flow and

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drama of a good roleplaying session, and so wanted to give players a quick and easy way to resolve actions. And though for new players the pause after each action while players determine their character's second and third actions may be a bit unnatural, the learning curve tends to be fairly short. Soon players will be resolving their actions in a matter of seconds, giving the game itself a smooth flow and easy transition from action to action without breaking up the roleplaying experience.

When these elements were combined we felt it gave the game a unique and realistic feel, with actions occurring fluidly and naturally and the game progressing briskly. Further, we felt that the tension inherent in resolving actions had a wonderfully dramatic feel and lent itself to all manner of roleplaying.

But then, what do we know. We're only monkeys, after all.

Arranging AOR Dice

During play there is a considerable amount of player strategy involved in arranging the Target Roll and AOR die. Assuming the total roll does not consist entirely of high numbers, the player will have to determine how best to divvy up the higher (and thus most effective) rolls so that a character's intentions are best served. Arranging the highest rolled dice as a Target Roll will result in a more successful action, but will make the action slower and decrease the character's possibility of additional actions in the Round. Placing the highest die as the AOR means the action will be performed as fast as possible and give the character a higher likelihood of additional actions, but also means that the Target Roll is not as successful as it could be and that the action is doomed to a lesser Degree of Success.

Players will quickly develop their own strategies for themselves, and their characters and will be in constant conflict over the choices they're faced with. It is strongly suggested that new players, especially, gain the opportunity to view alternate outcomes of their actions by re-arranging their dice for the first couple of actions they perform. It is this balance and freedom that the AOR System was founded on, and thus where it derives its name, and so is critically important that players understand its effect on the game.

Defense

While some people may wish to stand toe to toe with their opponents and duke it out, characters with

a more decided sense of self preservation will wish to prevent harm from coming to them by defending themselves. To do so characters can declare one of three "defensive actions" in place of a standard action.

Dodge

A dodge is simply a character's attempt to get out of the way of a specific incoming attack. It can be used against unarmed, melee or manually propelled projectile attacks (such as a bow or spear), but not against bullets or other high-speed attacks. A dodge takes the place of a character's standard action and is rolled as normal. During the Opposed Test the defender uses their Agility Attribute and may add either their Unarmed or Athletics Skill rating. The attacker must then beat both whatever the Narrator assigned Target Number was and the dodge roll total as well. Unless specific circumstances dictate otherwise, a single dodge only takes the place of a single action and is only useful against a single attack.

Parry

A parry functions almost identically to a dodge, except that rather than getting out of the way, the defender tries to intercept an incoming attack with a weapon or other improvised object. Instead of the character's Unarmed or Athletics Skill, they must use the appropriate melee weapon Skill (Blade, Pole or Chain). Certain weapons also have "Defense Modifiers" which represents their natural defensive capabilities (the Narrator may also add defense modifiers to other objects at her discretion). These modifiers are added or subtracted to the defending character's Target Roll for the Opposed Test.

Characters may also use shields or other parrying implements in their off hands while they attack with their primary weapons. For more information see the "Shields" section under "Optional Special Rules" at the end of this chapter.

Evade

Evading represents a character's attempt to avoid being hit by high-speed projectiles (such as bullets) or unseen attacks (i.e., being attacked from behind). In these cases the attacks cannot be dodged or parried specifically and so the character must take general defensive actions, such as running in a random pattern or diving behind cover, and pray that they succeed. An Evade can be employed in one of two ways: like a parry or dodge, taking the place of a single action and only protecting from a single incoming attack; or as the only action being performed for the Round, which then

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protects from all ranged attacks. An Evade adds either the character's Agility or Athletics Rating (whichever is higher) to any attacker's Target Number.

Damage and Health

Doing Damage

Each time a successful attack occurs it has the potential of wounding the target. Standard attacks which do damage through a single point of impact — such as punches, swords, maces or bullets — have a damage that is listed as a D6 derivative value (either D2, D3 or D6), followed by a comma, and then a single digit number (i.e. D3,2 or D6,1). Calculating damage for an attack is simple, but occurs in two steps. These correspond to the two pieces of information listed.

The first step, once an attack is successful, is to compare the Effect Roll to the dice value indicator on the attack style or weapon. A "D2" means to treat the dice as though it has only two sides, scoring a roll of 1, 2, or 3 as 1 point of damage while a roll of 4, 5, or 6 indicates 2 points. In a D3 roll, 1 and 2 are worth 1 point, 3 and 4 are worth 2, and 5 and 6 are worth 3. "D6" means there are six possibilities and the roll is taken at face value. Included with the dice value may be static or Strength bonuses as well (i.e. D6+2). That value is added to the sum of the Effect Roll.

Finally, the weapon's Degree of Success modifier must be applied. The number after the comma in a weapon's damage listing indicates the additional damage done per Degree of Success above zero, and is almost always listed as one of four ratings: 1/2, 1, 2 or 3. For example, if a weapon's damage was listed as "D6,2," for each DoS the attacker scored, 2 would be added to the damage. If the weapon's damage was "D6,1," for each DoS the attacker scored, 1 would be added to the damage. And if the damage was "D6,1/2," only 1/2 of a point would be added per Degree of Success (always rounding down).

The sum of these two numbers is the total damage of the attack and is compared to the victim's Health Levels to determine the type of wound done.

Physical and Physiological Damage

In Valherjar there are two types of damage a character can suffer, physical and physiological. The most easily quantifiable, physical damage represents actual physical harm occurring through inflicted injuries. Including cuts, bruises, punctures, breaks, tears and crushings, most of the time ill befalls a

character, especially at the hands of another character, it will be in the form of physical damage.

Physiological damage, on the other hand, represents the loss of energy, general fatigue and exhaustion that a person can suffer. Primarily self inflicted (though occasionally certain stunning attacks may do physiological damage), a character typically takes physiological damage from "overdoing it," pushing themselves too hard through exertion or in the use of Rune Magic, and is less permanent and recovered much faster than physical damage.

Both forms of damage are referenced against a character's Health Attribute and are tracked on the character's Health Meter, but each is addressed separately. Physical damage, such as from a knife wound, punch or gunshot, is related to their Fortitude Ratings. Physiological damage, such as from running excessive distances, using Rune Magic, or from being stunned, is measured against the character's Vitality Rating.

Health Levels

Each character has a series of boxes on their character sheet arranged into four rows representing their health and wound status. Each row represents a level of damage (called "Health Levels") a character can achieve.

<i>Critical</i>		
<i>Incapacitated</i>		
<i>Serious</i>		
-3	-3	
<i>Moderate</i>		
-1	-1	-1
<i>Light</i>		

Light wounds are generally superficial and represent damage that achieves no more than surface lacerations or bruising to the skin or outer tissue physically, and do little more than force the character to pant and draw deep breaths physiologically. Each character has four boxes of Light Wounds and suffers no penalty when a box is marked off.

Moderate Wounds are considered to be a significant, but still not an alarming, level of damage and could include cuts, abrasions, and other wounds that could require light stitching to heal physically, or a considerably exhausting but not debilitating level of fatigue physiologically. Each character has three boxes for Moderate Wounds and each box checked incurs a -1 penalty to all character rolls.

Serious Wounds are considerably more severe and represent an acute but not immediately threatening harm, generally involving a serious puncture wound

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or significant impact trauma inflicted to a nonvital or semi-vital portion of the body physically, and a significant level of exhaustion physiologically, of the type that would normally be treated with oxygen and bed rest. Each character has two boxes of Serious Wounds and receives a -3 to all rolls for each box of Serious Wounds that is checked.

Finally, Critical Wounds represent grave injuries inflicted either en masse or to an essential part of the body physically, and to a degree that the character loses consciousness physiologically. Each character has only 1 box for Critical Wounds and is considered effectively incapacitated when the box becomes checked. Failure to receive immediate medical attention for a Critical Wound will likely lead to the character's death

The negative effects from taking a Health Level wound are immediate and accumulative. Thus, a character that takes two Moderate Wounds (-1 each) and one Serious Wound (-3) would be at a total of -5 to all rolls that they attempt, including those for actions occurring later in the same Round.

Taking Damage; Wounds vs. Health Levels

To the side of each Health Level is the Level's Rating for both Fortitude and Vitality. This Rating represents the number of points of damage/fatigue that must be inflicted in order to score a wound at that Level.

When a character takes damage, or performs a task that generates considerable fatigue, the total damage score is compared to the four Level Ratings. The character will score a single box at the highest level that the damage/fatigue meets or exceeds the Rating of. A character can continue to take damage at a given Health Level until all of the boxes in that level are marked off. Once that happens, any additional wounds taken at that Level are automatically advanced to the next highest Health Level. For example, if a character has taken all four boxes worth of Light Wounds and then takes another Light Wound, he would record it as a Moderate Wound instead.

Physical wounds, compared to the Health Level's Fortitude rating, are recorded with an "X" in the relevant box. This indicates that the damage is semi-permanent and may require medical attention to heal.

Physiological wounds, compared to the Health Level's Vitality rating, are tallied with a single

diagonal slash ("/"). In the event that a health level has already taken physical damage, and has an X in one or all of the boxes there, fatigue is stacked on top of it as normal, increasing the modifiers for that level or even advancing to the next level up if all of the available boxes are filled. Should the character take additional physical damage, however, the new "X" can only stack with other physical damage markers and so will overwrite a box already filled with a physiological slash.

For example, let's say a character has 1 Moderate wound caused by physical damage (an "X" in the first Moderate Wound box), and thus is at a -1 penalty. Their Health chart would look like this:

<i>Critical</i>			
<i>Incapacitated</i>			
Serious			
-3		-3	
Moderate			
X	-1		-1
Light			

That character then exerts him or herself excessively, or casts a Runic Magic, that gives the equivalent of another Moderate wound, but this time in Vitality. Since one Moderate Level box is already filled with physical damage, the fatigue would be added to the next box in line, adding another -1 penalty.

<i>Critical</i>			
<i>Incapacitated</i>			
Serious			
-3		-3	
Moderate			
X	/	-1	
Light			

The character is then shot again, and so takes another Moderate wound, but this time, since one of the boxes is filled by fatigue injury rather than a physical one, the fatigue slash is overwritten with a physical X, and so the character remains at a -2 penalty.

<i>Critical</i>			
<i>Incapacitated</i>			
Serious			
-3		-3	
Moderate			
X	X	-1	
Light			

Area Effect Weapons

Though it is applied to the same Health Levels and ratings, damage from area effect weapons, such as flamethrowers and grenades is handled slightly differently. Similarly to a standard attack, damage

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ratings for area weapons are listed with two sets of values. The first is a dice value (and potential static bonus). However, instead of a comma, the second value is separated by a vertical slash (i.e. "D6|4"). While the dice value is still handled normally, the number after the slash, rather than a DoS modifier, indicates the blast radius of the attack in yards. Anyone caught within the radius takes the Effect Dice value of damage for each yard within the radius they are. This is most easily calculated by starting from the outside of the blast and working inwards, with each person taking a die of damage for each yard they are from the exterior. So, using our example of D6|4, anyone on the outskirts of the blast (between 3 and 4 yards away) would take D6 damage; anyone between 2 and 3 yards away would take D6x2 damage; anyone between 1 and 2 yards away would take D6x3 damage; and anyone less than 1 yard from the blast would take a staggering D6x4 damage!

Vitality Draining Activities

Unlike physical damage, which is generally only received after an attack or injury, there are a number of ways that a character can accumulate physiological drain on their own. Several activities, such as sprinting or using Rune Magic, may cause a character to take

exhaustion-based damage. Below are some examples of activities that may drain on a person's Vitality. Periodic resting or Tests of appropriate difficulties against relevant abilities (such as the Athletics Skill) may alleviate or prevent fatigue from occurring. The effects may also be considered cumulative and can be applied repeatedly at the Narrator's discretion. For example, sprinting 150 yards may be tallied as a 9 against Vitality).

Sprinting: 3 per 50 yards

Jogging: 1 per 100 yards

Marching/walking: 1 per 1/2-mile

Swimming: 1 per 50 yards

Recovering Health

Fortitude: Physical Injuries

Whether mortal or Valherjar, a person is little more than fragile flesh and bone and is remarkably vulnerable to all manners of harm. Once wounded, only time and rest will restore their health and make them whole. Where mortal man and Valherjar differ, however, is in the amount of damage they can recuperate from and the time it takes them to do so.

A normal mortal, without significant medical



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or magical assistance, will heal one Light Wound per 8 hours bedrest and may recover from Light or Moderate Wounds without medical attention. Serious or Critical Wounds, however, can only be mended with intensive medical care and there is a 50 percent chance that the wound will never heal properly, leaving the victim with permanent negative modifiers.

Valherjar, enhanced with the energy of the Rune Stones within them, heal much faster and require far less attention than their mortal counterparts. Though they must eat considerable amounts of protein to assist in their healings (approximately 4 pounds of pure protein will heal one moderate wound), they are capable of recovering two Light Wounds per six hours of rest, and only require medical attention or magical assistance to recuperate from a Critical Wound. If medical attention is provided a Valherjar can heal at twice the standard rate.

Fortitude Recovery Rates

Wound Type	Valherjar Healing Time	Mortal Healing Time
Light Wound	2 healed per 6 hours of rest	1 per 8 hours rest
Moderate Wound	1 per 12 hours rest	1 per 32 hours rest
Serious Wound	1 per 36 hours rest	1 per 4 days medical attention
Critical Wound	Requires 72 hours rest	Three weeks of medical attention

Vitality: Exhaustion

Though resolved similarly to physical healing, a body recovers much faster from fatigue and exhaustion than it does from physical injury and so healing times are greatly reduced, although there is a greater disparity between levels of injury. Light Wounds can be healed simply by resting for a few minutes. Moderate Wounds require relaxing, meditating or sleeping for an hour, Serious Wounds heal after a day or two's bed rest, and Critical Wounds with minor medical care. Should a character have a greater level of rest available to them (i.e., sleeping to heal a Light Wound) their recovery time is doubled or tripled, at the Narrator's discretion.

Vitality Recovery Rates

Wound Type	Valherjar Healing Time	Mortal Healing Time
Light Wound	1 healed per minute of rest	1 per 2 to 3 minutes rest
Moderate Wound	1 per hour rest	1 per hour of sleep
Serious Wound	1 per 8 hours sleep	1 per 2 days sleep and rest
Critical Wound	1 day of sleep and rest	3 days of medical attention

Armor

In the AOR System, armor acts as a static barrier between the character taking the hit and the damage being done to them. When a character wearing armor receives damage, first the Armor Rating for that damage type is subtracted from the damage total; then the remainder is applied normally. Not all armor, however, is equally effective against all attacks. Kevlar, for example, is fantastic for stopping bullets but does nothing to protect the wearer from blunt impact trauma, and while chain mail provides excellent protection against a cutting attack, its open form makes it nearly worthless versus chemical damage.

To account for these realities, all attacks in the AOR System do one of four types of damage: Ballistic, Edged, Impact and Chemical. Ballistic attacks (bullets) come from essentially blunt objects that are propelled at such a high velocity that they develop incredible amounts of kinetic energy. Edged weapons (knives, swords, spears) carry sharp sides or points that can be used to cut or pierce a target. Impact weapons (baseball bats, clubs, maces) deliver crushing, bludgeoning blows. Chemical damage (fire, electricity, acid) is something of a catchall term used to describe weapons that have a caustic or cellular energy effect.

Each piece of armor has a rating for each of these four damage types, and only the rating versus the type of damage being done can be applied. Also, only one Armor Rating value may be applied to a single attack's damage — so in the event of multiple layers of armor, use only the single best rating.

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Armor Penalties

Mankind has always been plagued by one simple rule about armor: Generally speaking, the more it protects, the more bulky, awkward and restricting it is. As such, stouter, more damage-reducing armors impose penalties on the wearer. Typically, these will come as Attribute penalties to the character's Dexterity, Agility and Endurance. In these instances, for the duration the character wears the armor, the penalties are imposed on any actions or Tests that involve the relevant Attributes.

Example of Play: A Round of Combat

Narrator: Two of the ratty thugs take the bait and follow you into the alley. As they turn the corner one of them hangs back a bit, hands wringing nervously in front of his ample belly, while the larger of the two continues to advance. He's winking and looks like he's going to try and grab you.

Justine: As soon as he gets close enough I'm going to stomp on his knee while drawing my pistol using the Quick Draw Specialization.

Narrator: Okay, roll your attack.

As Justine rolls for her attack the Narrator does the same for the two non-player characters. Justine begins by rolling to see how well she can kick the larger thug. She rolls her three dice and gets a 5, 6 and 3. She decides that this guy isn't going to be too much trouble and so uses the 6 as her AOR and the 5 and 3 as her Target Roll. This gives her an incredibly fast attack, plus a better chance for additional actions, but still leaves her with a nice enough Target Roll that she thinks she'll hit.

So now that she's decided how she wants to arrange her dice, she adds her AOR of 6 to her Initiative Base, which is 10. That gives her a total Initiative of 16 and a guaranteed second action this Round, and possibly a third. To her Target Roll of 5 and 3 she adds her Unarmed Skill of 2 and her Agility of 3 for a total attack roll of 13.

The Narrator does the same for the two thugs. The first thug, the one closest to Justine, is in fact going to try and grab her and so makes his roll, coming up with a 2, 4 and 5. The thug wants to do the best job he can grabbing her, so uses the 4 and 5 as his Target Roll and takes the 2 for his AOR. The 2 is added to his Initiative Base of 3 for a total Initiative of 5, while the 4 and 5 are added to his Unarmed Skill of 2 and

his Agility of 1 for a total of 12. The other thug is spending this Round just waiting to see what happens and so doesn't need to roll yet.

Narrator: Okay, counting down Initiative. 20, 19, 18, 17, 16...

Justine: I go at 16. I draw up my foot and jam it down hard into his knee, with a 13 to hit.

Narrator: That is a standard difficulty attack action, so you only needed a 12 to succeed. You have 1 Degree of Success.

Justine: A kick's damage is my Unarmed Skill (2) divided by 2 (bringing the damage to 1), plus my Strength Rating, which is 2 (damage total of 3), plus 1 per Degree of Success (for a total damage of 4). So he takes 4 damage. As for my next attack, I want to drill the guy at the end of the alley with my Sig-Sauer.

Narrator: Okay, roll your next attack while I tend to the thug

The Narrator compares the damage to the Thug's Health Meter.

You stomp down hard on his knee and see it buckle under your boot. He screams in pain and appears to be hobbling.

As the Narrator determines the damage to the kicked thug, Justine rolls for her follow-up attack. To determine this second action's Initiative Base, she takes her current action's Initiative (16) and subtracts 10, for a total of 6. To that new Initiative Base she will add the AOR for her new action, and it will be resolved as normal at that Initiative.

She rolls a 2, 4 and 5. She decides to use the 4 for her AOR and the 2 and 5 for her Target Roll. When she adds her AOR to her new Initiative Base of 6, she discovers that she has an Initiative of 10 for her second action. The 2 and 5 are added to her Pistol Skill and her Dexterity for a total of 12.

Once the kicked thug has been dealt his damage and Justine is done arranging her second attack roll, the Narrator continues to count down.

Narrator: 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10...

Justine: My second attack goes at 10. I aim down on the guy at the front of the alley and pull the trigger. My total Target Roll is 12.

The Narrator decides that since the Thug is just standing there and wasn't expecting trouble, he is an easier than average target to hit, thus assigning a Target Number of 10 for the shot.

Narrator: That hits him square in the stomach and has two Degrees of Success.

Justine: Okay then, my pistol does D6+1,1 damage. Starting with my Effect Die, which is the 5,

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I do 6 damage (the Effect Die + 1). To that I add 1 for each Degree of Success, which is a total of 8 (5+1 base damage +1 per DoS).

Narrator: He doubles over and falls to the ground, squealing in pain and crying. He appears to be out of the fight. What's your final action going to be?

Justine: I'm going to shoot the guy right in front of me to make sure he'll never bother anyone again.

She rolls and comes up with a 6, 3, and 2. She decides that she really doesn't want to miss this guy, so she assigns the 6 and 3 to her Target Roll and the 2 to her AOR. The AOR is added to her new Initiative Base, which is her old Initiative minus 10, for a total of 2 (her old Initiative of 10 minus 10, plus her AOR of 2).

Once Justine is done rolling, the Narrator begins counting down Initiatives again until she reaches the thug's Initiative of 5. On his turn, he finally gets to try and grab Justine, but with the modifiers from taking a Moderate wound from her kick he fails miserably. Finally, at an Initiative of 2, Justine's third and final attack of the Round occurs, and she manages to finish the thug with a well-placed shot from her pistol.



Rune Magic

Rune Magic at a Glance

1. Declare the Rune Magic use as, or in conjunction with, a standard action
2. If used as a complex action, roll as normal; separating the dice into a 2D6 TR and D6 AOR
3. Resolve the Rune Magic as if a normal action
4. Subtract any Degrees of Success from the Magic's Fatigue and then apply remainder to the character's Vitality Health Meter

Rune Magic

Runic Magic, in general, is used exactly like a Skill. In its use the Valherjar's Rating in that Magic is added to the appropriate Attribute (typically Will) and the Target Roll, then is compared to a Target Number. Generally speaking, DoS resolutions and modifiers are calculated as normal.

There are three notable points that distinguish Rune Magic from Skills. First, there is no possible use of Magic without a rating of at least 1. Second is the fact that most Rune Magic can, in a pinch, be executed as a Free action. Finally, there is an additional risk of Fatigue.

Vitality and Fatigue

Runic Magic is extremely powerful and Fatigue represents the physically exhausting aspect of channeling the enormous energies generated. Acting as a measure of the character's mental fortitude and general condition of rest, each time a character uses their Magic it may decrease the character's Vitality, move them closer to a state of extreme exhaustion and decrease their general ability to function.

With each Rune Magic's description is a Fatigue listing, which represents how innately exhausting the Magic is to use. These points are applied similarly to damage and are tracked on the character's Vitality in their Health Meter. When a Magic is used the Fatigue is compared to the Vitality ratings, and a box is marked at the highest level that the Fatigue is equal to or greater than, exactly as though the character had taken that many points worth of Vitality damage.

This drain can be balanced through a character mentally and physically preparing themselves and focusing on the control of the Magic. Thus, if a Rune

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Magic is used as a Complex Action, the Degree of Success from the Test is subtracted from the Magic's Fatigue before it is applied to the character's Vitality.

Rune Magic Actions

Unlike most Skills, many types of Rune Magic can be performed in a variety of different Action types. In the Magic's description, under "Action Type," it will list which types of action a given Magic can be executed as. Regardless of its listing, a Magic can always be used as a Complex action (meaning that, as with any other action, it is performed in a Round as normal with the DoS being applied to the Magic's Drain rating to determine if the character suffers Fatigue). However, several types of Rune Magic also include a listing for Free Action. If Magic has a listing of "Free" it may be performed, without test, as a character's Free Action within the Round. If the Magic is used as a Free action it occurs automatically and does not impede the character's ability to perform a Complex Action in the same Round. The drawback, however, is that since the Magic is being done on the fly, with no focus being dedicated to it, the fatigue is taken automatically, without a DoS modifier to apply. Thus, the fatigue from any Magic used as Free accumulates automatically on the Vitality Health Meter.

Runic Focus

Though in part the gods imbue the Valherjar with Runes so that they may gain both the offensive and defensive capabilities of Runic Magic, there is a mysterious and frustrating lack of divine instruction in their use. Often only providing tuition in only the most basic of applications, much of the utilities the Valherjar have developed over the centuries in the Magic's use have come through self-applied research and discovery. Countless day-lives have ended abruptly (and often quite dramatically) in Valhalla during these periods of experimentation, and many Valherjar will gather in small groups to dedicate their "down time" to applying theory or random exploration to the Magic they already know. More often than not this will either have no effect whatsoever or unleash the energy of the Runes in a random and unstable way, usually destroying the practitioner and leaving them to resurrect the following day. Nonetheless, these practices have led to some very impressive, and often surprising, alterations to the abilities the gods have given them and are now a generally accepted part of the Valherjar arsenal.

Thus, as Valherjar progress in their magical talents, and gain a greater control of the Magics

within them, the ability to Focus the Magic in new ways gradually occurs. Foci represent the capability to create a modified effect when a Magic is used by manipulating both the energy drawn through the Runes and the process of use. Typically, these Foci will strongly resemble the Magic they are derived from, but will have a unique presentation and effect.

Once a Valherjar gains a rating of 3 or higher in a primary Rune Magic, they gain the opportunity to purchase a Runic Focus using Veteran Points. Often having prerequisites of Rank or sufficient proficiencies in other abilities, the choice to pursue Foci is an individual one and is not embraced by all Valherjar. Frequently viewed as excessively time-consuming, overly difficult or unnatural (since Foci are not taught by the gods), many Valherjar only experiment with Foci sparingly and do not integrate them into their training.

In terms of game mechanics, a Focus is used just like, and with the Rating of, its parent Magic. The modifications will often affect the amount of Fatigue, the Target Number, and the general mechanics of the Magic's use, however.

Boons

Prestigious Valherjar will be given access to special blessings called Boons. Unlike traditional Rune Magics, in which the Valherjar draws the energy of the Runes forth to create an effect, Boons, once learned, become as natural as breathing. A talent as much as a Magical power, Boons function similarly to Rune Magics but have a few fundamental differences.

First and foremost, the Boons available to a Valherjar are rigidly dependant on that Valherjar's Aett and will essentially never change. Unlike Rune Magic, which can be learned by any Valherjar as they advance, Boons are individual blessings given to the Aettir. Though occasionally the same Boon will be taught in separate Aettir, they are not universally available.

Secondly, Boons do not draw on the Valherjar's life force to function, and so generate no Fatigue. Thus, each Boon can be used automatically and without penalty.

Thirdly, unlike standard Rune Magics, which begin with a Rating of 1 when taken, Boons are automatically learned at a Rating of 2. Thus the Valherjar is automatically highly proficient with the blessing as soon as it is gained.

Finally, Boons are reserved for high-ranking Valherjar only, and while other Magics also may have a Prestige requirements, the prerequisite for a Boon will be much higher. Though Boons are traditionally

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not taken away should the Valherjar fall from grace and lose a Prestige rank, it is not unheard of, and Boons will absolutely never be taught to a lower ranking Valherjar.

Luck

Periodically any character in as dramatic a world as *Valherjar's* will find themselves in a near hopeless position with only one shot to turn things around. Whether they lie direly wounded and horribly outnumbered with no chance at escape or are just betting it all on the next card, extraordinary fortune will occasionally play a role and allow them to succeed when it should be impossible. To incorporate that remarkable sense of chance that makes the stuff of myths and legends, the AOR System includes a Luck Attribute. This Attribute acts as a very finite pool that a character can draw from so that they can attempt the impossible and pull it off by the skin of their teeth.

Simply put, Luck acts as a limited number of automatic successes that a character can use at their player's discretion. Each point of Luck is the equivalent of a Degree of Success that can be applied to any action they perform, or that can subtract a Degree of Success from any action performed against them. They can be spent at any time, in any quantity desired (up to the character's Luck total), up until the resolution of an action is determined. Each point spent removes a point of Luck from the character's Attribute (effectively making them that much less lucky) and acts as a +1 DoS for any action by them or a -1 DoS for any action against them.

Situations in which characters use Luck must be reasonably possible (a character couldn't use Luck to knock down a building with their bare hands or throw a car) and all Luck is used at the Narrator's discretion. In times where two or more characters wish to use Luck to oppose each other, the players "bid" Luck against each other, with the highest total Degree of Success being victorious. Regardless of who succeeds in the action, however, the Luck bid by both players is lost.

Once spent, Luck is lost until the character performs an action dramatic or bold enough to net them more. Luck is gained exclusively through Narrator discretion and can be awarded for particularly dramatic actions, for exceptional roleplaying, or — under the idea that luck begets luck — as an ironic reward to something exceedingly improbable or lucky,

either positive or negative, occurring to the character.

For example, we find Colleen in a position where she has been shot in the knee by a Muspell and is now on the run from a pack of Jormun. As she flees down an alley she notices a barred shutter that has been left unlatched and has swung open, exposing the window beneath. She pauses to examine the shutter, realizes that the bars should be just heavy enough to stall the Jormun while she escapes, and glances over her shoulder to make sure she has enough time to make it up and through. Unfortunately, the window is almost 10 feet off the ground and she has a shattered leg; there's almost no way she can make it. But, with a little Luck (specifically, 2 point of it, spent for the equivalent of 2 Degrees of Success), she manages to not only find a series of ledges to grab on her way up, but also discovers the window is unlocked, so slips in and pulls the shutter closed with ease.