Combat

THE COMBAT ROUND

When combat begins, all character decisions must take place in *initiative phase*, a method of handling many simultaneous activities in a consecutive sequence.

Each section of time, or round, is equal to fifteen seconds of real time. This 15-second portion is called a **round.** Thus, there are four rounds per minute.

Further, each minute is divisible into ten six-second *segments*. Most actions take place in rounds, while some are measured in segments.

Every fourth rounds (or 100 segments) is a **turn**, which is equal to ten-minutes of real-time. Note that when in initiative phase, real-time is the time that takes place within the imaginary game environment, not the time it takes for the players to make decisions. A player should do his best to plan ahead to make initiative phase combat run smoothly, as should the game master.

If a player takes too long to reach a decision on his actions, the GM must decide whether to allow him additional time, or to cause him to miss his turn as he decides what to do both as a player and in character. Remember that in combat, every second counts and every decision can mean the difference between life and death.

Taking too long to consider all of your actions in the real world can easily cost you your life, but because this is (after all) just a game, it is necessary to allow the players time to consider the actions of their imaginary characters , so allowing a player a minute to decide on the actions of a 15-second round isn't out of the question, and it should be encouraged, as it means that the player is using his mind, which is part of the purpose behind role-playing games.

Players that act rashly usually wind up by not enjoying their role-playing experience, so the GM shouldn't make it his task to overly rush his players, but if a player is constantly taking an excessive amount of time to decide on his actions, or isn't paying attention to the story, then the GM should penalize him by forcing his character to *delay* his actions until the next round.

Your primary choices, once you enter initiative phase are to make an attack, cast a spell, use a class ability, use a skill, use a psychic power, or use an alchemic transmutation circle and/or move.

MELEE COMBAT

When combat begins, the most common thing that happens is the *Combat* skill check.

When a character wishes to make an attack on any target, he makes a skill check, using one of his *Combat* skills. To do so, he designates his target and the appropriate skill and the weapon allocated to that skill, then rolls 1d20, adding that roll to his bonus on that *combat* skill.

His target must immediately choose how to respond. If the target is aware of the threat, he may attempt to use one of his own combat-defense skills, either *Dodge* or *Parry.*

In melee combat, for example, Tulkas is attacking Marvok:

Tulkas is wielding a bastard sword, which is a heavy blade and rolls his *Combat (Heavy Blades)* skill (which is at a +8). Tulkas rolls a 13 on his 1d20 and the total result of his *combat skill check* is 21.

In order to avoid the attack, Marvok must roll either *defense* or *parry*. As Marvok is armed with a rapier and can choose to parry or dodge with that weapon, he chooses to parry.

Marvok has a +10 total skill bonus to *Parry* and rolls a 12 on his 1d20 check. However, his rapier is considered one category lighter then the bastard sword that Tulkas is using and has a -2 penalty to parry. Thus, the total result of his *combat skill check to parry* is only 20 and he is unable to block the blow from Tulkas.

Marvok's actions to parry do not count toward his own actions in the initiative phase: they are a non-action in response to the attack by Tulkas on his initiative round. When Marvok's turn comes around, he may choose any action, including attacking Tulkas, in which case, Tulkas may choose to either dodge or parry just as Mardok did when Tulkas attacked him.

Critical Hits & Botches

The following are the rules and procedures regarding critical hits and botches within the scope of the game during combat.

The easiest (and often the most comical) portion of this treatise is that of the critical failure, or *botch*. Botches are not simply mere misses, but rather, they have special effects.

A botch occurs when a player rolls a natural one on any skill check and the Game Master elects to spend one of the *GM Action Dice* to activate a **critical failure** on that check. Likewise, when a GM-controlled character rolls a natural one on a skill check against a player-controlled character, that player may spend one of his own action dice to activate a **critical failure** for the Game master's NPC.

In combat, botches may have many effects upon the character who makes a critical failure, the range of these can be anything from comic relief to real0life danger or serious malady for the character who scores the botch.

INTERRUPTION

Botches have an interrupting effect on the flow of a character's actions:

Once a character scores a botch, the player (or GM) loses all of the rest of that character's actions for that round (or longer, depending on the result of the botch). Some actions may continue (such as falling down a cliff) and other actions may be triggered by the botch itself, but the player's voluntary actions end at the precise moment that he scores a botch.

Some effects may also affect the actions of other players! The details for these are detailed in the following sections.

RESOLVING BOTCHES

The results of a botch are detailed below. Roll 3d6 and total the result, then follow the effect on this table:

Effects of a Botch

Roll	Special Effects
3	**Shatter/Destroy Attacking Weapon**: Attacking weapon must save or be /destroyed, possibly detonating in the hand of the wielder.
4	**Break/Damage Attacking Weapon:** Deal normal damage to weapon, possibly damaging or breaking it and preventing its further use until repaired.
5	**Major Snag:** Subject of the botch is effectively stunned for 2d4 rounds.
6	**Snag:** Subject of the botch is effectively stunned for 1d4 rounds.
7	**Comic Relief:** Subject loses 1d3 rounds as a comic display of errors humiliates the subject and possibly bewilders opponents and comrades.
8	**Lose Weapon:** Subject drops or otherwise\e loses control of his weapon. The weapon moves 1d3 x 5 feet away, using standard deviation. Roll again if the weapon cannot be lost (such as natural weapons).
9	**Drop Weapon:** Subject drops whatever weapon he is using at his feet. Roll again if the weapon cannot be dropped (such as natural weapons).
10	**No Special Effect:** The subject merely loses the rest of his actions for this round.
11	**No Special Effect:** The subject merely loses the rest of his actions for this round.
12	**Harry Teammate:** The subject's actions interfere with your comrades. The nearest ally loses his actions for this round. If the subject has no allies, roll again.
13	**Trip Self:** The subject falls prone in his square, which provokes attacks of opportunity, as normal for falling prone.
14	**Trip Teammate:** The subject trips his nearest ally, causing them to fall prone and provoking attacks of opportunity (against that ally, but not the subject). If the subject has no allies, he trips himself (see 13).
15	**Damage Teammate:** The subject accidentally strikes one of his allies! Deal damage normally to the nearest ally using the weapon skill and weapon that you had used when you botched. If the subject has no allies, he accidentally damages himself (see 16).
16	**Damage to Self:** The subject accidentally injures himself with his own weapon. Deal damage to yourself normally as if you had been struck with whatever weapon you were just using. If that would be impossible, the GM will determine the nature of the damage that you must take.
17	**Critical Damage to Teammate:** The subject accidentally strikes one of his allies! Deal damage to the nearest ally using the weapon skill and weapon that you had used when you botched, but apply that damage as if you had scored a *critical hit*. Use the critical hits tables that follow and their accompanying *special effects* to determine that exact nature of the critical hit and its effects. If the subject has no allies, he accidentally deals critical damages himself (see 18).
18	**Critical Damage to Self:** The subject accidentally injures himself with his own weapon. Deal damage to yourself as if you had been struck with whatever weapon you were just using and apply that damage as if you had scored a *critical hit* with that weapon. Use the critical hits tables that follow and their accompanying *special effects* to determine that exact nature of the critical hit and its effects. If that would be impossible, the GM will determine the nature of the damage that you must take.

SPECIAL BOTCH RESULTS

CRITICAL HITS

There are several botch results that may require detailed explanations:

Shatter/Destroy Attacking Weapon

This causes lethal damage to the attacking weapon: Mundane items break and special items have a chance to detonate! A natural weapon that shatters in this fashion deals a *critical wound* to the attacking body part(s).

Break / Damage Attacking Weapon

This causes damage to the attacking weapon: Deal damage to the weapon itself using the damage roll that it would normally inflict on another subject. Record this damage with the weapon's information. If this causes more damage than the weapon has Hit Points, then it breaks and must be repaired. A natural weapon that is damaged in this way takes *serious damage* to the attacking body part(s).

Comic Relief

This causes the subject to lose control of all of his actions for the requisite amount of time, as luck conspires to paint the character an idiot. *Comic Relief* is not terribly damaging, but can be quite embarrassing for the subject (imposing penalties on Diplomacy, Intimidate and other Influence-based checks). It also usually leaves the subject in a rather compromising situation afterward.

Harry Teammate

This causes the teammate to lose their next round of actions. It does not daze, stun or paralyze the teammate: they must simply spend the round dealing with whatever you just did to them, the nature of which is up to the imagination and logic of the GM.