



INTRODUCTION

GATEWAR AND THE ROLE-PLAYING CONCEPT

GateWar initiates players into an alternate universe, where they take the role of characters in a fantasy setting. The rules presented in this book form a framework that governs their development in the world of Vinya. Within this framework, the players determine the actions of their characters according to the attributes and personality with which they were created. The rules of GateWar are designed to allow the characters to interact with Non-Player Characters (NPCs) and creatures (also referred to as Monsters) in a fair and consistent manner—but the actions taken are determined and only limited by the player's imagination.

PLAYING GATEWAR: AN OVERVIEW

Rolling Dice:

GateWar is an open-ended story. The actions of the characters are controlled by the players, the outcomes of those actions are dictated by their abilities and by chance. Dice rolls are used to simulate this; characters have abilities which are determined (largely) by dice, which give certain percent chances to accomplish tasks. Rolling a one hundred sided die (more about that in the sidebar) will determine whether that percent chance in that situation was met or missed, and thus the character succeeds or fails at that task.

Statistics:

Most of the statistics in GateWar are determined by totaling the result of five four-sided dice and any modifiers due to the character's race. Thus a score of 12 or 13 indicates an average level of ability. Size is more a function of the character's race, and is determined differently.

Magic:

Individual spells have different effects, but there are a number of rules that apply to all common magic spells. First, each spell cast subtracts from the character's Magic Point Total. MPT restores itself naturally over time; in fact, one good night's sleep will generally restore all of a person's lost MPT. Any spell may be cast at range, and the range of any spell is the caster's MPT in hexes (before casting the spell). Duration spells (spells that provide temporary effects) will last for the caster's MPT in combat rounds. If the target of a spell doesn't want the spell to affect him, the spell must overcome his natural magical resistance. The base chance for a spell to succeed is 50% modified by plus or minus 05% for every point of MPT the caster has greater than or less than the target before the spell is cast. So: If a character with a current MPT of 17 is casting a Cornea Cloud (duration) spell at a target whose current MPT is 14, the target must be within 17

This is a sidebar. You should read all of them; we'll use sidebars to provide examples for concepts and rules that might not be obvious the first time you read through the rules. To keep from confusing the players in the examples with the characters they play, the players' names will be in all capitals. For example, SUSAN plays Lirg, and CRAIG plays Midon. BOB wants to join the game, too, and is going to make up a character as you read along. MICHELLE is the Game Master, and she plays everyone else that the characters run into during their adventures.

Sidebars will also be used to provide more esoteric information: tidbits about people, places, and creatures that are not vital to learning the game itself.

DICE ROLLING

When dice need to be rolled it will be denoted like this: roll 2d6. In this case, it means to roll two (2) six-sided dice (d6), and add them together. If you rolled a 4 and a 2, the result of your 2d6 roll would be a 6. Rolling a 1d100 is an exception. To roll a 1d100, you would roll one 10-sided die for the "tens" and one 10-sided die for the "ones." Thus, rolling a 7 then a 2 would be 72 and rolling two zeroes would mean 100.

hexes (170 ft.) in order to be in range, **B** because the caster has 3 more points of current MPT than his target, he gets +15% to his chance to succeed (the spell has a 65% chance to work), and **C** the spell, if successful, will last 17 combat rounds.

Spells:

There are two types of spells, Fixed and Variable. Fixed spells subtract a set value of Magic Points (MP) from the caster's MPT. Variable spells may be cast at different levels of power. For example, the Heal spell restores one Hit Point of damage to an injured location for every spell level at which it is cast. Thus, a Heal I spell restores 1 Hit Point, a Heal II spell restores 2 Hit Points, a Heal III 3 Points, and so forth. However, each increasing spell level doubles the MP cost. Thus a Heal I spell costs 1 MP to cast and a Heal II spell costs 2, but a Heal III spell costs 4 MP, a Heal IV costs 8, then 16 and so on as high as the caster is able to go.

The Combat Round:

The combat round breaks down into three actions, two physical and one mental, all of which occur at roughly the same time. Each Mental Action may be used to employ a Mental skill, or to cast a Magic Spell. Each Physical action may be used to employ a physical skill, such as weapons use.

Mental and Physical Skills:

Should a character choose to devote an action during a combat round to performing one Mental or Physical skill, he then rolls percentile dice. If he rolls the number representing his skill or less he succeeds; otherwise, he fails.

Miscellaneous Abilities:

Miscellaneous Abilities are different from Mental and Physical skills in many important respects: **A** Not all Miscellaneous Abilities represent percentile die rolls. **B** Miscellaneous Abilities are derived from statistics and Mental and Physical skills such that when one of those skills or statistics is improved through experience or training, the Miscellaneous Ability improves as well, automatically. **C** Mental and Physical skills are controlled by the player, who decides when and how they are used. Miscellaneous Abilities are referenced by the Game Master. Finally, **D** Mental and Physical skills both require the devotion of an action by the character. They require time and concentration; Miscellaneous Abilities do not. In short, the skills are voluntary while the abilities are involuntary.

Weapon Skills:

Essentially, weapon skills are just more Physical skills. Each weapon has a separate Attack and Parry skill.

Attack: If a player chooses to devote a physical action to attacking, he rolls percentile dice (1d100). If he rolls his Attack number or less he hits, otherwise he misses. If the roll is his Special number or less, he scores a special hit (an impale, stun, slash, or whatever, depending on the type of weapon being used), if he rolls his Critical number or less, then he scores a critical special hit, which inflicts damage like a special hit and ignores armor. However, if the roll is his fumble number or above, he does something embarrassing (shoots a friend, stabs his foot, trips on his own bowstring, etc.)

Parry: If a player chooses to devote a physical action to parrying an incoming blow, he rolls percentile dice. If he rolls his Parry number or less he manages to block the incoming attack, otherwise he misses. There is no Critical, Special or Fumble Parry, you either parry or you don't.

DA:

DA is the Damage Absorption of weapons, armor and objects. Even on a successful Parry, the attacker still gets to roll damage to the blocking weapon. If the attacker can exceed the DA of a parrying weapon in a single blow, then the weapon breaks and any excess damage strikes a random location. The damage is first subtracted from the DA of any armor worn in that location. Any damage left over would be subtracted from that location's HPs.

Hit Locations and Hit Points:

Every creature in GateWar has a number of Hit Points determined by body weight. It is from these points that weapon damage is subtracted. Creatures' bodies are divided into vulnerable areas called Hit Locations. Each location is a certain percent of the body as a whole, and has a number of Hit Points equal to that location's percentage of the total Hit Points.

A Brief Discussion of Damage and its Effects:

A damaged Hit Location with 0 or more Hit Points remaining is Wounded, but can still function. A Hit Location reduced to below 0 HPs is in Serious condition. An arm or leg in Serious condition will be numb and useless, a head or chest in Serious condition will render the victim unconscious, and in the abdomen it will paralyze him from the waist down. If the location is reduced below the negative of its original (if a 6 HP location is reduced below -6 HPs) then the situation is Grave—arms or legs are permanently maimed or hacked off the body completely; the Head, Chest, or Abdomen in Grave condition means death.

THE ROLE OF GAME MASTER

The primary goal of the Game Master (GM) is to transform the rules and information found in this book into an exciting and interesting storyline for the players to explore. The information is designed to help the Game Master, or referee, determine the success or failure of the characters' attempted actions, as well as to acquaint them with the physical laws, characteristics, and inhabitants of Vinya.

The rules provided are designed to allow the most realistic role-playing possible, covering actions for combat, everyday activities and the larger course of history on the continent during and in-between Game Time. A meta-rule of GateWar is that this does not mean that all the rules must be strictly enforced—this is a game, and should be primarily fun. If any rule seems unreasonable, confusing, or too complex to allow for a fast-paced game, alter it or omit it completely.

It is up to the Game Master to insure that the game remains fair—to both the players and the monsters they encounter; challenging, without grinding up the players' characters mercilessly; and most important, fun. The pace should be fast enough to hold the players' interest, yet not overwhelm them, which may mean adding, deleting, or altering situations or monsters called for by the rules. The Game Master plays the roles of the Non-Player Characters and monsters, acts as story-teller of the characters' tale as it unfolds, and also serves as final judge over any disputes or rules arbitration. The players may petition the Game Master for a rule change (and their reasoning should be considered), but the right and responsibility of final decision is the GM's entirely. (Of course, a GM who continually disregards the wishes of his players may find himself without them, Mastering a Game in which no one will play.)

One more thing—the world of Vinya can be a violent and imperfect place. GateWar players are faced with the prospect of a character's death. It is recommended that you as the Game Master try to preserve their miserable skins whenever possible, even if some rules must be bent. Characters finding themselves on the losing end of a fight could be captured for slavery or ransom (or rescue), saved by the militia, or even preserved by an act of God. Of course, some characters are destined not to make it. If the players must be consistently dragged out of the fire or insist on doing stupid things, give them their due. But remember, bottom line, this is a game designed for fun and enjoyment—no one likes to see a character they've spent months playing eradicated.

As you may have noticed with a run-through of the rules, there are a great many covering almost any situation. Rules are inherently limiting, but a good deal of the attraction most people feel for fantasy games is the absence of a restrictive format; the GM lays out the situation and the players deal with it in whatever fashion they think best suits the circumstances, within the bounds of their characters' natures. With this in mind, it is not necessary to clobber the players with the vast weight of rules for every circumstance provided. The ideal situation is when the GM provides the storyline and details of the scenario, and the players guide their characters through it, cautiously and realistically, resorting to the rules only as necessary to resolve combat or skill attempts. Further use of rules is warranted if the GM feels the players are taking advantage of the fact that they are basically an omniscient being moving a game piece about a board. If the characters are travelling for many days on light rations to the furthest extent of their capacity, weapons out and ready, and battling beasts on the way, the GM may feel it necessary to invoke the appropriate rules such as fatigue or blood-loss, or even force them to find and prepare meals, rather than just Foraging along the way. A good rule of thumb is that if the actions of the players seem reasonable and within the nature of their characters, let them do it without a rule or roll.

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