Fumbles

A **(WIP)** rules-light, narrative-based system
written for play-by-post games.

Glossary

- **Trait**: Traits are descriptive and can be anything the player wants them to be. Each trait grants a player a Narrative Dice (ND) when narrated how it is used in a post.

- **Maximum Available Dice pool (MAD)**: MAD is the maximum number of traits that can be used per round. It is normally capped at seven, though a variety of factors may raise or lower it from turn to turn.

- **Narrative Dice (ND)**: Dice gained by narrating the use of a trait. The total number of ND may never be higher than a players MAD for that round.

- **Success**: Every narrative dice that scores 4 or higher counts as a success.

- **Trait Check**: A single roll with one or more traits to determine if a player succeeds at a task. GM sets minimum number of successes needed based on the task's difficulty.

- **Challenge**: A prolonged encounter with repeated attack and defense rolls to achieve a story objective.

- **Challenge Rating (CR)**: The number of cumulative successes needed by the party to overcome the challenge.

- **Attack Roll**: Narrative dice used to reduce the Challenge Rating. Each success by an attack roll reduces the CR by one.

- **Defense Roll**: Narrative dice used to defend during a challenge. A minimum of one success needs to be rolled by the PC, to avoid being removed from the challenge.

- **_Smash_ rating (S)**: A challenge's _Smash_ rating is subtracted from the number of successes of a PCs defense Roll.

- **_Toughness_ rating (T)**: The challenge's _Toughness_ is subtracted from the number of successes of the Attack Roll. Only remaining successes reduce the CR.

- **Hero Points**: Hero Points may be used to gain several advantages as well as avoid being removed from the challenge. A Character may only have one hero point at a time.

Character Creation

Basic Rules

Character creation is very simple. All a player has to do, is pick out a number of traits (~12) for their character. Traits can be virtually anything that comprises a defining part of the character's personality, background, equipment, abilities, or skill sets. From "Magic-user" and "War Veteran" to "makes a mean curry" or "looks good in a leather jacket" any description, adjective, trope, archetype, equipment, or ability is fair game as a trait.

Optional: Attributes and Traits

Rather than just letting players pick whatever and however many traits they want, a GM may introduce Character Points (CP) to prevent PCs from becoming Jack-of-all-Trades. CPs are spent to buy either attributes (for 2 CP) and/or traits associated with that attribute (1 CP per trait). Attributes simply reflect more general characteristics that can be used under most circumstances and serve as an umbrella for a wider skill or ability set. For example the attribute "magic" or "expert thief" could have a list of spells or "lock-picks" and "sneaky" as associated traits, respectively. The classic attributes from a certain other system (strength, intelligence, willpower and so forth) would also work, once coupled to appropriate skills and abilities.

Attributes function the exact same way as traits mechanically. However, since each attribute has to have at least one associated trait, it limits the number of generic and broad traits a player can pick for their character, forcing them to specialize a bit more. 17-19 CPs are generally a good start for a character, allowing for a maximum of 5-6 broadly applicable attributes.

Optional: *Achilles' Heels* and *Stress Explosions*

In addition to traits players may also give their characters an *Achilles' Heel* and a *Stress Explosion*. The *Achilles' Heel* (AH) represents a character's fatal weakness, whether it be kryptonite, a skeleton in the closet, or a phobia of kittens. Players activate their AH voluntarily by narrating it's effect into their post, gaining a *Hero Point* in return (see below on using Hero Points). Once the *Achilles' Heel* has been activated however, they'll suffer a –1 penalty to their MAD for the remainder of the challenge (further details below).

A *Stress Explosion* (SE) is a manifestation of a character's bad habits, dark(er) side, or unpleasant personality traits. Temper tantrums, berserker mode, the recital of melodramatic monologues, essentially any normally hidden behavior that surfaces after a major letdown, beat-down, or defeat could work as a SE. *Stress Explosions* also impose an extra –1 penalty to the players MAD, however unlike *Achilles' Heels* they are not invoked voluntarily, nor grant any additional benefits. They do come in handy during challenges however (see later expositions)

Achilles' Heels and *Stress Explosions* provide an additional mechanic for characters to survive or overcome Challenges as well as adding more mechanical tactics to the game. However, they also extend the minimum number of turns a challenge needs to last, for it to become actually challenging. For more cinematic adventures, one *Achilles' Heel* and one *Stress Explosion* should be enough, while more realistic games (with a MAD of less than 7) could work without an AH or SE or both altogether.

Example: "Gandolf the Wizard"

Player A wants to play a spellslinger, replete with a bushy beard and pointy hat, and was given 17 CP. Firstly Gandolf gets the traits "IQ of 180" and "Magic!". Since being smart and rearranging the laws of the universe are applicable nearly everywhere they cost 2 CP each. As this is a dungeon crawl, Gandolf expects to dodge arrows and fry a lot of goblins, subsequently gaining several specific spells to do so: "Barrier" "Fireball" "Levitate" "Invisibility" "Scorching Hellfire" each costing 1 CP. To flesh out Gandolf's personality and looks, the player decides to give him a few more traits, these being "dead-pan snarker," "wizard staff," "wizard book," "wizard hat," "read arcane languages," and "Owl Familiar". The GM decides that both "wizard staff" and "wizard book" are a bit iffy for a specific trait and tentatively assigns them a CP cost of 1.5 for a total of 16 CP used. Left with only 1 CP Player 1 gives Gandolf the "pyromaniac" trait because frying goblins should be an enjoyable activity. As a *Achilles' Heel* Gandolf gets "exhausted quickly" while his *Stress Explosion* reveals his "really big Ego".

Additional CPs may be gained upon the successful completion of a challenge or after significant events in the story have occurred. Usually 1-3 CPs per advancement are reasonable rewards, allowing players to flesh out their characters with more traits after a session. Alternatively, a player may modify or change their character's AH or SE after a challenge by spending 2 CP and narrating a scene of personal growth. Makes no sense for Gandolf to remain a meek beanstalk after running about in the mountains for several weeks.

Core Mechanics

Using traits to gain Narrative Dice

Traits are used to overcome obstacles where the outcome is not 100% certain much like skills or attributes in other games. To apply a trait, a player simply needs to describe how their character uses it to resolve a certain problem, or just incorporate it somehow into their overall narrative. For each trait thusly used in one post, the player gains one *Narrative Dice* (ND). Once a player has finished writing their post, they roll a d6 for each ND accumulated. Every dice that scores 4 or higher counts as a success which helps them to overcome the obstacle or achieve the task. Players do *not* have to keep track over which trait belonged to what die. Instead the success or failure of a character's choices are determined solely by the players narrative.

Example: "Gandolf's Adventures"

Gandolf must slip past a group of Goblins with pointy spears. He pulls out his spell-book (1d6) and casts invisibility (magic and invisibility for 2d6), flying past the goblin war party (levitate 1d6 for a total of 4 ND) secure in his belief that they won't spot him at all. Alas, all his dice come out as threes and twos, and the invisible Gandolf bumps headlong into a Goblin who happened to take a p*ss in the bushes.

Simple checks, such as the one in the example, are called trait checks and require only one roll to determine success or failure. GMs may set a minimum number of successes needed by individual players, if the task is more difficult. Alternatively the GM may require a number of cumulative successes over the span of one round or more by the entire party, if the trait check requires group effort. Prolonged encounters or important plot objectives on the other hand will take the form of challenges (see below)

Maximum Available Dice (MAD)

While theoretically a Player could make use of all their traits in each post, the GM is advised to set a maximum number of available NDs (or *Maximum Available Dice*, aka. MAD), at the beginning of the campaign. The suggested MAD for most campaigns would be 7, however, if the GM wants players to be more creative and posts more involved, this could as well be higher. Meanwhile, a MAD of 5 could be appropriate for a low-powered game with more specialized PCs.

Challenges

Challenges are the essential game mechanic of the Fumbles system and should be used for most plot relevant scenes that may entail chances of failure. Every challenge uses the same mechanic, whether it's convincing a mobster to hand over a witness, fending of a group of orcs, competing in a piano audition, or navigating a spaceship through an asteroid field. Each challenge should have at least one objective that players need to complete (rescue hostages, defeat the villain, win the piano competition, etc.), as well as consequences for failures (e.g. party death, villain escapes with artifact, ridicule and embarrassment) that are provided by the GM beforehand.

During a challenge a player gains *Narrative Dice* (ND) up to their *Maximum Available Dice* (MAD), by describing how they use their traits during the challenge each turn, much like during a trait check. However, the player must split their NDs between an attack roll and a defense roll. How, is up to the player. Once allocated, the player rolls his ND and counts the number of successes for his attack and defense roll respectively. All challenges have a *Challenge Rating* (CR) that indicates how many cumulative number of successes the group needs to accumulate to achieve the objective. Each success on the attack roll will reduce the CR by one point, while at least one success on the defense roll is needed for a character to stay involved in the challenge. Once each player has allocated and rolled their ND the turn ends and the GM subtracts the successes of the attack rolls from the Challenge's CR.

Challenges that are more difficult may also have a *Toughness* rating (T) and a *Smash* rating (S). *Toughness* is subtracted from the successes of a players attack roll while *Smash* is subtracted from the successes of the players defense roll. Every remaining success of the attack roll reduces the CR permanently by one. Once all players have made their rolls, the round ends and players activate *Achilles' Heel*s or *Stress Explosions*, that come into effect during the next round.

Example: Gandolf's Goblin Barbecue

Gandolf the Wizard randomly encounters a group of Goblins (CR=6; T=2; S=1 or simply 6/2/1). Happy to fry something he starts scorching the entire area with an arsenal of fire spells (hellfire and fireball 2d6) while cackling manically (pyromaniac for another d6). He floats out of the reach of their spears (levitation for another d6) while arrows bounce of harmlessly of his boosted defensive spells (magic and barrier for 2d6). Lastly he hurls snarky remarks at the group of goblins that catches them entirely off guard (dead-pan snarker for the last 1d6).

His total ND numbers 7 which is equal to the campaign's MAD. He decides to divide his ND somewhat evenly and allocates 4 dice to his attack roll and 3 dice to his defense roll. He rolls 3 successes for his attack roll, and 2 successes for

his defense roll. Since the *Toughness* and *Smash* ratings are 2 and 1 he scored one success for both of his rolls, and the CR has been reduced to 5.

Should a player roll no successes on their defense rolls the character is removed from the challenge. While the player may still post and interact with the scene, they may not roll any more NDs. A character may however use a *Hero Point* to recover immediately. Alternatively, if the character possesses a *Stress Explosion* that has not been activated yet, it will do so automatically at the end of the round, preventing the character from being removed. However, each active *Stress Explosion* and/or *Achilles' Heel* will reduce the player's MAD by one point for the remainder of the challenge.

> **Example:** "Gandolf in Dire Straits."
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> Gandolf continues barbecuing Goblin steaks. Realizing he'll not make much progress being so cautious, however, he goes all out on the offensive. Gandolf ignores the spears poking at his sides and the arrows whizzing past his ears and allocates all ND to his attack roll. He rolls 5 successes, reducing the CR to 2 (-1 from the previous round and –3 from this round). However, since he didn't score any defensive successes his *Stress Explosion* activates. Irritated that a group of measly goblins dare to touch his very own greatness, Gandolf starts making mistakes. During the next turn Gandolf's MAD will have been reduced to 6, most likely forcing him to spend a *Hero Point* to avoid getting skewered. Alternatively, he could have simply used his *Hero Point* instead, which would not have reduced his MAD.

Once the CR has been reduced to 0 the objective of the challenge has been completed, provided the group still has at least one character standing at the end. Meanwhile, failure occurs when all the players have been removed, with no remaining Hero Points or *Stress Explosions* to activate.

Hero Points

Hero Points are a resource that allow a player to gain a temporary advantage for one round. Each player starts out with one Hero Point at the beginning of a challenge, which may be used at any point in time, before or after rolling. This Hero Point can be spend to do any one of the following things:

1) <u>Devil's Own Luck</u>: Survive a round with no defense successes

2) <u>Invoke Trope</u>: The Player narrates an appropriate trope (dependent upon GM discretion) and gains 3 extra ND for one round, that can bring the total to above the players current MAD.

3)   <u>Heroic Recovery</u>: Recover a spent Achilles' Heel or Stress Explosion, removing penalties to MAD in the process

4)   <u>In the Nick of Time</u>: A player may also simply give a Hero Point to another player

Example: *"Gandolf is Victorious"*

Gandolf is still stuck in a tussle with the goblin raiding party. Now that his MAD has been reduced to 6 he allocates his dice evenly between attack and defense. He gets lucky. His attack roll scores 3 successes, while his defense roll gives him the minimum of 2 successes needed to stay alive. One success short of victory, he decides to try and clean up the goblin war band for good. Using a *Hero Point* he decides to gain three extra dice and allocates them all to his attack roll. He gains two additional successes reducing the CR to 0. The last goblin is incinerated in a flashy display of power.

If Gandolf hadn't rolled 2 successes for his defense roll, he would have spent the *Hero Point* on just staying alive. Even if he finished up the challenge, he would have died in the process, without any defense successes.

Hero Points are restored at the end of every successfully completed Challenge. In addition Players can gain Hero Points by activating their *Achilles' Heel* (AH) at the end of the turn (after all dice have been rolled). Activating an AH grants the player one extra hero point, but in return their MAD is decreased by one for the remainder of the challenge. Each Achilles' Heel may only be used once per challenge, however certain conditions (set by the GM) may allow a player to recover from their AH, regaining the lost MAD, and allowing it to be activated again.

Initiative? What's that...

The challenge system should make it obvious that common RPG mechanics such as initiative, combat order, and movement are not needed here. Most GMs know by now that those trappings can slow down and hamper story progression significantly in PbP, and often remove them even from mechanistically complex systems. However, Fumbles actually takes this idea one step further. Not only does posting order not matter, but posting frequency is not important either. Because rolls are essentially self-contained within each character, players may easily post several times in a row, or skip a couple of turns without mechanistically changing the outcome of the challenge. GMs are still advised to structure a challenge such that players post once per turn, but the game still won't come to a screeching halt (or require a GM to take on PC duties), if a player has to skip a few.

Advanced Rules for Narrative Dice

Sharing Traits

Occasionally a player may have only a few usable traits for a given check. Rather than stretching the rule of cool to make inappropriate traits applicable, other players may narrate *one* of their traits for the PC, giving them *one* extra ND. During Challenges players may also roll *one* defense or attack dice for another player that is either deficient in appropriate traits or simply had a stroke of bad luck. Players may donate one trait to as many comrades as they wish, however, doing so may never raise the ND beyond the current MAD for any player, or, in other words, the total number of dice rolled during a round by all players together, may never be higher than the sum of the MADs for each player.

Example: "Gandolf's Trusty Companion"

Gandolf is joined by his trusty friend, Frody, in his tussle with the Goblin war band. Unfortunately, Frody is a halfling cook and has invested most of his CP into useless traits, such as frying eggs and being a coward. With some imagination he manages to gather 5 ND using his agility, halfling fortitude and size, a frying pan, and quick reflexes honed by a lifetime of running away. Unfortunately, Frody rolls only one success for his defense roll not enough to avert the challenges *Smash* rating. With a sigh, Gandolf quickly casts barrier, rolling a 4 preventing Frody from being turned into Halfling shush-kebab. Since Frody only rolled 5 ND, Gandolf can still roll his total MAD for his defense and attack rolls. If Gandolf's shared trait, would also have come up as a 3 or less, however, Frody would have activated his *Stress Explosion* at the end of the turn, unless Aragurn the the Ranger jumps into the fray and shares a trait as well.

Props and *Goodies*

Props are simply objects or features that the GM introduces into a challenge. *Props* can be anything, from specific terrain, to acquired treasure, to NPCs, or important information. Narrating the use of a *Prop* will grant a player NDs in the same manner as traits do. A GM may further define how often a *Prop* can be used per round or per challenge, and how many players can make use of it, during one turn.

A *Goody* is similar to a *Prop*, except narrating it not only grants a ND, but also raises a players MAD by one for that post. *Goodies* are best given as rewards for completing previous chapters, or as safeguards for difficult and long lasting climatic challenges. The "healing potion" would make a very classic *Goody* granting a PC one ND towards a defensive roll, once. However, discovering the BBEGs weakness, acquiring Next Gen hacking software, or learning the secret behind the evil merchant company's success might

be appropriate examples for *Goodies* as well. Much like *Props*, *Goodies* can also be one-use only, last for an entire encounter, or even the rest of the game according to GM discretion.

Berserk and Fortress Mode

Players may opt to enter *Fortress* or *Berserk* mode devoting all their ND to either defense or attack respectively. Doing so will grant the player one additional, automatic success to either their defense roll (in *Fortress* mode) or attack roll (in *Berserk* mode). This automatic success is not counted towards a players MAD. Characters can still share traits while in either mode, but are limited to giving only defense or attack dice respectively.

Black Dice and Boon Dice

If a GM wants to take on a mechanistically active role during a scene, and put more pressure on the character's directly, then they may opt to roll *Black Dice* and/or *Boon Dice* during a challenge. *Black Dice* represent difficult obstacles that may impede a character's progress during a challenge. An elite warrior in a pack of mooks, a thunderstorm, friendly fire, or an excessively ornery butler during a social event could all be enough reason to introduce *Black Dice* before or during a challenge. *Boon Dice* are the opposite of *Black Dice*. They usually represent favorable conditions, helpful NPCs, good terrain, or troops in a battle.

To use *Black Dice* the GM simply rolls the number of *Black Dice* allocated. Every *Black Die* that comes up as a 4 or higher will cancel out the success of one player's attack or defense roll. A GM has two options on how to use these cancellations: Firstly, she can assign them to players who have not rolled yet, and specifically target a character's defenses or attacks. Alternatively, *Black Dice* may be voluntarily taken up by players after their roll, canceling out an excess success. If no-one does so, however, the GM can start assigning them to players at will. This can obviously be fatal, if the GM is a meanie. The GM has the ultimate say on whether *Black Dice* are targeted or voluntary, but should explain how they're used before the players start rolling.

Boon Dice are handled similarly to *Black Dice*. The GM simply rolls however many she introduced into the challenge, but instead of canceling successes *Boon Dice* grant additional ones to the players. *Boon Dice* may similarly be either targeted or taken voluntarily

> **Example:** "Gandolf and Frody meet Crunch"
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> Gandolf and Frody guard a caravan traveling to a nearby city. On their way they are attacked by a group of orcish bandits. Their leader Crunch looks especially menacing, with all those skulls hanging from his belt. The GM decides that Crunch warrants a *Black Die* during the encounter. Fortunately, the caravan is accompanied by the NPC Aragurn, whose three-day-beard marks him as a seasoned ranger. His combat experience is enough reason for a *Boon Die*. The GM rolls the *Black* and *Boon Dice* before the other two players narrate their

actions, and both come up with a 4 and 5. The GM decides that Crunch is swinging his cleaver around wildly, attacking anything and everyone. The *Black Die* is designated voluntarily to anyone's defense roll. Meanwhile the GM narrates how Aragurn loosens a volley of arrows onto the orcs who scramble about in chaos. The GM decides that the extra support improve Gandolf's chances at frying things undisturbed and adds an extra success to his attack rolls. Happily, Frody takes up the unassigned *Black Die.* Since he stayed in *Fortress* mode, the extra success needed doesn't hurt him very much. During the next round the GM may continue to use the *Black* and *Boon Dice* the same way, or change things up a bit. Crunch may very well see Gandolf as the biggest threat and target him mercilessly with *Black Dice* towards his defense rolls. Aragurn, on the other hand, may decide to help Frody out of a predicament granting a *Boon Die* to his defenses.

An optional rule for more high powered games is to let the party gain black dice whenever an *Achilles Heel* or *Stress Explosion* is activated, rather than reducing a players MAD. *Black Dice* are generally more benign than MAD penalties, hence this optional rule will let players take on more complex and long lasting challenges.

What is the difference between *Boon Dice* and *Goodies*? Simply put, a GM controls and narrates *Boon Dice*, while players control and describe the use of *Goodies*. From an in-game perspective they may not be all too different, but the general idea is that *Boon Dice* represent favorable conditions that act independently from the characters, while *Goodies* are tools the characters can directly make use of.

A word of caution...

Adding the above optional rules into the game gives players more tactical options to overcome difficult challenges by encouraging teamwork and coordinating ND allocation. However, they also allow players to draw out even the most difficult challenge indefinitely, simply by staying in *Fortress* mode. When these optional rules are used the GM should introduce an additional threshold for failure: If the party goes for 3 turns without achieving any successes on their attack rolls, the party failed!

To turn or not to turn...

Not only do the advanced rules for ND introduce greater complexity and options, they also make it more difficult to run loose challenges where everyone posts as they wish. If a GM uses more than two of those optional rules, it would be wise for them to introduce turns into the challenge. A turn functions no differently from other game systems, in that every player makes their rolls once. After every player has finished doing so, the GM closes off the previous and introduces the new turn. Posting order still won't matter, and players may set aside *Shared Dice* to roll after other players have posted their actions.

Advanced Rules for Challenges

Minor Objectives

Normally a challenge with a single objective should last no longer than 5-7 rounds. For climatic scenes, longer challenges consisting of multiple objectives may be more appropriate. A multi-tiered challenge works similarly to a regular challenge except that it contains additional objectives, with their own CR and toughness. The characters still need to achieve the primary objective to succeed, but pursuing sub-challenges may grant them important advantages, or might make beating the primary objective easier. Players still roll their defense and attack dice as normal but they will have to decide which objective's CR they want to tackle. Successes on the attack roll are then subtracted normally from the respective objective. While each objective has its own CR and *Toughness*, the primary challenge's *Smash* rating remains the same for each player, whether they tackle a sub-challenge or not. Overcoming the CR of minor objectives, should always provide players with rewards usable for the encounter, such as:

- A reduction in either T or S of the primary challenge
- Gaining a *Hero Point* for the encounter
- Recovering spent *Achilles' Heels* and/or *Stress Explosions*
- Receiving a number of *Props* and/or *Goodies* usable this or the next encounter
- Removing *Black Dice* (if used)
- Gaining *Boon Dice* (if used)

Example

The PCs have infiltrated a clandestine facility that conducts illegal experiments on human beings to advance the Transcendence Project. To shut down the experiments forever, the PCs will have to erase the core processor and initiate the self-destruct mechanism. Of course it's not as easy as waltzing up to the Mainframe and pushing a red button. An elite team of mutants with psychic powers stands in their way, and of course the PCs will have to rescue and escort the captured test subjects to safety, before they blow up the joint. To simulate the three objectives the GM adds two minor objectives on top of the main objective, destroy the facility. The challenges look like this

Challenge

Find the *Core Processor* and initiate self-destruct: 55/2/3

Minor Objective: Defeat Mutant guards: 20/2

Minor Objective: Rescue prisoners: 12/1

The GM decides that defeating the mutant guards should lower the difficulty of destroying the facility significantly. As a reward for completing the first minor objective the Challenge's S rating will be lowered by 2, (from 3 to 1). On the other hand rescuing the test subjects should give the PCs a second wind and renew their motivation. Should the PCs achieve this objective everyone's *Achilles' Heels* and *Stress Explosions* will be reset. The GM hopes that at least a few players decide to engage the super mutants first, since the party has a few characters with combat traits. Meanwhile, another player can focus on finding and rescuing the hostages, allowing everyone to burn through their AHs and *SEs* during the first few rounds without expending their hero point. Of course, the PCs may decide on a different path too, possibly even ignoring the minor objectives altogether, heading straight to the mainframe.

Timed Objectives

A timed objective is simply that: An objective whose CR must be reduced in a specific number of turns. If the primary challenge is also a timed objective the party simply fails, if the players do not succeed within the time limit. If the timed objective is a sub-challenge, then the GM might impose penalties upon the party such as:

- An increase in S or T of the primary challenge
- A loss of a *Hero Point*
- Reduced rewards at the end of the challenge
- A reduction in MAD for one or multiple turns
- A number of *Black Dice* (if used)
- Changing the primary challenge's objective entirely

Alternatively, a GM may also reward players, if the group manages to subdue a timed objective within the time limit. See above for suitable rewards to give during a challenge.

Triggers

Triggers work somewhat differently from regular challenges or objectives. Instead of a CR, *Triggers* have a threshold rating. The party must accumulate a number of attack successes equal to the Trigger's threshold each turn, or the trigger's conditions activate. Unlike regular challenges however the threshold regenerates to its original value at the beginning of each turn. Obviously triggers, only make sense alongside a primary challenge.

Triggers can have multiple effects the most common being penalties as described in the *Timed Objectives* section. However, triggers, may also remove rewards or positive

conditions provided beforehand. more complex scenarios can also have triggers activate timed objectives or even change the primary objective of the challenge entirely.

As an example, a stealth mission into a politician's villa could have a Trigger (alert the compound to your presence) alongside a primary objective to retrieve an important document. Failing to pacify the Trigger, sees the players surrounded by guards (increase S, but possibly also decrease T) in the next turn. At the same time the Trigger initiates a timer to achieve the objective, as the politician prepares to evacuate the compound, while destroying all the incriminating evidence she holed up in her safe.

Capstones

Capstones are narrative events that occur during a challenge after the party has achieved a number of cumulative successes. Capstones simply serve as plot points for the GM, if the challenge is intended to last more than 6 rounds (such as a challenge that consists of locating and then stealing an object for example). If desired, the GM may include rewards or penalties upon reaching a capstone as well.

Boss Challenges

Bosses represent the ultimate challenge in Fumbles and entail a high chance of failure. Bosses are appropriate for especially climatic scenes that signal the end of a chapter or the adventure itself, but GMs should be cautious using them in between scenes. Bosses can kill a team fairly quickly if the GM decides so.

Bosses still retain all the mechanics of a standard challenge, however, they also come with their own set of 3-5 traits that are represented as *Black Dice*. As if that weren't enough, however, Bosses have a few special abilities that they can activate at the beginning of a turn by burning a few CR from any objective. A Boss may do one of the following each turn:

- <u>Cause an affliction</u>: An affliction seals one trait of a player for the remainder of the challenge, preventing it from contributing to the player's NDs. This ability costs 1 CR and may only be applied to each player once. Only one trait may be sealed this way, even if that trait has other traits reliant upon it (such as "Magic", or "Fightin' Skillz")

- <u>Gain Black Dice</u>: A Boss may temporarily gain one or more extra *Black Dice* to use against the players during one round. Doing so reduces the CR by 1 per *Black Dice* gained.

- <u>Exploit Fatal Weakness</u>: A Boss can trigger an *Achilles' Heel* or *Stress Explosion* of a player. Unlike normally, an AH activated this way does not provide additional Hero Points. Doing so costs 6 CR and this ability may only be used every 5 turns.

- <u>You made me mad!</u>: The Boss may initiate the second stage of a challenge and increase either the S or T rating of a challenge by 1 one time. Doing so burns 10 CR from any objective, and this ability can only be invoked when the players have either achieved a secondary objective, or reduced the primary objective's CR by half.