

ELEGANT ROLE-PLAYING

by Gregor Hutton

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1 Basic Rules

1.1 Characteristics

Mastery, **Wisdom** and **Power** are described in **rating points**, an average human has a rating of 3, while a mighty hero may have 12 or more.

1.2 Contests – Attempting Tasks

When attempting a task (such as leaping a fence or striking an opponent) you roll a **six-sided die (d6)** and add this to a rating (Mastery for physical actions, Wisdom for mental actions, and Power for mystical or social actions) to form a **score**. Compare the score with an **opposing value** [either a fixed number determined by the GamesMaster (GM), e.g. 6 is **tough**, 9 is **hard**, or an opponent's score if contesting] to get a **result**.

$$\text{acting score} - \text{opposing value} = \text{result}$$

1.3 Results

A result of 1 means marginal **success**, higher results yield greater degrees of success. A result of 0 or lower means **failure**. For an **extended contest** a character needs to accumulate a number of result points to be successful (e.g. 5) and this may require several contests, with the result points totalled over several attempts.

Example: A Friend In Need...

Hestus the pirate is trying to climb the back wall of the Inn of Iniquity, a shady denizen of thieves, curs and women of the night...

His long-time friend and occasional lover M'Ladye de Four-Seasons is on the third floor, unaware that her next visitor is going to be Brutus the Cut-throat, a villain of ill repute. Brutus is at this very moment inside the inn making his way up the stairs. He has left three henchmen minding the bottom of the stair lest anyone try to intervene. He intends to get the whereabouts of the **Azure of Atalon** from M'Ladye, who unwittingly knows where, but not what, it is.

About This Game

Elegant Role-Playing (ERP) is a **free** role-playing game system. First up for ERP is a fantasy setting (called **Scarab**). I may well use it for other settings as well, because it can handle anything from human to Godlike level. It is based on three characteristics: **MASTERY**, **WISDOM** and **POWER**.

About The Author

Gregor Hutton was born in 1972 near Glasgow in Scotland. He has been a roleplayer, game-tinkerer and writer since 1984. He currently lives in Edinburgh and works as a Senior Editor for a publishing company.

ERP is produced on an **ApplePower Macintosh G4** computer in **Quark XPress 4.1**, Typeset in **Arial** and **Friz Quadrata**.





Note About The Climb

Hestus would barely have made the climb without his +1 add for Climbing, as he would have achieved 9 result points in total (3, 1 and 5) with his final roll of 5, rather than a total of 12.



The GM informs Hestus's player that Hestus must make a contest of Mastery and achieve a total of 9 result points (three for each floor) with an opposing value of 6. He has three attempts before Brutus reaches the third floor landing, and a further two attempts if he needs them before Brutus bursts into M'Ladye's room swishing his cutlass and hook menacingly.

Hestus has a Mastery of 6 and gets +1 to the contest as he has an 'add' of +1 for climbing. So Hestus will roll a d6 and **add** 7 versus an opposing value of 6.

He rolls a three for 4 result points [score (7+3=10) – OV (6) = result (4)] and then rolls a one on his second attempt for (8–6) 2 result points.

After two tries he has 6 result points and needs 3 or more result points on his final try to reach M'Ladye's window before Brutus reaches the landing.

He rolls a five, for (12–6) 6 result points giving Hestus a total of 12 result points, more than enough to climb the wall.

The GM tells Hestus' player that Hestus successfully climbs up the wall unnoticed and swings over the balcony of M'Ladye's room. There is a sudden movement to the left and M'Ladye steps out from behind a silk screen barely clothed, her chin drops as if to scream. Outside the room Brutus' peg leg thumps on to the landing...

1.4 Damage

In combat each result point causes 1 **Wound** point (you start with 0 wounds) to your opponent. When wounded, a character tests their Mastery, Wisdom or Power (for physical, mental or mystical wounds) against an opposing value of their current wounds total (wounds are cumulative). A result of 1 or more means the character can fight on. A result of 0 or lower renders the character unconscious, –5 or lower indicates that the character is possibly dead. Only the GM can decide if a character dies or not, it is their responsibility to choose what is best for the story.

1.5 Weapons

A punch or kick does less damage than other attacks and so subtracts 3 from the wounds caused [a '**damage modifier**' (DM) of –3], a knife has DM –2, a cudgel or similar weapon DM –1 (although in all these cases this will not take the wounds caused below 1), while a two-handed sword has DM +2. A sword has DM 0, unless it is wielded two-handed (DM +1).

1.6 Armour

Armour reduces the number of wounds by a set amount. Hardened leather armour reduces the damage by 1, ring mail by 2, chain mail by 3 and plate mail by 4. Armour will not reduce a blow below causing 1 wound. Also note that armour does not protect against non-physical wounds.

Rings of Protection typically reduce damage by either 1 or 2 points depending on the strength of the magic, these can reduce a blow to causing no wounds (unlike armour). **Protective magic** is subtracted from the damage before any armour is taken into account. Rings of Protection also protect against almost all sorts of damage (psychic attacks and so on). Strangely Rings don't protect against the damaging effects of casting spells, and some say that the rings even take pleasure in being bathed in such damage...

Legend also says that rings can gain **Glory**...

1.7 Healing

Characters normally **heal** 1 wound (i.e. subtract one from their current wounds total) for every hour of rest, but the GM can rule that wounds may take longer to heal and require either medical or mystical aid.

One example might be a healing spell with an opposing value of 6. The caster contests their Power against an opposing value of 6, with each result point being a wound healed by the target of the spell. Spells can be demanding on the body and mind, and commonly the caster gains 1 wound for casting a spell (more dangerous spells can cause more than this and it is said that some spells such as summoning demi-Gods can kill the caster outright!). Wounds gained in this way are contested against Power.

Injured sorcerers often have to rest before casting, lest their own art finishes them off where a barbarian's sword failed. Of course the quickest way to heal is to cast a spell... and healing spells are notoriously dangerous to cast on fellow sorcerers.

2 Character Creation

2.1 Example: A Fantasy Setting

Allocate 15 points between Mastery, Wisdom and Power. The highest of the three cannot be more than 6 points greater than the lowest. Typically you should allocate 6, 5 and 4 to the characteristics.

Both Glory and Wounds are 0 and so you can leave these blank.

Describe your character in My Legend, listing 6 adds that you have. No add can be greater than 2 to start the game, but it can rise to 3 when you start adventuring and gaining Glory.

Write down your clothes, weapons and so on in My Possessions and their effects. Choose either (a) two 1-point magical items, or (b) one 2-point item from the lists below.

1-point Magical Items

A Jar of Hiding (can hold the contents of a small room in a jar, objects must fit through the narrow mouth)

A +1 Ring of Protection (1 point of protection against all wounds)

A Love Philtre (100% guaranteed successful, 1 draft)

Cloak of Invisibility (opposing value 6 to be spotted)

A Bottle of Elixir (3 drinks worth, each healing d6 wounds)

Sword of Wounding (causes +1 wound, cannot be reduced to 0 by a Ring of Protection)

A Flute of Sleeping (causes unsuspecting victims to fall into a deep sleep for result points in hours if successful, test the flute's Power of 3 against an opposing value of the victim's Power)

2-point Magical Items

A Basket of Hiding

A Magic Carpet

A Sword of Slaying (+2)

A +2 Ring of Protection

A Drum of War

A Ring of Invisibility



Example Character: Hestus

Hestus of Port Garde, Pirate and Thief.

Mastery **6** (dandy with a cutlass, and quick as a dart), Wisdom **4** (brighter than the average cut-throat but not university material), Power **5** (popular and determined)

Famed for his **seamanship** (+1), **cutlass-fighting** (+1) and **climbing** (+1) Hestus has set out on a new life of adventure. Little-known are his **skill with poisons** (+1) and ability to **speak many languages** (+1). He is also an excellent **navigator** (+1) and tells many tales of the Gods in the stars.

Hestus has a **ring of protection** (+1) and a **cutlass of wounding** (+1)



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MY LEGEND and my specialities

MY POSSESSIONS and their effects

Character Creation: Characteristics 15, Speciality Adds 6, Possessions 2 special items

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