Cosmic Combat

A game by Jasper Polane

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1. Introduction

A year ago, at the center of the universe, a hole was ripped in the Fabric Of Space And Time, and a horde of Demonic Creatures poured out from The Other Side. Commanded by the terrible Lords Of Entropy the demon armies started their conquest of the cosmos, destroying everything in their path. Only the Incarnates stand between them and total annihilation, and you're one of them.

Cosmic Combat is a game about the Existence Wars, fought to determine the Fate Of The Universe. Players act the part of incredibly powerful creatures called Incarnates, able to manipulate the elementary matter of the cosmos. They're generals leading armies that are fighting The Evil Hordes Of The Lords Of Entropy.

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You'll need six-sided dice to play.

Acknowledgements

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2. Incarnate Creation

To play **Cosmic Combat**, you need to make an Incarnate. Incarnates are mind bogglingly powerful characters with the ability to manipulate the elementary matter of the universe itself. In short, your Incarnate can use his Cosmic Powers to do everything you can imagine.

Concept

Before picking the numbers, take some time to think about your Incarnate. What does he want? Where is he from? Where is he going?

Name: Think up a cool name for your Incarnate.

Appearance: Some notes on what he looks like, style of clothing, stand-out items, etc.

Origin: A short description of where your Incarnate is from and some notes on his history. Keep it short, and make sure you explain where his Phenomenal Cosmic Powers come from. Some ideas:
- A member of a powerful alien species.
- A renegade angel or demon.
- A cyborg or robot, getting his powers from highly advanced technology.
- A God or Goddess.

The Lords Of Entropy: The Entropy Lords are formless Chaos Incarnates, whose appearance is different to every individual, depending on what he or she expects. Describe what the Lords will look like when your Incarnate encounters one of them: A formless mass of tentacles and teeth, enormous dragons that eat planets, beautiful dark chaos queens, etc.

Here's my Incarnate, Astrid. She's a Valkyrie, one of Odin's sword maidens, blonde and blue-eyed, winged horse and all. She's convinced these are the End Times, and she's fighting in Ragnarok. She sees the Entropy Lords as gigantic Ice Giants.

Stats

Every Incarnate has 4 stats. Distribute 10 points.

Kicking Ass: Used when fighting others.
Being A Sneaky Bastard: Rolled when doing something secretive or to lie to someone.
Wielding Awesome Power: Used whenever an Incarnate uses his Cosmic Power.
Looking Cool While Doing It: Rolled to impress others and look your best.

Astrid's stats:
Kicking Ass	*3*
Being A Sneaky Bastard	*2*
Wielding Awesome Power	*2*

3. Conflict Resolution

Roll the dice whenever you try to do something and someone else decides to oppose you. In **Cosmic Combat** everybody may declare a conflict, not just the GM, but you can only use your own Incarnate or a NPC to oppose someone, not another player's PC Incarnate.

Every side of the conflict declares the goal he wants to achieve in this conflict, and what action he takes to achieve it. Based upon this two stats are chosen and added together. The resulting total is the number of dice to roll.

For Example, Astrid is fighting a Particle Vampire. Of course, her goal is to send the monster back to the cold netherworld it came from, so she rolls her Kicking Ass stat, but she doesn't want the creature to find out she's a Valkyrie, so she wants to use Being A Sneaky Bastard to hide this fact from it. The Particle Vampire just wants to feed off her Ion Field, and rolls Kicking Ass + Wielding Awesome Powers.

Some more examples:
- Severing someone's head: Kicking Ass + Looking Cool While Doing It.
- Attacking someone from behind: Kicking Ass + Being A Sneaky Bastard.
- Blowing up a planet: Kicking Ass + Wielding Awesome Power.
- Seducing a married Goddess: Being A Sneaky Bastard + Looking Cool While Doing It.

Only after all the goals in the conflict are declared and it's clear what will happen if either side wins you can roll the dice.

Both sides roll their dice. Arrange the dice highest to lowest, and compare your highest result with the highest die of your opponent. The one with the highest die wins this exchange, and narrates his Incarnate's actions. After this, the two dice are discarded and the second highest dice are compared. Continue until you have compared the lowest dice.

The side winning the most exchanges has won the conflict, and achieves his goal. If both sides win an equal number of exchanges, the conflict is undecided and a follow-up conflict should be rolled.

Tied dice are not discarded, but put into the character's Matter Pool. They can be used later to calculate the mechanical effects of the conflict. If one of the players rolled more dice, his lowest dice are also placed into his Matter Pool.

Back to our example: Astrid's fighting the Particle Vampire. Let's say me and the GM both roll 5 dice. I roll 6, 3, 3, 2, 1. The GM rolls 5, 5, 3, 2, 2.

I win the first exchange: Astrid hacks at the monster with her positronic sword. The second exchange goes to the Vampire: He sucks the energy out of Astrid's energy blade. The third and fourth are tied, so we both get 2 dice in our Matter Pools. The final exchange is won by the Particle Vampire: He grabs Astrid, and starts feeding. And because she failed in her attempt to hide her nature, the creature's now aware of her being a Valkyrie.

Multiple Characters in a Conflict

When there's more than two characters in the conflict, the goals of all the Incarnates must be different. The above rules are used normally, with the highest die narrating the exchange. Ties are put into the character's Matter Pool, but any remaining dice from other players are used to determine the winner of this exchange as usual.

Example: Astrid rolls a 4, the Particle Vampire also rolls a 4, and the Bone Colossus rolls a 3. Astrid and the Vampire tie and both get a die in their Matter Pool. The Bone Colossus is the winner of this exchange, and his player narrates.

Hacking

Whenever an Incarnate uses his Cosmic Powers, he sends ripples through the Cosmic Background Radiation of the universe. These can be detected by anyone in the Cosmos with the ability to manipulate time and space. They may decide to use their own powers to take control of the probabilities of the situation.

In the game, this means: Whenever an Incarnate uses his Wielding Awesome Power stat in a conflict, players not involved in the conflict can Hack into it by rolling their own Wielding Awesome Power stat. The GM can do the same for NPC Incarnates, such as a Lord Of Entropy. (This is in fact a nice way to introduce new opposition into the game.)

Treat the Hacker's dice as if he's involved in the conflict. He gets dice added to his Matter Pool when he ties with another player, and can narrate the exchange if he has the highest die. However, he can't win or lose the conflict, and must determine the winner of the exchange in his narration.

Let's go back to my original example conflict of Astrid versus the Particle Vampire, only now the Bone Colossus Hacks into the conflict. I roll 6, 3, 3, 2, 1, the GM rolls 5, 5, 3, 2, 2, and the Colossus' player rolls 3 dice: 6, 5, 4. The Vampire wins the first exchange, Astrid and the Bone Colossus get 1 die in their Matter Pools. The second exchange goes to Astrid, the Vampire and the Colossus tie. The third die is won by the Colossus, and his player narrates, describing how Astrid wins this exchange. Next exchange is tied, and the Particle Vampire wins the last exchange, winning the conflict.

4. The Matter Pool

The winner of the conflict can spend the dice in his Matter Pool to achieve the mechanical effects below. The dice are used as points, so they're not rolled again, and the original result of a die doesn't matter. You don't have to spend all your dice and can save them for your next conflict.

If you lose the conflict, you can't spend your Matter Pool at this point, but the Pool is not emptied: The dice can be used after winning a later conflict to achieve a bigger effect.

Damage: Spending 1 die from your Matter Pool enables you to kill one planet worth of mortals. Incarnates, however, are not as easy to damage: You can lower one of your opponent's stats with 1 point per die.

When one or more stats drop to 0, the Incarnate is unconscious, and he or she cannot take any actions until another character heals you or the GM decides to restore him to consciousness in a later scene. You can prevent a stat from dropping to 0 by emptying your Matter Pool as a last ditch defense, which keeps the stat from falling below 1.

NPC Incarnates can be killed by lowering all his stats to 0. PC Incarnates cannot die, unless his player decides to kill him off, or until the End Game mechanics are in effect. Likewise, Entropy Lords can only be killed in the End Game.

Healing: 1 die resurrects one planet worth of mortals, or gives an Incarnate back one damaged stat point per die. You can use the healing on yourself, or on another Incarnate.

Raising stats: You can temporarily raise one of your stats above its normal value by 1 point for every die from your Matter Pool. The change is in effect until the next conflict the stat is used in.

The Particle Vampire, feeding of Astrid, has 2 dice in his Matter Pool. The GM decides to use 1 die to damage Astrid's Wielding Awesome Power stat. Astrid's Cosmic Power flows into the Vampire, and the GM uses his second die to raise it's Kicking Ass stat by 1 point.

Changing the Plot: You can use the dice in your Matter Pool to influence the plot of the game. Introduce a new character, danger, or event for every die you spend, one fact per die.

Ending the Game: The winner of a conflict can put one of his dice into the Mission Pool. When the number of Mission Dice equals the Difficulty of this adventure, the End Game begins.

5. Playing Cosmic Combat

At the start of the game, the GM presents the PC's basic mission. This is the goal of the adventure, the thing that must be achieved at the end of the game.

Next, he sets the Adventure Difficulty. The Difficulty determines how many Mission Dice are needed before the End Game starts.

Adventure Difficulty	#Mission Dice needed
Easy	Equal to the number of players
Average	2 times the number of players
Difficult	3 times the number of players
Last Mission of the Campaign	4 times the number of players

End Game

When the number of dice in the Mission Pool is equal to the adventure's Difficulty, the End Game begins. The adventure goal can now be achieved, and the End Game mechanics below will come in effect:

- **Incarnate Death**: Normally, PC Incarnates and Lords Of Entropy cannot die, but in the End Game, they're in danger. If the Incarnate's four stats drop to 0, he dies.
- **Matter Pool**: When winning a conflict, you can use your opponents Matter Pool as well as your own.
- **Hacking**: Events in the End Game are enormous, and every conflict leaves its mark on the Cosmic Awareness. Incarnates can Hack into any conflict, even when Wielding Awesome Power isn't used.

The winner of the final conflict in the game may narrate the adventure's ending. Be as over the top as you can get.

Character Improvement

After the adventure, every Incarnate can raise one of his stats by 1 point.