A painting of a young boy in a red jacket and cap, leaning against a wooden post, with a horse-drawn carriage in the background. The boy is looking directly at the viewer with a serious expression. He is wearing a red jacket with a dark collar and a red cap with a black band. A gold badge is pinned to his jacket. He is leaning against a large, weathered wooden post. In the background, a horse-drawn carriage is visible, and a black box with white text is on the ground.

NEWSIES & BOOTBLACKS

GARR'S
BLACKING

J. BASTIEN-LEPAGE

London 1887

Newsies & Bootblacks: The First Edition

by Miguel de Luis

February 26, 2011

A MiniM Role-Playing Game

For the homeless children of every age and time, and for those who work for them, in gratitude.

Acknowledgments

Newsies & Bootblacks would not be a quarter as good without the kind help of many people encouraging me to keep on; finding the mistakes, suggesting improvements and creative ways to do things. They each have played a roll in creating every minute of fun this game provides. Among them are: Tonisan Padial, Hugo (Ze_Mighty_Vegetable), Davina Haisell, Joe Murphy, Jim Kernan, Brian Gross, Pandora Caitiff, Zombie Butch, Sean 2009, Destriarch, Moth_Devil, DJorgensen, Steve Conan Trustrum, Mike Laff, Harlan Quinn, Joyce A Martin, Tammy Warren, the people from La Marca del Este, the people from 1 Thousand Monkeys, the people from Obsidian Portal, Alejandro, Juanjo and Rayco from Sueños de Papel.

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A game of imagination, role-playing and wonder by Miguel de Luis. Play along with the adventures of a bunch of kids earning their pluck on their own in an Edwardian world filled with crazed inventors, fagins, strange conspiracies and exotic foreigners from countries you've never heard about. Oh, and there's an ounce of steampunk, too.

- ♥ Try *by accident* a flying machine and check to see if the moon is on fire!
- ♥ Dodge bullies and pickpockets.
- ♥ Expose corrupt politicians.
- ♥ Find the *true* story of your *real* family.
- ♥ Look for treasure in the sewers; mind the *living statues*.
- ♥ Live at the Newsboy Lodge.
- ♥ Travel to exotic locations.
- ♥ And much more.

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Introduction

Thank you for buying this game



You are helping me realize the dream of designing and publishing my first game. The 12-year-old in me could not be happier. You have in front of you, the result of my efforts. I have tried to create a jolly, original game that will provide you with hours of fun. I also want to thank you on the behalf of [Love's Bridge](#), an organization that helps children and young people who are having it rough in Perm, Russia. If you are indeed able, please take the time to [donate](#) \$1 or more to them.

If there is something you believe I could improve, please [tell me](#). I promise I will consider each and every suggestion, and then see what I can do about it. If you want to publish your own rules, adventures or anything else, just [tell me](#). I will be with you as soon as I am able.

Feel free to share this game [in Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#), tell your friends if you love it, or your enemies if you hate it, distribute the file, p2p it, link it or place it on a public torrent. It would be lovely if you could mention the donation thing.

Scores of bootblack angels will sing you into your dream.

Newsies & Bootblacks: A role-playing game

Have you ever played a role-playing game? I mean the kind you play around a table, together with your friends. If you have, you know the drill so well that I am glad you are reading this chapter. Why? Because *Newsies & Bootblacks* employs ordinary six-sided dice, yet uses them in a unique way.

It would be a good idea to begin with *Newsies & Bootblacks: First Game*. It is a quick introduction into the game that includes a ready-to-play adventure. This you can download for free on the [MiniM Role-playing](#) website and *probably*

from where you downloaded this game too. This is not a very hard game with hundreds of rules to remember. However, it is always more fun to start by plunging right into a game, and you will be playing a lot faster with the first game.

If you have never played a role-playing game before, we need to do some talking. You assemble a few friends around a table; each gets to play the role of an adventurous hero. As we role-players love big flashy words, we call these player characters. These characters are supposed to be living in some imaginary world, either the one presented in this book, or some other, such as Narnia, Middle Earth, or one of your own fantasy.

The setting may be historical, such as life during the time of the Three Musketeers, or the pioneers of the American Old West. The time period may be the present, the past, the future or even something completely out of time. You can play events as they actually took place, but altering history may also be the foundation for a great game. What if Rome did not fall to the barbarians? What if the Anglo-Saxon shield wall held and William, the Conqueror of England was defeated? What if the Cherokee had managed to establish a recognized state in America?¹

Role-playing games are not only about brave new worlds or superpowers. Those are just the bells and whistles. Role-playing games are all about stories, simulation, fun and above all, heroes; people who choose to be the best that they can be.

So, who is a hero?

Some time ago, when I was teaching, I met this boy in a boarding school. He was quite the hard-working kid who was always striving for the best; the kind of pupil teachers like. One day, in the dorms, one of his friends asked him, “J, why do you study so hard?” His answer was, “Because it feels so great when I go to bed.” The other kids sighed with relief and one of them said, “You are lazy, just like us.” Our hero answered nothing, nodded his head and then looked at me with a face that said “They don’t get

¹If you are not sure what a role-playing game is, you should ask a friend or consult [Wikipedia](#), which hosts a very good [article](#) on role-playing.

it.” I understood; it feels great to go to bed when you have done your best. If you live your own life to its fullest you are a hero, and that’s what *Newsies & Bootblacks* is all about.

These heroes need adventures. Getting up at 4 a.m. on Sunday mornings might seem tough enough. Suppose you are 12 years old. Pickpockets, mobsters and worse, hide in the still dark alleys that lead to Newspaper’s Row. There you go, under the chilly falling snow, your pockets filled with your last hard-earned pennies to buy a bundle of papers that you will sell, one by one, for a small profit.

A piece of cake? Then add a friendly little ghost and her not-so-friendly huge ghost mother. A felonious foreign spy with an unhealthy interest in you – are you sure you know your *real* parents? – might be in the game. A mad scientist might think you will make a great test subject for his death ray. Or what about surviving a mob of gangsters that is five feet wide?

In a novel or film, heroes rarely fail. They may get kicked in the first scene or throughout the story, but in the end, more often than not, they beat the bad guys. That is not guaranteed in *Newsies & Bootblacks*. If you think hard and play smart you can win, but any mistake could have dire consequences for your character.

That’s why we have a game master. She or he is a referee and narrator combined. The game master should know the rules thoroughly, keep all the secrets of the story and decide the outcome of the actions attempted by any character. The game master is also in charge of running the game world: the weather, the events and all its inhabitants, including the non-player characters.

I know from first-hand experience that being a game master can be quite rewarding if you do it well. While not easy, it is not incredibly hard either. Let’s suppose Elizabeth is the game master in a high fantasy game with knights, dragons and all that old-fashioned² stuff.

She could begin the game describing a basic situation: “*You are walking through a thick forest when suddenly, a strange whistling sound and a startling breeze surprise you. As you turn and look up through the branches and leaves, you spot a red dragon, flying. What do you do?*”

The player characters are then free to attempt any action they like. Do they

²Still always great fun!

want to hide? That idea is fine, and probably smart, too. Fight? Then pray, but you can try. Invite the beast to dinner? Feel free to; just don't blame me if you become the main course. The choices you make often have consequences you never imagined, and can lead into small adventures of their own.

The game master, aided by the rules and usually some rolls of dice, will determine the outcome of your intended action. The game can progress to the end of the story, which can be quite surprising.



Who wins?

In role-playing games there is no easy answer to this question. Unlike most conventional games, there is no score keeping of *us* versus *them*. In that sense, there are no winners or losers. If you have lived a good story and it has been fun, then consider yourself a winner.

That said, every adventure you play in *Newsies & Bootblacks* will have some kind of objective; something your characters want or need. Sometimes the objective will be obvious, like discovering a treasure or rescuing a friend. Sometimes the game master will keep the main objective hidden for most of the adventure, or it could change in the middle of the game, but there should always be an objective.

So watch out. If your group achieves the objective your character will be rewarded in some way. Not to mention, you will feel much more accomplished. But remember, it is a group effort, not an individual one. You cannot really win if your friends lose; not in a role-playing game and certainly not in real life, either.

An example game session

I could keep writing on and on, but the best way to understand a game is to see one being played. If you can, find some people who play and join their group,

or attend a game convention in your area. In the meantime, see what you can get from this dialog, which is, according to my experience, what could happen in a role-playing game session.

Martin (game master): *"OK, so are you going to follow that pickpocket down to the sewers or not? You have five seconds."*

Tammy: *"I say we go. I want my stuff back."* Tammy plays a 12-year-old daredevil kind of newsgirl.

Daniel: *"I don't know. There could be crocs down there, you know."*
Daniel's character is just nine, and not exactly brawny.

James: *"Crocs, yeah, come on, let's go."* James' character at 13, has all the potential, but no motivation to be a bully.

Daniel: *"And what about the ghost we saw yesterday?"*

Tammy: *"You don't know if it was really a ghost, do you? And whatever it was, we beat it."*

Martin: *"Are you going or not? The pickpocket is running away as you speak."*

Tammy and James: *"We go!"*

Daniel: *"OK, but don't blame me if you end up in the gator's belly."*

Martin: *"OK, as you go down to the tunnels you realize how dark they are, not to mention damp and smelly. Are you sure you want to go on?"*

Daniel: *"No."*

Tammy: *"What?! Of course we want to."*

James: *"I'm with Tammy."*

Martin: *"OK, I want all of you to make an Eyes & Ears check. Roll your dice. The target number is 13."*

Daniel: *"I've got a 14; am I OK?"*

Martin: *"Yes."*

Tammy: *"Oh, oh, I've got a 12."*

James: *"And it's an 8 for me. My luck, always my luck!"*

Martin: *“OK. So Daniel you stop right in time, but Tammy and James walk confidently into a stream of brownish water. It rises up to your elbows. I’m sure you know what kind of water this is, don’t you?”*

Daniel bursts into laughter.

Martin: *“Now, Daniel, you might have heard something to your back. Make another Eyes & Ears check, please. The target number is 11 this time.”*

This is only a small excerpt of a game session, but I feel it is good enough to get a feeling of what role-playing is all about. Don’t you worry, I began just with one book and some dice, back in the times when there was no Internet and none of my friends knew anything about role-playing games. You will figure it out just fine, and remember, it is OK if you don’t play perfectly the first time. Nobody does.

Dice

Newsies & Bootblacks uses normal six-sided dice. They are made stronger or weaker than regular dice, just by the way you read them.

Fool Dice (fd): When you roll fool dice ignore any result higher than 4. That means if you roll a 5 or 6 you read it as if it were a 4.

Weak Dice (wd): When you roll weak dice ignore any result higher than 5. That means if you roll a 6, you read it as if it were a 5.

Normal Dice (nd): These you read normally; a 1 is a 1, a 2 is a 2, a 6 is a 6, and so on. (Also known as OK dice.)

Swell Dice (sd): When you roll any swell dice, ignore any result lower than 3. That means when you roll a 1 or a 2 you read the die as if it were a 3.

Tips with dice

- 🎲 Use different colors or sizes for each kind of dice to avoid confusion.

- ☞ Failing that, roll dice in order: fool dice first, then weak, then normal and then swell.
- ☞ You could play with just one die; however, I prefer to use two sets of three dice with each set in a particular size or color.

Miscellanea

Quality grades

In *Newsies & Bootblacks*, anything can be graded in the traditional school grades of A, B, C, D and E. C is pretty ordinary, cheap stuff, A is great and E is barely usable trash.

A prince would only wear A-grade clothes, unless he swaps them for the E-grade clothes of a beggar as in the Mark Twain tale. An E-grade ship is always leaking and likely to sink at the first storm. A C-grade newspaper is what most people read. Newsies are (there is no shame in the truth) rather poor. They are used to wearing and using mostly D-grade stuff: hand-me-downs, used clothing bought in a shop or traded between themselves.

Definitions

Attribute: Major stats that define the capabilities of a character. In *Newsies & Bootblacks* these are: Strength, Agility, Health, Education, Eyes & Ears and Charisma.

Game Master (GM): The person who is in charge of interpreting the rules, narrating the scene and insuring that everyone has a great time.

New Paris: New Paris is the city (and the state) designed to be the main location for the game³. It's just south of New York and just as lively, with a brilliant cultural life, a few decrepit, crime-ridden areas and lots of mysteries.

Newsies & Bootblacks: This game.

³You can have your games set just about anywhere.

Non-Player Character (NPC): Any character, animal or monster, spirit or ghost who is not played by any player. These are usually neutral but can be either friends or foes. They are all played and controlled by the game master.

Player Character (PC): Any character played by a player; usually just one character per player.

Real Time or Game Time: When I mention real time, I refer to time spent in the real world. Game time refers to the time spent in the game world. The distinction is important to avoid confusion between the real world and the game world; people ringing your door at dawn if you told them something like, "Hey, we are meeting tomorrow at 5 a.m.!"

Skill: An area or field of expertise. Each skill is linked to one attribute. Notice that every attribute but Health has skills linked to them.

The game and real life

Real life can get real tough

Even today, there are many homeless children living on their own. Perhaps they are closer to home than you think, selling papers or finding other ways to survive. This game does not try to simulate real life but instead, the imagined life of novels and films, and even those interpreted from a modern perspective. In these worlds it is easier to survive and there always seems to be a caring person around. Yes, it is true that death persecutes Oliver Twist and that Gavroche from Les Misérables dies, but the former always finds a twist in the story that saves him and the latter dies heroically.

Boys and girls

It is less known but true, that many girls work on the streets of New Paris as peddlers, newsies, bootblacks and in other street business. They are less visible for two main reasons: society prejudice and protection. It is not that people would buy less papers from girls than boys, but the collective ideal that girls should stay at home helping their mothers is still strong, even when they

have no mother to help. Second, many girls feel they are safer in the streets by pretending to be tough or in other words, by pretending to be boys. Being young enough, all that is required is a haircut and a change of clothes.

Players can play a character of any gender they prefer. It is OK if you want to play either a boy or a girl. Remember it's just a game, but don't make anybody play a character they don't like. That is just boring.

Girls and the Newsboy Lodge

I will be telling you more about the Newsboy Lodge on page [130](#) but for now, let's say it's a very cheap hotel for newsboys. Now, what about the girls? My take is that they have separate dorms in the Newsboy Lodge, but perhaps the game master or player characters would prefer separate institutions and as such, there would be a Newsgirl Lodge. Or, you could say there is no Newsboy Lodge for girls, or for anybody, or that it's just filled up. Please note that if you decide there's no Newsboy Lodge or similar institution in your adventure, then it would be easy for the player characters to be quite homeless.

Racism and other stupid discriminations

One of the good things about a game of fantasy, even low fantasy such as this one, is that you don't have to repeat the silliness of real life. And so, racism is virtually unknown in the general population. In New Paris, unless said otherwise, suppose that in any area, half the population is white. There's no perfect place and surely New Paris City can improve in this regard, but for most situations you can assume people would not mind the color of your skin.

However, New Parisians surely discriminate against the poor, especially on Royal Island. If you look poor it's because you deserve being poor and you should know your place. It's as un-American as un-American can be, but that's the way of Royal Island.

Issues to avoid

There are a few issues I have purposefully avoided in this game; sexual abuse, self-harm, severe emotional distress or the use of drugs. I earnestly recommend you avoid them as well. Trust me; as a former volunteer working with street

children, I have witnessed some of these. They're nothing I'd be gaming about, period. It hurts even as I type.



Part I.

Rules

1. Player characters



Good characters make great stories. If you know who the characters are and what they want, just add a complication and a setting and you have an adventure. In *Newsies & Bootblacks*, player characters are not the usual lot of extraordinary guys with uncanny powers, but rather, they are mere boys and girls from age nine to 14 when they first enter the game, and never older than 16. Once a character hits his 17th birthday, he is retired for the game. Player characters are poor and orphaned, living on their own on the streets of New Paris. What they do have is extra luck, but even this benefit will run out fast in the face of adventure if not used wisely.

This game uses numbers to describe your player character. These numbers tell you how many dice you need to roll when your character tries to run away from a ghost, or what happens if it falls down the stairs; how strong he is, or the skills he commands, etc.

In this chapter you will learn how to create your player character. Skim through it first so you have a better idea of what decisions to make. You will need a few dice, some pencils and paper (an index card will do), so you can write down all the information.

There is also a character sheet on the last page of this book which you can print to record all your character information.

Who are you?

Age

We need to know how old your character is. Roll one die. Write the number down and add 8 to determine your character's age. If you rolled a 4, your character will be 12; $4 + 8 = 12$. If you are smart you'll soon realize that your character can be of any age from nine to 14.

If you¹ are younger than 16, you don't need to roll. Just choose how old your character is. Remember that your character cannot be a day younger than nine or older than 14.

Is it better for a character to be young or old in this game? That's a tough question to answer. If you are older, you'll generally be stronger and have more knowledge. But if you are younger you'll be luckier. In fact, you'll have more chits, but we'll speak about those later.

In short

☛ Roll one die and add 8. The result is your character's age.

Name and gender

Next, we need to know your character's name. Choose any name you want and write it down. Choose your character's gender too. In this game it doesn't matter if your character is a boy or a girl, except when he or she goes to the restroom. It's OK if you are a boy and you want to play a girl² or the other way around. Your character's gender doesn't have to match your gender.

In short

☛ Choose any name you want for your character.

☛ Choose any gender you want for your character.

¹Not your character, but you the player.

²Many homeless girls who live on their own pretend to be boys, just to look tough.

Birthday

Finally, we need to know your character's birthday. You can choose any day of the year. This is important, because in *Newsies & Bootblacks* your character suddenly improves on their birthday. The game master does not need to tell you the date in which the game begins, so don't ask.

Attributes

Attributes are the figures that define your character's basic capabilities. It is important that you understand what each one of these is used for.

These are your attributes

Strength (STR): Measures how strong you are. A character can use Strength to lift a heavy weight, break things, throw a stone to see how far it goes or fight off a bully. Adults tend to be much stronger than any newsboy. As far as this game is concerned, girls can be just as strong as any boy.

Health (HTH): A measure of your character's resistance to sickness, fatigue, poisons, bullets and thrown cream cakes. Your character could be exposed to all of these and worse.

Agility (AGI): Tells you how graciously your character moves. A character with low Agility will never be a good athlete. Agility is also important to handle a bike, ride, run or hide from a band of gangsters.

Education (EDU): Measures how much the character knows about the world. Anything that can be known and learned falls within the range of Education. If you want your character to be a mechanic or know how to dress a wound, you'll want his Education attribute to be as high as possible³.

Eyes & Ears (E&E): Measures how well your character can understand what's going on around him. Please remember that it does include *all five senses*⁴;

³What about intelligence? I believe only the player can provide that.

⁴So why Eyes & Ears? Because sight and hearing will be by far, the most used of the five senses and this name is easy to understand for very young players.

not just sight and hearing. If your character needs to find a secret message hidden under a rubble stone, follow the scent of a chemical to the secret laboratory of a mad scientist or listen to the whisper of a foreign spy, you'd better be as strong as possible in this attribute.

Charisma (CHA): Measures how cute, swell, nice, handsome, cheerful, good-looking and cool your character is, all rolled into one attribute. Charisma is great when you want to sell papers to the public, learn a new language, sign, beg, convince or juggle for money and fun.

Note that all humans have a least one weak die assigned to each of these attributes, as will most animals. A few monsters, such as ghosts, will not use each and every one of these. Please, take time to consider before adding any new attributes to your game. Do so only if you sorely need it.

This is how you generate your attributes

We pay for new dice with attribute points (APs) You begin with as many attribute points as your age, plus seven.

In short

$$\heartsuit AP = \text{Age} + 7$$

With those attribute points you can buy dice for your character's attributes. Every weak die costs 1 AP, while a normal die costs two APs. You can also upgrade a weak die to a normal die for 1 AP. *Adult characters can have allocated up to six dice in any single attribute. However, these are all non-player characters played by the game master.*⁵ Every attribute must have at least one die allocated to it.

In case you are wondering, you can't buy swell or fool dice. Your character's skills upgrade your normal dice to swell dice or in some cases, downgrade your

⁵As normal dice are not twice as powerful as weak dice, read a 6 as if it were a 5. It is a good idea to buy weak dice until you have four dice in any single attribute. Then, if you still need to improve that attribute, upgrade those weak dice to normal dice.

weak dice to fool dice. These will be explained in more detail in the following chapter.

Be wise when you split up these dice. If your character gets very strong but is so ugly that dogs run away from him, they won't sell many papers. And, they can be as cute as a kitty with angel wings, but if they stay most days in bed sick, they won't be of much help, either.

In short

- ☞ One weak die (wd) = 1 AP
- ☞ One normal die (nd) = 2 AP
- ☞ Upgrade one wd to one nd = 1 AP
- ☞ Maximum number of dice in any single attribute = 4
- ☞ Minimum number of dice in any single attribute = 1
- ☞ You can't buy swell or fool dice.

Pace

Pace is a measure of your character's speed, expressed as how many yards your character can walk per turn⁶. Your character's pace depends on his age. For anybody younger than nine, one pace equals two yards per turn; for nine to 11 it's three yards per turn; for 12 to 14 it's four yards per turn, while characters 15 years and older move at five yards per turn.

Obviously, your character can move faster by running or sprinting, but we will leave those details to Chapter 5 on page 79. Right now, all you have to do is record your character's pace on the character sheet.

⁶A turn is a vague measure of time roughly equivalent to "just a moment"

Skills

These are your skills

Skills are stats just like attributes, only less broad. Agility (attribute), tells us how well you move in general, while Riding (skill), for example, tells us how good you are at handling a bike.

This game has 21 skills open to player characters:

FISTICUFFS (STR), THROWING (STR), ATHLETICS (AGI), CLIMBING (AGI), DODGING (AGI), LOCKS (AGI), PICKPOCKETS (AGI), RIDING (AGI), STEALTH (AGI), SWIMMING (AGI), VEHICLES (AGI), ACADEMICS (EDU), CRAFTS (EDU), HEALING (EDU), MECHANICS (EDU), STREETWISE (EDU), OBSERVATION (E&E), SHOOTING (E&E), LANGUAGES (CHA), PERFORMANCE (CHA) AND SWEET TALK (CHA)

You will figure out that Athletics is good for climbing, jumping and playing football; Fisticuffs comes in handy for brawling and Healing helps to fix people after that brawling. Other skills might be a little harder to figure out. If you need help, they are better explained in [Chapter 2 on page 36](#)

Every skill is linked to an attribute that is shown in brackets. For example, Academics (EDU) is a skill linked to the Education attribute. That means if you are *good at* Academics (an Education skill), you roll using your Education dice, but upgraded.

Notice that no skill is linked to the Health attribute.

How you generate your skills

First, find out how many skills your character is *good at*. These are as many as his age minus 6. If your character is nine, he's *good at* $9 - 6 = 3$ skills. Write them down on your character sheet or a scrap of paper under "good at".

Then, find out how many skills your character is *bad at*. These are 18 minus his age. If your character is 12, he's *bad at* $18 - 12 = 6$ skills. Record these under "bad at".

Those skills you have not chosen to be either *good at* or *bad at*, you are *OK at*. We will deal with the exact meaning of these on page 37. Right now, all you need to know is that being *bad at* a skill decreases your chances at completing any tasks associated with that skill because it *downgrades* your dice. Being *good at* a skill *upgrades* your dice.

As you can see, the older your character is the more skills they will be *good at* and the less skills they will be *bad at*. That makes perfect sense, though it makes younger characters weaker. In the next section titled “Chits”, you will find a system that somehow compensates for that, *especially* if the player is smart and creative.

In short

- ☞ A player character is *good at* as many skills as his age minus 6.
- ☞ A player character is *bad at* as many skills as 18 minus his age.
- ☞ The player chooses freely the skills he is *good at* or *bad at*. He records these on the character sheet.
- ☞ Any skill not chosen as either *good at* or *bad at* is an *OK at* skill. The player may record these on the character sheet for reference.

Choose wisely. If your character is *bad at* Fisticuffs, he'd better be *good at* Athletics. Did you notice the attributes' abbreviations in brackets next to the skill name? These are important. I will be telling you more, but just so you know, being *good at* Riding, a skill of Agility, makes your Agility dice better when you are riding bikes, while being *bad at* Riding, will make your Agility dice worse. So, if you have a lot of dice in Agility, being *good at* Riding will make you a fantastic racer, but if you have few and bad dice in Agility, you'll only be average.

Can you read?

If your character is *bad at* Academics he can't read. If your character is *good at* Academics he can read perfectly.

If your character is *OK at Academics*, he can read, but might misunderstand a few things. The game master may ask you to check your Academics skill any time you try to read something more difficult than a children's book.

Chits

What are chits?

Chits are points a player can use to buy favors from the game master, such as rolling dice again or making dice stronger. Chits can also be used to avoid death or change the flow of the story, at an increased cost. Don't be too happy spending them, because chits are hard to refill. If you run out of chits your character could become a crybaby who would rather whine than try hard at anything.

I will be sharing more about chits later in Chapter [4 on page 62](#) but for now know that the more you have the better.

How many chits you begin with

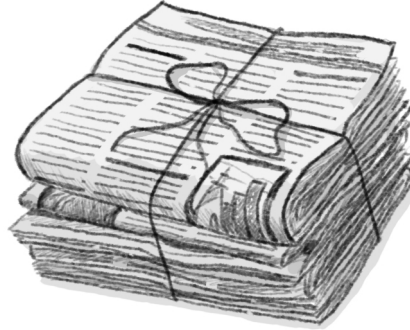
You begin with as many chits as 20 minus your character's age. If your character is 12, you have 8 chits; if your character is nine you have 11 chits, and so on.

During the game, you will be able to earn more chits and share them with other players. The maximum number of chits you can have at any time is twice as much the starting chits of your character's age. This maximum does change as your character grows older in the game. If you begin at nine years of age your maximum number of chits will decrease from 22 to 20 (twice the starting chits for a 10-year-old).

In short

- ☞ Use chits to buy favors from the game master.
- ☞ *Every player character begins with 20 minus age chits (20 - Age).*

- ☛ Player characters can have up to as many chits as twice the starting chits for their character's age.
- ☛ Only player characters can have chits.



Equipment

The characters of this game are poor orphans and they have to earn the money for their own bread and butter. Even so, they begin the game with a few items and some money.

Dress up or fade away

First, let's see how well-clothed you are. Roll two normal dice and check the number you get in the following table.

Clothes Table

Dice (nd)	Clothes Grade
2	A
3 to 4	B
5 to 6	C
7 to 10	D
11 to 12	E

What do these letters A to E mean? A = best quality, while E = worst. Leave it to your imagination to provide the details, however, some suggestions follow:

E-Grade Clothes Kit: If your character is wearing E-grade clothes, he looks just like Oliver Twist did right after arriving in London. He owns a shirt, knee-long breeches and his underwear; that's that. He is barefoot, which could be nasty in winter⁷. Oh, and don't get me started about his undies.

D-Grade Clothes Kit: If your character is wearing D-grade clothes he looks a bit better, but not much. He has everything the E kit has, plus he gets a worn-out jacket and a newsboy cap, and perhaps some ragged boots or shoes, reserved for foul weather. Besides all that, I'm afraid that probably some piece of his clothing is two sizes larger or smaller than you want.

C-Grade Clothes Kit: If your character is wearing C-grade clothes, he looks like the average child of a working family on his way to the factory or, if he's lucky enough, to school. If a boy, he wears a shirt, his pants⁸, a jacket, a newsboy cap, a pair of shoes and socks. A girl would own a simple dress with long stockings, plain shoes and some headgear. Everything is of plain color, but reasonably clean and well made. You will not need to worry about winter with these clothes; it could still feel cold, though. Characters wearing C-grade clothes and worse will only own two sets of underwear, so they need to wash these thoroughly every night... or pretend to do so.

B-Grade Clothes Kit: This grade of clothes is a little better. It includes everything a C-grade clothes kit has, plus extras such as a waistcoat, a cheap handkerchief with your initials sewn on it and a scarf for winter. You also have plenty of underwear, so you don't need to get your undies clean every night. A B-grade clothes kit also includes an old C-grade clothes kit.

A-Grade Clothes Kit: It is a rare sight to see a newsboy in this rich-boy outfit. It includes everything B-grade clothes have, but items are much better

⁷That aside, being barefoot is not much of an issue. It's normal for children to go barefoot in New Paris City; even outdoors. But don't expect to be admitted to any fashionable place without decent shoes, and don't even think about selling some of the most expensive papers, you street rat.

⁸Long or short is your choice, but mind the weather.

made and with brighter colors. Wearing this outfit is how you want to sell *The Hawk* or some other fancy newspaper in Benjamin Franklin's park. In A-grade clothes you pretty much look like Little Lord Fauntleroy, which is generally best anywhere but in dark alleys. An A-grade clothes kit also includes an old C-grade clothes kit.

Wealth

Your character will want to buy things, and the best way to know if he can afford something is to determine how much money he has. I will be sharing the exact details in Chapter 4. Right now, all you need to do is roll a couple of dice, add your character's age and multiply the total by 10. The result is how many cents your character begins with.

In short

☛ Starting wealth = (2 dice + age) x 10 cents

Example: Anne is creating Tom, a newsboy, who is 12. She rolls two dice, getting a 7. Now, $7 + 12 = 19$, which means Tom begins with $19 \times 10 = 190$ cents or \$1.90.

Other useful stuff

There is nothing as full of wonder as the pockets of a child. Well, to be completely honest, full of wonder and plain, old-fashioned garbage. Instead of buying or choosing your equipment before the game, you must roll in the Random Stuff Table. If the dice show their uglier sides to you, remember that even the most seemingly insignificant item can be gold in the hands of a lively mind.

Roll two *normal* dice, but this time don't add them. Instead, choose one to be the first die and the other to be the second die. Check the table, knowing that the first die will be the first number and the second die will be the second number. If you rolled a 1 with your first die and a 4 with your second die, check the "1-4" box in the following table; you get a notebook. If you rolled a 3 and a 2 with your dice, the "3-2" box will provide you with some yummy sausages.

You must roll at least once, and up to seven times on the Random Stuff Table. Be careful, because if you roll a double six (6-6) you lose everything, including your money, and you will not be able to roll again.

Random Stuff Table

Dice (1d - 1d)	Result	Dice (1d - 1d)	Result
1-1	Cheap toy	4-1	Pack of expensive sweets
1-2	Flute	4-2	Mousetrap
1-3	Pencil	4-3	Warm sweater
1-4	Notebook	4-4	Quilt
1-5	Pen-and-ink flask	4-5	New Paris map
1-6	Double-headed coin	4-6	Thermos bottle
2-1	Whistle	5-1	Cloth bag
2-2	Harmonica	5-2	Prayer book or bible
2-3	Book	5-3	3 NPET tokens (2)
2-4	Marbles	5-4	Magnifying glass
2-5	Slingshot	5-5	Postage (3)
2-6	Pendant	5-6	Bootblack kit
3-1	Bowl	6-1	Bicycle (4)
3-2	Sausages (1)	6-2	Baseball cap
3-3	Hammer	6-3	Animal friend (5)
3-4	Sewing kit	6-4	Backpack
3-5	Candles (1)	6-5	12 feet of rope
3-6	Matchbox	6-6	Robbed! (6)

Notes

1. Roll two normal dice to determine how many sausages you get.
2. NPET stands for New Paris Elevated Train company, the main New Paris

transportation system. Each NPET token is good for one-way travel to anywhere in New Paris.

3. Good for four letters addressed anywhere within the state of New Paris.
4. Old and rusty, but working.
5. A small cute and harmless animal.
6. You've been robbed and lost everything you got on the Random Stuff Table. You lose all your money and your clothes rating drops to E. *You can't make any further roll on this table.* Tough luck!

In short

- ☛ Roll for your clothes.
- ☛ Roll for your money. You begin with $(2 \text{ dice} + \text{age}) \times 10$ cents.
- ☛ Roll at least once and up to seven times in the Fabulous Random Stuff Table of 36 Miscellaneous Stuffous.
- ☛ If you roll a double 6 you lose everything you acquired in the table.



Background

How did your character become a newsboy living on his own on the streets of New Paris City? Everybody has a story. An interesting story can help a poor orphan with a good imagination sell some newspapers. Beyond that, knowing where you come from will make your character worth more than a bundle of numbers and stats.

Are you really an orphan? If your parents are alive, then what about them? Is your father in prison for life? You might want to keep that to yourself, though. Is your mother locked in an asylum for her own safety? Are they so poor the best thing they could do for you was to buy you a ticket for New Paris City and pray? What became of your brothers? Perhaps you could be the sibling of another character; just ask another player if you think that would be cool. Were you born in America or are you an immigrant? Were you born in New Paris City or did you, as many others, travel there for the opportunity to make your dreams come true? What are those dreams, by the way? Fancy to be a lawyer, perhaps the president despite all odds, or do you want to try your chances at baseball?

Add all the details you want and write them down on your character sheet. If you can only think of a couple, that's alright. You can always add to your character's story as you play the game. But please, do speak with your game master to check that your family story fits the adventure. He might be thinking of a story about kids who just arrived from Europe, or about the children of a scientist murdered by a nefarious rival or...

If you aren't that sure where your character is from you *may* want to use the Background Table that follows. Roll three normal dice, thrice. The first roll will determine where you are from. The second and third will see what happened to your mother and father.



Background Table

Dice (3 nd)	Area	Parent
3	Royal Island	Prison
4	Royal Island	Prison
5	Decree Slums	Dead
6	West Gate	Dead
7	West Gate	Adventure
8	Outer Expanses	Dead
9	Concordia	Hospital
10	Concordia	Missing
11	Inner Expanses	Missing
12	Concordia	Missing
13	New Paris State	Missing
14	USA	Unknown
15	USA	Unknown
16	Decree Slums	Adventure
17	Immigrant	Unknown
18	Immigrant	Adventure

Roll once for place of birth and once for each parent.

Dead: Your father or mother is dead and unless the information is wrong, there is nothing anybody can do about it.

Prison: Your father or mother is serving a very long sentence in prison, possibly for life. You can only visit once a year and he or she doesn't write you much. Yeah, it's kind of sad.

Hospital: Your father or mother suffers from a long-term sickness that keeps him or her in the hospital or some other facility. If it's not a transmissible or mental illness, you could be allowed to visit once a week.

Missing: You don't know where your father or mother is. Perhaps they did not come home from work one day, or their ship sank and the body was never found. Or, maybe your parent had to run away from police, criminals or creditors.

Unknown: You have no idea who your father or mother is. If you know your father but not your mother, consider that your father was simply somebody who cared for you, because he had a kind heart, or perhaps to send you begging or to pick a pocket or two, just as Fagin did with *Oliver Twist*. If both your parents are unknown, then you spent your first years in an orphanage until you (or somebody else) decided you were old enough to care for yourself.

Adventure: You aren't quite sure; maybe it's a story you made up for yourself when you were very little. Perhaps somebody told you just to comfort you, or you believe your parent is doing something special. It could be that you are the secret son of a prince of some small nation in central Europe, or that your mother is an elf or is working in a mission somewhere far, far away.

In New Paris, as in real life, many newsies, bootblacks and young peddlers live with their families. *Player characters, however, are all on their own.* Parents (uncles, grandparents and any adult family member) are either dead, unknown, far away, locked in prison or unable to help or make contact with the player character. In practical terms, every player character in this game is an orphan.

In short

♥ Figure out your character's story.

☞ Remember that your character's parents and any other grownup members of his family must not be able to help. They could be dead, sick, in prison, lost in the jungle...

☞ *If you want*, you can roll on the Background Table.

The pack

Newsies & Bootblacks assumes all player characters are friends who care for each other. So, it is a good idea for players to coordinate themselves when they are designing their characters. Pay attention to what each of you is going to be *good at* or *bad at*. Ask the game master for hints about what could be needed in the game. If the game master says the adventure is all about spies, then you'd probably want to be *good at* Stealth or Languages. Think what could happen if everybody was *bad at* Streetwise.

Also, you should have a story explaining why you are all friends. Some of you could be siblings or cousins. Perhaps you all arrived in New Paris on the same ship from Europe and your parents died on the journey. Usually, you just met in the streets, got along well and decided to be friends. Or, there could be other reasons. Perhaps the game master wants you to meet in the first scene you play in the adventure. Be sure to ask your game master first.

In short

☞ Ensure your characters make a good team.

☞ Make up your own pack story.

☞ That's that!

Now that you have your characters ready to go sell some papers and save the world at the same time, the question is, are you up for the challenge?

Character creation: an example

Let me guide you as I create a character using the rules I've just outlined in this chapter. First of all, I roll one single die to determine my character's age.

The result is a 4, so my character's age is $4+8 = 12$. I decide my character is a boy and his name is Allan Krebs.

Then I need to buy dice to choose his attributes (age + 7). He's 12, so I have $12 + 7 = 19$ attribute points (AP) to buy dice. I decide to buy only weak dice (wd), as they give more bang for the buck. I buy three wd for Strength, two wd for Health (so Allan is a little weak), three wd go to Agility, four wd to Education (I want Allan to be smart), three wd for Eyes & Ears, and the last four wd go to Charisma. No attribute has more than four dice and each one has at least one, as the rules command.

His attributes are now finished:

Strength = three wd, Health = two wd, Agility = three wd, Education
= four wd, Eyes & Ears = three wd, Charisma = four wd

Then I decide which skills Allan is *good at* and *bad at*. As he is 12, he's *good at* $12 - 6 = 6$ skills. I choose Academics, Sweet Talk, Observation, Streetwise, Athletics and Shooting. He'll be *bad at* $18 - 12 = 6$ skills. I choose Pickpockets, Locks (he's no thief), Vehicles, Mechanics, Crafts, (he's not good at fixing stuff) and Riding.

He'll be *OK at* the remaining nine skills. These are Climbing, Dodging, Fisticuffs, Healing, Performance, Languages, Stealth, Swimming and Throwing. I don't need to write these on the character sheet, but I'm going to do it anyway to speed up the game.

Allan is *good at* Academics, and that means he can read well enough to not need to check for his Academics skill when trying to read any text in English.

Allan is 12 and that means he will begin with $20 - 12 = 8$ chits. His maximum number of chits is twice this number, or 16.

Let's see about his stuff now. I roll two dice for his clothing, using the Clothes Table and argh, I got an 8!; that means Allan's clothes are of the lowly D grade. He's barefoot⁹ and his clothes could use a little mending and cleaning, I'm afraid.

Money, that's what I want. Allan is 12 and I roll an 8 on two dice so I get $(12+8) \times 10 \text{ cents} = 20 \times 10 \text{ cents} = 200 \text{ cents}$ or \$2.00.

I decide to try my luck with the Random Stuff Table, rolling seven times (the maximum). On my first roll I get a 3 and 5, a 3-5 which means six candles.

⁹He's saving up his shoes for winter.

I make another six-dice throw and get six more candles, a pack of expensive sweets; let's make them Turkish Delights (I confess myself a Narnian in spirit), a harmonica (that's cool) a notebook and a bowl; a curious mix.

Finally, I see to my character's background. I'm not sure of where I want him to be from, so I roll using the Background Table as a guide. I roll an 11, so he's from the Inner Expanses. Then, I roll again to determine his father's and mother's background, getting a 12 and a 13; they are both missing.

I note everything down on the character sheet and Allan is now ready for a great adventure in New Paris.

Special cases

Hotel staff

Maids, hotel boys, apprentice cooks and other hotel staff have much less freedom than a newsboy. They work all day, live at the premises and take orders from everybody else. In exchange, they get a uniform, a weekly wage, decent meals and a bed in a shared room. If they work hard and do well enough, they could raise in the ranks and become a hotel manager. These jobs are not easy to get.

Hotel staff characters are created using the same rules as *Newsies*, with the following differences:

1. They get a B-grade uniform; those working for a luxury hotel get an A-grade hotel boy or maid uniform. They can keep it, even if robbed, as the hotel will replace it for them.
2. They cannot own animals of any kind.
3. They get an extra die to determine their starting wealth.

As hotel staff characters are restricted to their hotels, any player wishing to play them must first seek permission from the game master. A game master might also want to run an adventure exclusively with hotel staff characters.

Bootblacks

Bootblacks are those who make a living out of cleaning and waxing boots and shoes. Many among them are also newsboys, providing both services for some extra benefit and a lot of extra trouble. Bootblacks are created just like newsboys, but they must somehow acquire a Bootblack box. The Crafts skill is also a must for bootblacks and most trades.

Bootblacks are allowed in any game¹⁰, and always welcomed in the Newsboy Lodge.

Messengers

Messengers work for a telegraph company delivering cables from the telegraph stations to clients anywhere in New Paris. Messenger boys must be physically fit, able to read, own a bicycle (the company isn't providing one, sorry) and be at least *OK at Streetwise*. Messenger boys trade the freedom of being a newsboy for weekly wages and a C-grade uniform.

The game master may not allow messengers in the game, so check with your game master first.

Errand kids

Errand kids work for companies, hotels, institutions or professionals, doing errands and whatever else they are asked. While many errand kids work for a single employer, player characters should most often be of the independent kind, working for young lawyers and others who cannot hire permanent assistants. While anybody can be an errand girl or boy, good Charisma, being *good at Streetwise* and Crafts, owning a bicycle and having respectable clothing and manners do help.

Independent errand kids are always allowed in any game and welcomed in the Newsboy Lodge. Mind that many newsies, bootblacks and other kinds of street kids work as errand kids to supplement their income.

¹⁰That is, unless the game master or game group is thinking of something very special.



2. Testing skills and attributes

This is how you play this game



Some friends are sitting at a table; one of them is the game master, the rest are the players, each one playing the role of a player character. The game master describes the scene:

"You enter the alley with soft feet and wild hearts, trembling at what could be waiting for you among the shadows. The air is filled with the stench of the putrid fruit piled against a corner. What could be hiding behind it? Ghosts are supposed to exist only in fairy tales, but right now you aren't so sure. Was that a step you heard? Tell me, what are you going to do?"

Rick, one of the player characters, decides to take the lead. *"I am going to shoot at the fruit pile with my slingshot and if anything moves, I say we run away like crazy."*

If the game master is sure about the success of an action he grants a success and that's that; no dice required. If on the other hand, the action is believed impossible, the game master forbids it.

In this case the game master is sure that Rick can't miss hitting the fruit pile. He answers "OK, Rick". You point and shoot and the stone hits the rotting fruit pile. After a split second, you all see a ferocious, rabid cat emerging from the fruit pile, foam coming out of its mouth. Now tell me, what are you going to do?"

The group's answer is unanimous: "Run for it!" Perhaps the game master is exaggerating a bit on his description of the cat, but they aren't taking any chances

with a rabid feline.

Now the game master has a small problem; will the players be able to outrun the cat through the maze of trash-ridden alleys? That's why we have rules. They help you to decide who can do what and what the results of those actions could be, striving to be fair, fast and fun.

Basic checks

Choosing the skill and the dice

Basic checks¹ allow us to know whether a character has been successful when attempting an action. It is one of the most used rules in every game session, so pay attention.

1. Make sure you know what *action* the player character is attempting and what the *consequences* of that action could be. For example: if a player shoots a rat with his slingshot, the action would be shooting and the possible consequences are either a hit or a miss – and the effects of that hit. The game master might want to ask the player to make sure he understands what he's trying to do.
2. The game master is the only one who can determine the consequences of any attempted action.
3. The game master then determines which *skill* is more appropriate for the *action* being attempted².
4. *If there's no appropriate skill*, the game master should choose an *attribute* instead³. Again, the game master's decision is final.
5. Use the dice of the attribute linked to the skill, *upgrading* or *downgrading* them:

¹Also known as skill tests.

²Shooting is appropriate when the action is shooting a rat with your slingshot. Academics is appropriate for reading.

³Suppose a newsboy finds one of the first photographic inventions and wants to take a picture of his friends. There is no skill for photography so the game master might decide that you use your Education attribute for this action.

- ☞ If the character is *good at* the appropriate skill, upgrade the dice of the linked attribute. Weak dice become normal dice (OK dice), while normal dice become swell dice.
- ☞ If the character is *bad at* the appropriate skill, downgrade the dice of the linked attribute. Weak dice become fool dice and normal dice become weak dice.
- ☞ If the character is *OK at* the appropriate skill, use the dice of the linked attribute without any modifications.

Example: *Allan is good at Sweet Talk, a skill linked to the Charisma attribute. He has four weak dice in his Charisma attribute. When he tries any Sweet Talk action, such as asking a bootblack girl for a date, he upgrades those four weak dice to four normal dice.*

The target number

The game master then determines a target number (TN). If the player rolls equal or higher than the target number, he succeeds. If he rolls less than the target number, he fails. A task of average difficulty will demand a TN of 10, a very easy task could use a TN of 4, while a difficult task can only be achieved with a TN of 14 or more. Refer to the Target Number Table on the next page.

Example: Suppose Rick is shooting a can with a slingshot. Since Shooting is the appropriate skill for this, the game master chooses it to carry out the action. Shooting is linked to Eyes & Ears. Rick's character sheet shows that he has three weak dice in Eyes & Ears; not so good. Yet, Rick is also *good at* Shooting, so he upgrades those three weak dice to normal dice. The game master announces that hitting the can will require a TN of 11 because it's quite far away. Rick rolls his three normal dice and gets a 13, hitting the can right in the middle with a satisfying noise, watching as it falls and rolls along the pavement. Had Rick been *bad at* Shooting, he would have had a problem because he would have downgraded his weak dice to fool dice. It's hard to roll an 11 with three fool dice unless you use some chits⁴. If Rick had been neither *good at* or *bad at* Shooting, he

⁴Chits are discussed in Chapter 4 on page 62

would have used the three weak dice of his Agility score and had some chance of hitting the can.

When to not roll dice

If the game master is sure you will succeed (or fail), you don't have to roll any dice. To speed up the game, the game master may decide that a player character (not a non-player character) automatically succeeds at an easy task. Reserve rolling dice for the important stuff only. This is how it goes:

Impossible Tasks: The attempt is genuinely impossible, such as flapping your arms to fly. The attempt fails automatically, whether the dice is rolled or the chits are spent.

Trivial Tasks: These are so easy, you are guaranteed to succeed. The game master does not need to require a die roll, except if the task is attempted under stress such as during a fight or in an emergency.

Very Easy Tasks: The game master may decide that the player character succeeds automatically, except if the task is attempted under stress such as during a fight or in an emergency.

Target Number Table

This table is a guideline for the game master when he has to determine a target number. You can use a TN of 5 or 7 if you think that would be the most appropriate for any given situation⁵.

⁵Note that average (normal) difficulty means average for an adult without special training. Dressing a wound would be of average difficulty using the Healing skill. In any case, these guidelines are not the Bible. The game master can change this table or disregard it altogether.

Difficulty	Suggested Target Number
Trivial	4
Very easy	6
Easy	8
Average	10
Hard	12
Very hard	14
Experts only	15 or more

The fumble

You fumble when you roll seven points lower than your target number, or you roll a 1 with each and every one of your dice⁶.

A fumble could not mean anything more serious than making a fool of yourself before your friends; falling off your bike, tripping, or answering to your teacher that King George the Fifth was the first U.S. President. However, it could have very dear consequences, especially when running away from a ghost or in a fight, so avoid attempting actions where you could easily fumble.

The fail

You fail when you roll lower than your target number, but yet not so bad as in a fumble.

A fail means you have not achieved your desired goals. If you fail attacking somebody in a fight, you just miss your enemy, if you fumble, your own strength could make you fall down, face first. Still, failing can be tragic in some situations, like if you are trying to jump from one window to the next.

⁶It's a good thing that swell dice do not have any 1s. Plus, if you have three weak dice in Education and you are *good at* Academics, it would be unlikely for you to fumble unless you face a difficult task.

The success

You achieve success when you roll equal or higher than your target number, but yet you do not get a spectacular success.

A success means you have reached your desired goals, which in most cases would be good enough.

The spectacular success

The spectacular success is the opposite of the fumble. *You get a spectacular success when you roll seven points over the target number, or you roll a 6 with each and every one of your dice.*

A spectacular success gives you additional benefits; you'll sell newspapers much faster (giving you time to do something else or just sell more papers), you don't only know about George Washington, but you can tell your teacher the size of his shoes. In an emergency, a spectacular success could save the day.

In short

- ☛ The player tells the game master what action his character is attempting.
- ☛ The game master determines the appropriate skill to carry out that action. If there is no appropriate skill, he chooses an attribute.
- ☛ If the character is *good at* the skill, he upgrades⁷ the dice of his linked attribute.
- ☛ If the character is *bad at* the skill, he downgrades⁸ the dice of his linked attribute.
- ☛ If the character is not *OK at* the skill or is using an attribute, he rolls the dice of the linked attribute without upgrading or downgrading them.
- ☛ The game master determines the target number of the action as he sees fit⁹.

⁷Normal dice become swell dice and weak dice become normal dice.

⁸Normal dice become weak dice and weak dice become fool dice.

⁹A TN of 10 is average, 14 is very hard and 6 is very easy.

- ☛ The player rolls his dice, adding the results. He succeeds if the total is equal to or greater than the target number, and fails if the total is less than the target number.
- ☛ If the total is 7 points less than the TN or all your dice show 1s, it's a fumble.
- ☛ If the total is 7 points greater than the TN or all your dice show 6s, it's a spectacular success.
- ☛ Fumbles carry additional penalties, while a spectacular success provides extra benefits.

Fallen dice

Any die that falls off the table *when testing for a skill or attribute* is read as a 1. Both players and the game master should be careful when throwing their dice, for their own benefit.

Competitive tasks

Now you know how to test if a character succeeds at any given task. You ask the game master for a target number, you roll your dice, add them up, and if you get as much as the target number or higher, you succeed. What if two or more characters are competing to achieve the same task?

We could be trying to see who can run faster or sell the last newspaper to the last client of the day. Each character rolls his dice and the highest result wins. If two or more characters roll the same result they perform equally well.

If the task was hard enough without competition, the game master might assign a minimum target number. If no character achieves this minimum they all fail.

Let's suppose Tim and Pip are both taking an examination for the chance to earn a scholarship at the New Paris Atelier School of Arts. There's only one remaining scholarship and the school demands a minimum level of skill for admittance. The game master determines

both competitors will need a TN of 15 or greater. Should they both fail, none of them will receive the scholarship.

Those who fumble (TN - 7), lose automatically. Those who roll a spectacular success (TN + 7), double their total.

In short

- ☛ For a competitive task, every character rolls his dice and the highest total wins.
- ☛ The game master *may* assign a minimum target number.
- ☛ A fumble will lose automatically, while a spectacular success will double the totals.
- ☛ If both characters fail or fumble, there will be no winner.

With a little help from my friends

What if two or more characters are trying to help each other to achieve the same task? First of all, the game master must make sure that teamwork does indeed help in the given situation. Athletics or shooting are examples of skills that are often individual in nature, while lifting a carriage from the body of an unfortunate newsboy does indeed benefit from as many arms as possible.

The game master determines the target number and one of the characters is chosen to be the leader. The other characters are considered assistants. The leader rolls his dice normally. The assistants roll theirs too, but their results are halved, rounded up, and they then add all their points to the grand total.

The game master may also assign a maximum number of helpers.

Let's say that Tim and Pip are carrying a huge basket filled with eggs, hopefully without breaking any. The game master determines this is a feat of Strength and assigns a TN of 10. That's bad news for Tim (STR two weak dice) and Pip (STR two weak dice), so they decide to cooperate. Tim is chosen to be the leader and he rolls a 5 and a 3, for a total of 8. Pip, the helper, rolls a 4 + 3 = 7, halved to 3.5, rounded

up to 4. The grand total is $8 + 4 = 12$, which is greater than the TN of 10, so they succeed.

Fumble and spectacular success

Any player who rolls a 1 on all of his dice causes the whole group to fumble. The group can also fumble if the grand total is 7 under the target number.

The group achieves a spectacular success if the grand total is 7 over the target number, or if the leader rolls a 6 with all their dice and nobody fumbles; if anybody fumbles, the whole group fumbles.

In short

- ☞ The game master must agree that the task can be done in a group.
- ☞ One of the characters is chosen to be the leader, the rest are considered assistants.
- ☞ The leader rolls his dice and adds them up normally.
- ☞ The assistants roll their dice, but totals are halved and rounded up.
- ☞ Add the leader's and the assistants' rolls to find the grand total.
- ☞ If the grand total is equal to or greater than the target number, the group succeeds.
- ☞ If anybody fumbles, the whole group fumbles.
- ☞ If the grand total is lower than the TN - 7, it's a fumble.
- ☞ If the grand total is greater than the TN + 7, it's a spectacular success.

Quick and dirty or slow and neat

The game assumes that most tasks are instantaneous or can be accomplished in less than two minutes. However, there are actions that require time, which is in short supply in an adventure. What then? The game master assigns a time frame to the action, according to his own good sense. If the player wants

to speed up their action *just a little bit* the game master should raise the TN by 1. If the player wants to do the action in half the time, the game master should double the target number.

If the players are happy with slowing down their actions *just a little bit* the game master may lower the TN by 1. If the players want to act slowly and safely the game master should lower the TN by 3.

Suppose the players need to know how much time it would take them to do their homework¹⁰ for the Newsboy Lodge Night School. The game master decides that it would normally take two hours. The players are not happy about that, so they ask to speed up that time by one third for a final time of one hour and 20 minutes. The game master thus determines that normally to get an A in that homework they would require a TN of 8, but since they are speeding up, he raises the TN by 1 to a total of 9.

In short

- ☞ If the players want to speed up their actions *just a little bit* the game master should raise the TN by 1.
- ☞ If the players want to act in half the time, the game master should double the target number.
- ☞ If the players are happy with slowing down their actions *just a little bit* the game master may lower the TN by 1.
- ☞ If the players want to act slow and safe the game master should lower the TN by 5.

Try again

Most actions can be attempted more than once. In each case the game master must be satisfied that the characters still have the time, the materials and any

¹⁰Normally, a player doesn't roll for doing homework, but these players are trying to get to college eventually, so they want great grades.

other requirement. You can't try again with a fine Chinese vase that fell down, rolled and broke into smithereens. You can try again with a drawing that went wrong, provided you have a pencil and an eraser.

The game master will choose to use the same target number from the first attempt *unless there is a good reason* to change it. A second or third attempt at escaping from the watch of kidnappers will be harder as the criminals will have been alerted. On the other hand, a second attempt at solving a mathematics question should be easier.

However, if you try again but fail, you must pay 1 chit for the opportunity to attempt that same task again.

Let's say Bobby is trying to pick the lock of a door to a room where he is locked in. Unfortunately, he's *bad at Locks* and has only two weak dice in Agility. Since he is *bad at Locks* his two weak dice are downgraded to two fool dice. The game master asks him for a TN of 8; difficult with just two fool dice. The player decides to try again and the game master concedes he has a better chance to pick the lock now that he's familiar with it, and lowers the TN to 7. Poor Bobby rolls his dice again and fails. Now, Bobby has heard that the corpse with whom he shares the room where he's locked in, is from Transylvania and he does not want to risk any legends of vampires. So, he pays 1 chit for another go with a TN lowered to 6. This time he succeeds. (As you will learn in Chapter 4 on page 62, Bobby could have used 1 chit for a re-roll in any of his earlier attempts. He chose not to do so because it was 9 a.m. (when a vampire sleeps), and he needed to lower the target number.)

Make sure the players understand that to try again is not the same as re-rolling. When you re-roll, you are rolling your dice again for the same action. If you try again you are making a new attempt¹¹.

In short

- ☛ When a character wants to try again, he attempts a task that he has already tried and failed at.

¹¹If the characters doing their homework in the earlier example decided to try again, they would have had to erase everything they'd already done and start over.

- ☛ The game master must be assured that the action is still possible.
- ☛ Have the characters used up the materials, tools and fuel, etc.?
- ☛ The game master can adjust the target number of the action if any successive attempt makes the action harder or easier.
- ☛ If the player fails three times in a row, he must pay 1 chit for the opportunity to have a fourth attempt.

Scenes

A scene is any goal attempted by a character or group of characters that requires more than one simple action and involves more than one skill. Normally, you role play and simulate each and every action attempted. Sometimes, to speed up the game, the game master and the players may agree to solve the whole scene with just one single dice roll.

Rules

1. The game master describes the situation as he or she always does, and the players share what their characters intend to do, as usual.
2. A player or the game master proposes to solve the situation as a scene.
3. The game master assigns a number from 1 to 6 (or better), that the players must roll in one single normal die. He warns the players of the consequences if they fail.
4. The players vote. If at least half plus one of the players agree with the proposal of the game master, accepting the possible consequences of a failure, the situation can be solved as a scene; otherwise it must be played as normal.
5. The youngest player rolls the dice.

6. Chits¹² can only be used in scenes to buy re-rolls or to get a *still breathing* favor. Re-rolls for scenes are much more expensive, costing 2 chits per player.
7. The game master applies the consequences of success or failure according to the result of the dice roll.

Let's suppose the player characters are following a suspected spy to sneak into his hideout. That would require several skills (Stealth and Observation) and actions. You would probably want to role play that scene in detail, but let's suppose it's late in the evening and you are running out of real time to play. After hearing the players' plan and assessing the situation, the game master believes they have a fair chance of succeeding. He tells the players they need to roll a 4 or better with one normal die. If they fail, they will be captured by the spy and imprisoned in some dirty cellar. The players are OK with it, so they roll the dice. Unfortunately, they roll a 3 and buy a re-roll, which comes expensive at 2 chits per player.

Detailed skill list

As promised, here is the detailed skill list, organized by each skill's linked attribute¹³. This list provides reference and guidelines for the game master and players, so you don't have to memorize it¹⁴.

Strength skills

Fisticuffs (STR): Fisticuffs is the appropriate skill to use when you get into a fight, as long as you fight with your own body or use hand weapons such as a stick or a sword. You can use this skill in a friendly wrestling competition or while mock boxing. Don't use this skill for throwing a stone or

¹²The use of chits is explained in Chapter 4 on page 62

¹³There are no skills linked to Health.

¹⁴Please note that the Language skill works differently. In fact, it's so special it has its own section.

using a slingshot. That action is better reserved for Throwing and Shooting.

You can usually try again as long as you are not in a fight. However, make each attempt harder by raising the TN by 1 if you don't rest for at least five minutes.¹⁵

Throwing (STR): Throwing is the skill of choice when you are throwing anything, either a carefully crafted javelin or throwing a knife to the most humble stone.

You can try again as long as you don't run out of objects to throw.

Agility skills

Athletics (AGI): Athletics is the appropriate skill for any action dealing with a sport or similar activity, not already covered by more specific skills such as Climbing or Riding. So, when a character is trying to climb a wall, play baseball or football, or jump over a fence, this skill would, under most circumstances, be helpful.

A fumble in this skill can mean that you trip over yourself, perhaps suffering a few cuts and bruises¹⁶.

Athletics is also appropriate when the characters are trying to run away from a criminal on foot, when participating in a race with their friends, or when trying to arrive on time to catch the Elevated Train or Subway.

You can usually try again unless you are involved in a competition.

Climbing (AGI): Climbing might be your last hope of escape when cornered in a narrow alley. It's also useful when trying to sneak into (or out of) a building, and to survive the most treacherous passages of the New Paris sewers.

You can usually try again as long as you are not in a fight, but make each attempt harder by raising the TN by 1 if you don't rest for at least five minutes.

Dodging (AGI): Dodging is an ability mostly used in a fight to avoid being hit, as discussed in Chapter 5 on page 79, but it can also come in handy to

¹⁵You'll find more details on how to use Strength in Chapter 5 on page 79

¹⁶See the Damage Table on page 90

avoid being run over by a train, carriage or a horse.

You cannot try again to dodge the same attack.

Locks (AGI): This skill comprises the ability to open locks and safes, *provided you have the proper tools*. Opening the door of a poor tenement house is relatively easy, requiring a TN of 12. A basic safety lock requires at least a TN of 13; a safe would require at least a TN of 15. With improvised tools, increase the TN by 3 to a total of 5.

A fumble means you have damaged your tools, making them unusable even after they are properly repaired. You can usually try again unless you don't fumble.

Pickpockets (AGI): This skill is useful for the obvious task of stealing wallets, watches and expensive handkerchiefs while the poor victim doesn't notice. Stealing from an unwary old lady should demand a TN of 12, but who would be such a crook? However, stealing from a wary policeman commands a TN of 16 or more. For other victims, the game master should use his good sense.

A failure in this task indicates that the victim notices before you get to steal anything.

Riding (AGI): Riding includes the capacity to drive a bicycle, for example, and the ability to maintain it. The Mechanics skill (not Crafts) is also adequate to care for a bicycle, but not to ride it. As with Climbing and Athletics, a fumble in this skill will usually mean that you fall off your bike, perhaps suffering a few cuts and bruises.

You can usually try again unless you are involved in a competition or you are being chased.

Stealth (AGI): This skill comes in handy when playing hide-and-seek, especially if the one who seeks you is little Pete and his pet Rottweiler. In short, it's good for both hiding and moving silently without being detected.

You cannot usually try again once you've been discovered.

Swimming (AGI): Only characters who are *good at* Swimming may swim in relatively calm waters without having to roll for this skill. Everybody else must roll for Swimming when they are swimming in water deeper than

their height, with a TN of 8 for rough waters.

Failure means that the player character cannot advance and must struggle to keep himself afloat.

A fumble puts the character in immediate danger of drowning. In this case, the player character must struggle for his life, rolling once every minute. Any further failure means the player character would drown in five minutes, unless rescued.

Vehicles (AGI): The Vehicles skill is useful to operate and maintain any land vehicle except a bicycle. This includes trains and stagecoaches, but not riding a horse.

You can try again unless you are being chased or are undertaking some competition.

Education skills

Academics (EDU): Academics is a glorified term for school stuff. History, Biology, Botany, Philosophy and in general, all school, high school and university subjects not covered by more specific skills belong to Academics. Use this skill when a character wants to know the meaning of some word, the poisonous effects of some plant or do research in a library.

You can *only* try again” if *your character* is aware that he has failed, he can consult reference works, or ask a learned person such as a teacher.

Crafts (EDU) and Mechanics (EDU): Crafts covers all sorts of traditional crafts, maintenance and repairs not related to electricity or mechanics; sewing, carpentry, masonry, drawing, painting, etc., are covered by this skill. Crafts can be a pretty useful skill in the hands of the right player, provided there are enough tools, materials and time available. Repairing a train engine or some new wonder of science such as a horseless carriage is covered by Mechanics.

A fumble at any of these skills lowers the quality of the item by one level.¹⁷

You can usually try again as long as the materials are not used up by the

¹⁷B-grade clothes downgrade to C, C-grade to D, D-grade to E and with E, well, you better get a barrel or something.

attempt¹⁸.

Healing (EDU): Healing covers everything from dressing the leg of a puppy to minor surgery. Full details on how to use this skill are covered on page 92 and on page 114.

Streetwise (EDU): Streetwise makes you aware of the places and people you ought to know (or avoid) in New Paris.

You can't usually try again with this skill; if you don't know, then you don't know.

Eyes & Ears skills

Observation (E&E): Observation is a great skill to discover someone trying to hide from you, trying to read a note in the dark or recognizing a face among the crowd.

Shooting (E&E): Shooting includes the skill to use and maintain any weapon that shoots a missile of some sort.

Charisma skills

Performance (CHA): Being *good at* Performance helps you to perform on the streets for a few dimes, juggle or even run a puppet show for children.

Languages (CHA): Languages is in fact, two skills in one: a) how many languages you know well enough to have a basic conversation; and b) communicating through mime and gestures. Note that standard sign language is considered a language; not mime and gestures.

A character who is *good at* Languages is entitled to test this skill the first time he needs to use a foreign language. If the test is successful the character can use that language.

Failure means the character is not able to communicate in that language and will be limited to mime and gestures. The game master should assign a target number using his good sense, taking into account the character's background. A TN of 12 is suggested for common and easy languages;

¹⁸You can try again as long as you have paper or an eraser handy.

while rare or hard tongues should get higher numbers. Note that this test cannot be repeated without spending chits.

A character who is *bad at* or *OK at* Languages can only speak English.

You can only try again with this skill after spending at least one week immersed in the language or after one month of intensive training.

Sweet Talk (CHA): This skill is used to convince people to agree with your opinions and make them do what you want them to do. It can even be used, God forbid, to tell some untruthful story to a policeman who may have just found you with a gold watch that just *accidentally* fell into your pocket. The target number varies wildly; the story about a watch that *accidentally* fell into a newsboy's pocket should command a TN of 15, at the very least. A fumble means the other person is angry enough that he would not pay attention to your words for one full week, and it could have the reverse consequences that you intended.

You can try again as long as you don't fumble, but don't forget that each attempt raises the TN by 1.

Example game session, continued

Veteran role-players may already be familiar with the rules, as explained before, but I will continue with the sample game session from the Introduction, so you can see how I would implement them in a real game.

Martin: "OK. So Daniel you stop right in time, but Tammy and James walk confidently into a stream of water. It rises up to your elbows. I'm sure you know what kind of water this is, do you?"

Daniel bursts into laughter.

Martin: "Now Daniel, you might have heard something to your back. Make another Eyes & Ears check, please; the TN is just 11 this time."

Daniel: "OK, no problem. I'm *good at* Observation and have three weak dice, so I upgrade them. Three normal dice, thank you."

Daniel rolls the dice. "I've got a 4-6-3; that's 13."

Martin: "Higher than the target number, great. Daniel, definitely, you've heard the steps of someone behind you. What do you do?"

Daniel: "I turn around real fast."

Martin: "Daniel, as soon as you turn around, you see it just for a second, a rat running fast and then fading away under the shadows."

Tammy: "Well, what do we do, now?"

Martin: "Whatever you want, as always. I suggest you get out of that... er... stream and see if you go north or south."

James: "Any hint of where the pickpocket went?"

Martin: "Yes, too bad it's so dark down here."

Daniel: "I'm trying anyway."

Martin: "Well, it's a TN of 16 this time. You'd better have some good rolling of dice."

Daniel rolls his dice: "Hey, got all 6s!"

Martin: "A spectacular success. Daniel, by sheer luck you spot er... 25 cents spread southwards in pennies."

Tammy: "Great, Daniel. Now, grab the money and go fetch him!"

James: "I think we should make a torch first. Martin, is there anything we can use to make a torch from the stuff around here?"

Martin: "Hmm, that would be too much luck..."



3. Wealth and stuff

Unless the game master decides otherwise, player characters are supposed to be able to provide for themselves regularly. Most newsboys (and girls) will live at the Newsboy Lodge or some similar institution, where they can stay and receive basic meals for a token payment. In other words, we assume that the player characters are able to earn their basic upkeep selling their papers or working in whatever other trade they have chosen for themselves.

Everything else however, even school, costs money and the player characters should be aware of the cost and the consequences.

Equipment rules

Definitions

Large Object: A large object is anything that would not fit inside a pocket.

Small Object: A small object is anything that would fit inside a pocket.

Limits

- ☞ Large Object: A character can carry as many large objects as dice he has allocated to Strength, whether these are weak or normal dice. Using a bag or backpack doubles that number.
- ☞ Small Object: A character can carry up to 12 small objects; if he is using a bag or backpack, double that number.

Note: These limits are as always, a guideline for the game master, who can use his good judgment to disallow any newsboy to carry an elephant as if it were just one large object.

Equipment quality

In Chapter 2 you saw that there were five grades of clothes ranging from A to E. We use a similar system for equipment, according to the following guidelines:

- ☞ A: Good quality product; exclusive service.
- ☞ B: Standard quality product; first-class service.
- ☞ C: Cheap, mass-produced product; second-class service.
- ☞ D: Second-hand or badly manufactured product; third-class safe.
- ☞ E: Barely usable, worn-out or unsafe product; unsafe service, such as riding on the top of a train car.

Rating prices

Prices are going up and down all the time on New Paris streets; something might be cheap in one shop and hugely expensive just around the corner. As such, instead of giving an exact price for items and stuff, the game master may choose to rate them according to the following scale:

Rating Prices Table

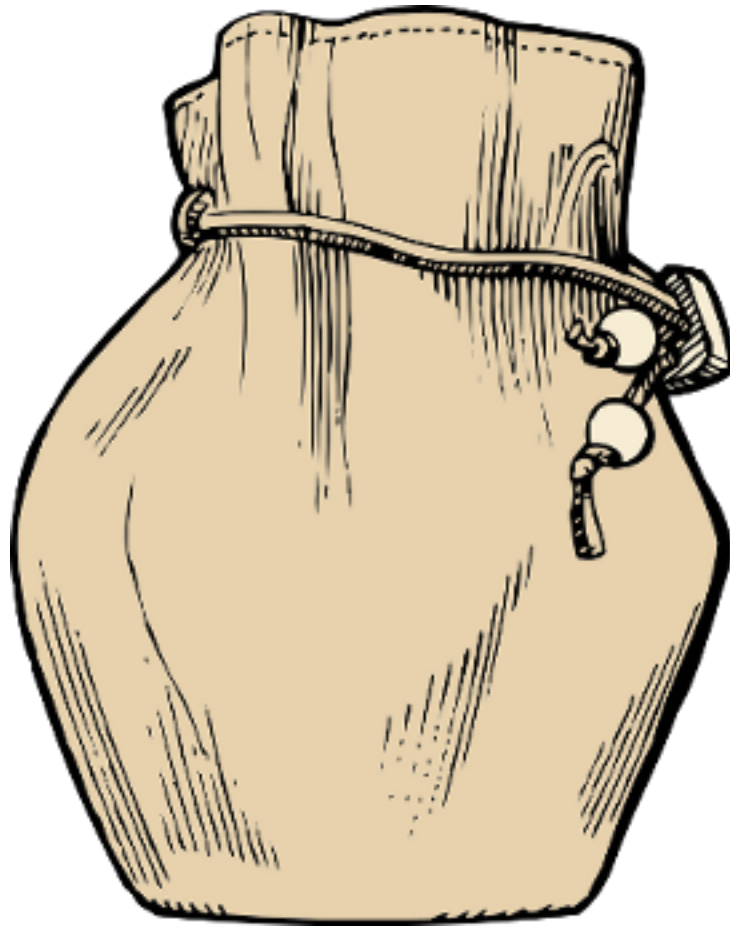
Rating	A	B	C	D	E
Minimum value	\$10	\$5	\$1	\$0.20	\$0.01
Usual value	\$25	\$7	\$3	\$0.50	\$0.10
Maximum value	–	\$15	\$6	\$1.50	\$0.30

If the price of your pin is rated E, you could find it from 1 to 30 cents in shops. The game master should choose the exact price when the player characters want to buy something. If in doubt, use the usual value.

Inflation (rarely deflation) might change the values in the table. A good, simple way to add stress to the player characters is to begin a

new adventure by telling the players that inflation has increased all the prices. Newspaper sales are harder to make during an economic crisis.

Please note that the quality grade of an item does not equal its price grade. A gold pin could demand a C-grade price; while an E-grade steamship could still be priced in the A-grade range.



Stuff you can buy

Price Table

Name	Size	Price	Quality	Notes
Clothing D	Large	\$2.50 - C	D	a,b
Clothing C	Large	\$7 - B	C	a,b
Clothing B	Large	\$10 - A	B	a
Clothing A	Large	\$20 + A	A	a,c
Shoes	Large	\$1.50 C	D	a
Sport shoes	Large	\$5 B	B	a
Candle	Small	5 cents E	C	
Deluxe slingshot	Small	\$2.00 C	B	d
Street fast food	Small	45 cents D	D	
Cafeteria meal	Large	60 cents D	C	
Deluxe breakfast	Large	\$2 C	A	
School book	Large	\$4 C	C	
Cheap school book	Large	50 cents D	D	e
School supplies	Large	\$1.75 C	C	f
Newspaper bag	-	Free	C	g
Backpack	-	\$2 C	D	
NPET Token	-	2 cents E	-	i
Medication, rare	Small	\$30 A	B	c,h
Medication	Small	\$5 B	B	h

Notes

- ☞ a) It does not count as an object if worn.
- ☞ b) No shoes.
- ☞ c) Rare.
- ☞ d) For pampered kids. Most boys build their own using their Crafts skill, or they ask an older brother to build it for them.
- ☞ e) School books printed in cheap newspaper-grade unbound paper for the use of poor students. Meant to last for one school term only.
- ☞ f) Includes two black pencils, an eraser, a wooden ruler, a cheap 48-page notebook, sandpaper (to use as a pencil sharpener), a simple pen and a case.
- ☞ g) Given for free to the newsies with higher sales; has newspaper's logo.
- ☞ h) Proper medication add +2 to Health or Healing rolls (See Chapter 9: Section 9.6.6).
- ☞ i) Urban Transportation, 1 fare.

Stuff you cannot buy

This is a list of steampunk items that you cannot find in any shop. Instead the characters will only have access to them in the course of their adventures.

As always these are only examples, feel free to add new items or modify the existing ones in your own adventures.

Being prototypes they are all of D-grade quality.

1. OWL Walking Camera. A camera in the shape of a wooden owl. It can walk slowly following a preset pattern (as in walk five feet, rotate left 90 degrees). Clockwork walking autonomy 100 yards. The OWL will take one photo every 10 yards or at a specific times, as set by its operator.
2. Electric Torch. A hand-sized electric torch, the last of the last in illuminating technology!

3. Portable Miniature Phonograph. To record and play conversations. Must be wound. It holds a small cylinder which can hold up to five minutes of recording.
4. Miniature Electric Motor. It serves to wind other mechanisms or to power miniature vehicles.
5. Miniature Phone with cable. Once hooked to a line it can be used to call anywhere.
6. Miniature Magnetic Detector. It detects coin-sized metal objects up to 12 inches away.
7. Doggy. A electric powered dog, wire guided (wire unwinds up to 24 yards) Batteries charge in six hours, last one hour. Doggy can be fitted with OWL, Electric Torch, and Portable Photographer. It's nose will turn red if it detects harmful chemicals.
8. Blue Poison Tranquilizer Pistol.
9. Dr. Wisemore's Thin-Rope (24 yards). Can hold up to 200 kilos. Must be used with gloves. Almost invisible.
10. Dr. Uranus Flash and Smoke Pills. These pills look like any ordinary medication. When thrown to the ground they will explode, liberating a 10-cubic foot smoke cloud that will dissipate in three seconds.



4. Chits

The player characters of this game are luckier than average. It's like the world wants to compensate them for having it rough. Perhaps their guardian angels are better than average. Explain it however you wish. In any case, when things get really tough they more often than not, escape safe and sound until their special star fades.

Good acts, especially heroic deeds, can recover the favor of the angels, making that special star shine again and recover or even gain chits up to the character's maximum.

Chits offer a major advantage to the smart player who is able to use them creatively. True, sometimes the best you can do, is to re-roll a critical dice throw, but there are other strategic options that pay better in the long run.

Using chits

When a player character wants to purchase one favor, he announces it to the game master, who must then approve the request. The game master would do so, as long as the player is not asking for anything weird, uncanny, unsporting or against the rules. The player then pays the favor's price in chits to the game master, who will then grant it. The benefits of such a favor should be narrated in a way that shows the role that luck played¹.

You may use markers, pawns or fake money to represent chits, or you could simply keep track of them on the character sheet.

The following table details how many chits you can use for any such favor. You aren't limited by the table; the players should feel free to ask for any favor

¹The game master will say something like, "Luckily, the bullet is defective and drops to the ground, harmlessly." Or, "The assassin forgot to load his revolver." Or whatever feels appropriate to the situation.

not listed in this table, as long as the game master approves them... for a fair price in chits.

Using Chits Table

Chits Spent	Favor Won
1	Something nice happens
1	Give me a clue
1	Ha! Missed me
1	Re-roll
1	Still breathing
1	Double or nothing
1	Let me try something cool
1 or more	Found it!
1	I'm a hero
2	Each extra weak die
2	Just hurt
3	Something helpful happens
3	Each extra swell die
3	Triple or nothing!
4	Just a scratch
5	Can't touch me

Explanations***Something nice happens***

For 1 chit, you can have an event happen that would require some help in any given situation. For more substantial help you need to pay 3 chits, as discussed

in *Something helpful happens*. In any case, this event must be plausible and make sense.

Examples of nice events include: A kind old lady buys you an apple when you are hungry, or a small brave dog comes to your defense in a fight. Perhaps you are seeking employment and a lawyer trusts you to deliver some important documents to a client. If you do it well, you'll have earned yourself a job. Maybe the common hospital room is filled and you get your private room, just like the rich kids, or perhaps you meet a friendly Civil War veteran just two days before your American History exam at the night school.

Give me a clue

For 1 chit you can ask the game master to give you a clue about some secret or mystery, or some other element of the plot. The game master can be as straightforward or enigmatic as the story requires. For example: instead of just saying "The butler did it", the game master could say something like "The master of politeness is stained in red".

Ha! Missed me

For 1 chit you can dodge any attack delivered by a non-lethal weapon or any unarmed attack (such as a kick). The attack is assumed to have failed, so your character can act normally.

Re-roll

Choose any dice you have already rolled and re-roll them at a cost of 1 chit per die. You can re-roll all your dice for a total cost of 3 chits.

Still breathing

When the game master announces your character is dead for any reason, you can pay 1 chit to keep them alive. However, he is still gravely injured and unable to stand up, so it could be wiser to pay 2 chits for the "Just Hurt" favor.

Double or nothing

Just as it says, pay 1 chit for the opportunity to double the result of all your dice. The whole thing is a gamble that could turn against you if you are unlucky again. See how it goes.

1. If after rolling your dice you don't like the results and want a chance for *Double or nothing*, you tell the game master.
2. He then would announce what is at stake. Usually you would lose 1 or 2 extra chits and fumble at your attempt. However, the game master could say your character is hurt, or might fail spectacularly before all your friends. If you agree with the consequences, you spend your chit and roll one normal die.
3. On an even result you can double your original throw.
4. On an odd result however, you'll face the consequences that the game master announced.

Let's say you are playing baseball. You rolled a mere 8 (according to the game master, just enough to advance to first base). However, the game master told you that a 15 would grant you a home run and you desperately want that. So, you announce that you are taking your chances at *Double or nothing* and want to know what the consequence of failure could be. The game master, perhaps in a mischievous mood, announces that if you don't roll higher than your original throw, your pants will fall down for the general merriment of your friends and rivals watching the game. Plus, you'll have to pay 1 extra chit. You agree to those terms and re-roll. Thankfully, this time you roll a 4 (an even result), and double your original throw for a total of $8 \times 2 = 16$ chits; more than enough for a home run.

Let me try something cool

Sometimes you just need to do something cool, like jumping on a horse and then through a window to dodge a particularly nasty bully. The problem is that

the game master can assign an impossible target number to such daredevil actions. In that case you can pay 1 chit to lower that TN to 12.

The game master must agree that:

- ♥ a) Your action is cool enough (dangerous is not always cool); and
- ♥ b) It has to be physically possible (even if unlikely) for a human.

Found it!

Whenever your character needs an item that's reasonable for him to own or somehow find, you can pay 2 chits and your character will either have it in his pockets or find it easily somewhere. The object must not weigh more than five pounds or cost more than \$1 per chit² spent.

I'm a hero

For heroic actions in which your character, out of the goodness of his heart and without motive for any reward, risks his life for the sake of others or some noble ideal, you can pay 1 chit to lower the TN to 10.

As in *Let me try something cool* the game master must agree that:

- ♥ The action is heroic enough; and
- ♥ It has to be physically possible (however unlikely) for a human.

Each extra weak die

Before or after you roll the dice, 2 chits buy one extra weak die to roll immediately before your throw. This extra die is lost as soon as it is used.

Just hurt

You can pay 3 chits to reduce a grave or dead damage result to hurt on the damage scale³. You could say the bullet did not touch a vital organ, the sword did not cut as deeply as it looked or that you fell on soft ground. In any case, you only received half as much damage.

²A 20-pound item will cost you 4 chits and 3 chits will buy you a \$3 coat.

³You will see more information about damage in Section [5 on page 90](#).

Something helpful happens

For 3 chits, you can ask the game master for a helpful event to happen. This event must be plausible without recourse to fantasy. It must make sense, so restrain yourself as it cannot fully solve the situation on its own. For example: if you are selling papers good weather would definitely help, but you can't get someone to buy all your bundles no matter how good your excuse is. In any case, the game master's opinion is final on this matter.

Examples of helpful events include: A nurse on his way to the hospital finds you hurt and decides to help; an angry wolfhound appears just between you and the muggers who would rob you; the train you were about to miss is delayed; the thundering rain which was going to doom paper sales stops until you finish your last bundle; your court case is assigned to a judge who has a soft spot for newsies, or while shopping for new boots a new shoe shop opens and everything is selling at 25% off.

Each extra swell die

Before or after you roll, 3 chits buy one extra swell die. You must roll your new die immediately and add the result to your throw.

Triple or nothing!

Just as it says, pay 3 chits for the opportunity to triple all your dice. The whole thing is a gamble that could be turned against you if you are unlucky again. See how it goes.

1. If after rolling your dice you don't like the results and want a chance for *Triple or nothing!*, just tell the game master.
2. The game master then announces what is at stake. Usually you'd lose 3 to 5 extra chits and fumble at your attempt. Although, the game master might say your character could be hurt, die or just fail spectacularly before all your friends. If you agree with the proposed consequences, you spend your 3 chits and roll one normal die.

3. On an even result you can double your original throw.
4. On an odd result however, you'll face the consequences that the game master announced.

Just a scratch

At the cost of four chits you can trade the effects of any injury for a -1 malus⁴. This is a pretty expensive option so use it with care. You can't use it for any previous injuries or for accumulated damage; it must be used immediately after your character has been hurt.

Can't touch me

For five chits your character can survive any single attack or accident, suffering no effects whatsoever.

New favors

The game master can grant any favors not included in this list at a reasonable cost in chits.

In short

When your player needs a favor, refer to the favor table, pay the chits and follow the rules. If the favor is not included in the table, the game master may (or may not) concede at a reasonable cost in chits, using the table as a guideline.

⁴Refers to the level of sickness. You will see more information about damage in Section 6.7.



Earning chits

The initial supply of chits might seem generous, but because they can run out quickly, you'll be happy to know there are a few ways of replacing them. Chits are not earned easily, as you will see in the table below.

Earning Chits Table

Event	Chits Earned
Act of kindness	See rules
Helping a rival	2
Helping an enemy	3
Heroic generosity	2
Outstanding honesty	2
Winning the adventure	See rules

Winning a competition	1
Saved a life	3
Heroic feat	2
Major festivities	Varies
A stranger helps you	2

Act of Kindness: As every newsboy knows, God helps those who are kind and good. This might not agree with your opinion about real life, but that's the way it works in this game. When a character performs a random act of kindness towards somebody who is not a friend and cannot easily answer in kind, roll a normal die. If you roll a 5 or a 6, you earn 1 chit. The game master must be satisfied that the act is appropriate to the adventure, is ethical and demands significant effort from the character⁵.

Helping a Rival: If you help somebody who is definitely not a friend or rival in some kind of competition, you get 1 chit. Another newsboy who makes fun of you because you sell less qualifies as a rival. That straight-A student who tells the whole world every time you get a C or worse, qualifies as a rival. A friend who sometimes makes a joke, does not. When helping a rival you must not do anything unethical or that would unlawfully harm anyone else. Again, the game master must be satisfied that the act is appropriate to the adventure, is ethical and demands significant effort from the character.

Helping an Enemy: An enemy is the most serious form of rival. Examples of enemies include a bully who is after you, a crooked cop, somebody who has robbed you, and so on. Again, when helping a rival you must not do anything unethical or that would unlawfully harm anyone else. You don't get 3 chits just by helping a gang kidnap a pastor. The game master must be satisfied that the act is appropriate to the adventure, is ethical and demands significant effort from the character.

⁵Giving a flower to a homeless lady is nice, but will not grant you the chance of getting a chit. Spending half an hour to find the parents of a five-year-old girl who is lost in the city would.

Heroic Generosity and Outstanding Honesty: This time the game master must not only be satisfied that the act is appropriate to the adventure, is ethical and demands significant effort from the character; the action must be extraordinary. Ordinary honesty, like not shortchanging or keeping your word does not grant you any chits. Returning a wallet you found on the street with \$20 or confessing a crime when nobody has a clue you did it, would indeed qualify. Likewise, heroic generosity means an extraordinary effort either in money or kind. For example: spending a full week volunteering at a soup kitchen for eight hours a day, donating a full week's earnings or sharing your food even when you are hungry.

Winning the Adventure: Once the game master is satisfied the players have finished an adventure successfully, he will grant a number of chits to the whole gaming group. It is the players' responsibility to divide the whole lot as they believe is fair. Some groups may simply divide the points evenly, while others may choose to reward the best players, or the one who brought the pretzels and soda. The exact number of chits will vary from adventure to adventure. Generally, the harder the adventure is the more chits the group will receive.

Saved a Life: When a player character makes a significant effort by taking an action that decisively helps rescue somebody from certain danger, he earns 3 chits.

Heroic Feat: Two chits are awarded to any heroic feat that does not lead to saving a life.

Major Festivities: On specific days such as Christmas, there is so much fun and goodwill that your character recovers his energies and optimism. For details refer to [Chapter 7 on page 99](#)

A Stranger Helps You: If a non-player character who does not know your character helps you when you are in some great trouble, you receive 2 chits. The game master should use this option only when a player is in dire straits, not to reward careless playing.

"In fact, if it had not been for a good-hearted turnpike-man, and a benevolent old lady, Oliver's troubles would have been shortened by the very same process which had put an end to his mother's; in other words, he would most assuredly have fallen dead upon the king's highway. But the turnpike-man gave him a meal of bread and cheese; and the old lady, who had a shipwrecked grandson wandering bare-footed in some distant part of the earth, took pity upon the poor orphan, and gave him what little she could afford - and more - with such kind and gentle words, and such tears of sympathy and compassion, that they sank deeper into Oliver's soul, than all the sufferings he had ever undergone." Oliver Twist, Chapter VIII



Maximum number of chits

Player characters can save the chits they accumulate during their adventure as a good luck reserve for times of real trouble. However, there is a limit to the number of chits they can accumulate. Chits won by a character who has reached this limit are wasted and cannot be used or shared.

Maximum Number of Chits Table

Age	Can have up to
9	22 chits
10	20 chits
11	18 chits
12	16 chits
13	14 chits
14	12 chits
15 or more	10 chits

Sharing chits

Players can transfer chits to other player characters. For every 3 chits you share, the other character receives 2. If you share 2 chits the other character would receive 1 chit. As you can see, sharing 3 chits gets a better rate. This is quite a good number of chits to share, so reserve them for an emergency.

Sharing chits does not qualify for either an act of kindness or heroic generosity, so you do not earn chits by sharing them. However, you can consider yourself a good friend, tap yourself on the back and smile proudly.

Losing chits

There is a difference between spending and wasting chits. A player can waste his chits for re-rolls that were not worth it or he can save them for when they

are sorely needed. However, there are actions and situations that will cause you to lose chits. These are introduced for game balance and to help players role play better and think deeper.

There are three kinds of situations that will eat your chits up. First of all, losing at something you are *good at* or in which you have given significant effort; second, acting against the Newsies Code⁶ and third, significant emotional distress. Some of these situations are detailed in the table below. As always, the game master should use discretion and consider this table as a guide, not the Bible.

5.6.1 Losing Chits Table

Event	Chits Lost
Fumbling at something you are <i>good at</i>	1
Fumbling after using 1 or more chits	1
First time your character steals	3
First time your character begs	1
Loses at some competition	1
Cowardice, if friends are in danger	2
Going hungry, per day	1 or 2
E-grade clothes in cold weather	1
D or E-grade clothes in freezing weather	2
Homeless, per week	1

Stealing: Caught or not, your character loses 3 chits the first time he steals.

Begging: When your character has to beg for money from strangers (the very first time), your character loses 1 chit for the humiliation.

⁶See chapter [11 on page 137](#).

Going Hungry: Every night you go to bed without having been able to eat at least one full meal, you lose 1 chit; 2 if the weather is cold.

E-Grade Clothes in Cold Weather: E-grade clothes are not warm enough to protect you in cold weather. For every full day that you have to face wearing E-grade clothes in cold weather, you lose 1 chit⁷.

D or E-Grade Clothes in Freezing Weather: Freezing weather is severe enough that only C-grade clothes or better can protect you. For every full day that your character has to face wearing nothing better than D or E-grade clothes in freezing weather, your character loses 1 chit.

You cannot lose more than 5 chits in any given season due to hunger, foul weather or homelessness. The game master may choose to ignore the loss of chits between adventures.

No chits? Big problem.

Having no chits means more than just not being able to re-roll or buy favors from the game master. Your character believes he's out of luck and feeling deeply sad. Call it a depression if you like, but I would not get that pretentious. Why is being so sad a problem? Because until you get at least 1 chit (or somebody shares one with you), every time you attempt an action that demands a dice roll you have to first roll one normal die in the following table.

5.7.1 No Chits, Big Problem Table

Die (nd)	Result
1	"It's no use trying." (Make no attempt.)
2-3	"I'll just fail." (TN + 1)
4-5	No effect. (Roll normally.)
6	"An angel smiles." (Gain 1 chit and roll normally.)

⁷More rules about weather in Chapter 8 on page 106.

Exceptions

1. You don't roll on this table while in a serious fight or during an emergency. Adrenaline and instincts won't let you die without a fight.
2. Non-player characters don't have chits and they won't use this table.

Explanation of results

- ☛ "I'll just fail." Your character is so convinced of being a failure that he is unable to make a full effort. Raise the TN by 1; better luck next time.
- ☛ "An angel smiles." Call it God's help, endorphins, or whatever you like. Your character has just recovered from his sadness, as young persons often do. You get 1 chit; use it with care.
- ☛ "It's no use trying." Instead of trying, your character blames his bad luck on the world, his parents or his friends. He starts whining, rolls himself up in ball or does anything but what he intended to do. He can try again once he is over it, after five minutes has passed.
- ☛ "No effect." Just as it says; you roll your dice normally.

An example game session, continued

So, we continue our adventure:

Martin: "A spectacular success. Daniel, by sheer luck you spot er... 25 cents spread southwards in pennies."

Tammy: "Great, Daniel. Now, grab the money and go fetch him!"

James: "I think we should make a torch first. Martin, is there anything we can use to make a torch from the stuff around here?"

Martin: "Hmm, that would be too much luck..."

James: "OK, I'm pushing my luck here. Martin, what if I pay you 1 chit?"

Martin: "Make it 3, and it's a deal."

Tammy: "Three? For one stupid torch?"

Martin: "One stupid torch that you need now. A torch that could be quite handy, you know."

Daniel: "I think 2 chits is fair for a torch."

Martin: "OK, it's 2 chits, but that's final. Take it or leave it."

James: "I take it. Here's my 2 chits."

Martin: "Great, thank you. You all start searching for materials to make a torch but there's nothing you can see around here. Finally, as you are about to give up, James steps on something and falls on the ground, landing on his bottom."⁸

⁸Usually, James would have checked Agility to avoid such a fate, but as this is just for fun, the players are letting the game master get away with it.

5. Fights and chases



Fights and chases are chaotic and dangerous. One single shooting in the whole adventure could be deadly to all the characters. Needless to say, *Newsies & Bootblacks* is not a game about killing monsters and plundering their treasure, so combat could well be limited to slingshots, water buckets and cream

cakes.

Sometimes there are no better alternatives. If you deal with nefarious spies, mad scientists, or rabid cats, or you dodge a band of young bullies, sooner or later you could end up in a fight. A bully would probably limit himself to knock you down and steal your stuff, but an evil wizard and his zombies might be less kind. Bottom line: even if it's not essential to the stories, we need to address combat with care.

Bear in mind that *Newsies & Bootblacks* does not attempt to mimic real life. Players are trying to simulate stories, comics and films. As such, and in the name of good fun, I'd ask the adults to remember the fun they had when they were 10 years old; when they made their toys fight each other.

Sequence

To have some control in the chaos of combat, *Newsies & Bootblacks* has a sequence of actions. Use it as a to-do list for combat. You first have to do something, then you do something else. I know that it's a bit artificial to say you first shoot, move and then fight, or that fire "fights" when it burns, but

many games use a similar structure and it works out quite nicely. So, let me introduce you to the full sequence below:

1. Surprise¹
2. Initiative roll
3. Shooting / Throwing / Ranged attacks
4. Movement / Reaction phase
5. Close combat
6. Checking for victory

Surprise

This phase of the sequence is optional. In most circumstances both warring parties would be aware of each other, and in that case there is no need to roll for surprise; go directly to on page 82. Yet, when one group is ambushing another we need to see if they have achieved their goals.

The surprise roll

1. The ambushers roll for Stealth, using the character with the *worst* odds. The game master may grant special modifiers if the terrain, the weather or darkness are in favor of the ambushing party. The table below includes a few examples.
2. Nobody can help in that roll.
3. The ambushed group rolls for Observation, using the character with the *best* odds. Again, nobody can help in that roll.
4. If the ambushed party rolls a lower number than the ambushing party, they have been surprised.

¹This step of the sequence occurs only when there is a chance of surprise.

5. If the ambushed party rolls an equal or higher number than the ambushing party, they have not been surprised; continue with the normal sequence.

Surprise Roll Table

Situation	Modifier
Night	+2
Rain or worse	+1
Total darkness	+3
Main street	-3
Heavy fog	+2
Sewers	+3
Sneaky alley	+1

Effects of surprise

1. The successful ambushers choose how close they get to the ambushed party.
2. The surprised characters cannot move, shoot or attack for the rest of the turn.
3. The successful ambushers can act normally.
4. Proceed to Section 6.4 “Shooting and Ranged Attacks”, as there is no need to roll for initiative.

Initiative

1. Every character rolls for Athletics.²
2. Characters act in sequence according to their totals.
3. In the event of a tie:
 - ☛ Player characters act first, if still tied.
 - ☛ Younger characters act first, if still tied.
 - ☛ The character with the most chits acts first, if still tied.
 - ☛ Roll again until you break the tie.

Shooting, throwing and ranged attacks

1. Attacks by shooting are resolved just like any other skill check, using the appropriate skill.
2. In *Newsies & Bootblacks* all weapons are considered to be in range³.

Target number

1. For most weapons, the TN is 6 + 1 for every full 10 yards of distance.
2. For short-range weapons, the TN is 6 + 1 for every five full yards of distance.
3. For extreme short-range weapons the TN is 4 + 1 for every two full yards of distance.
4. Add 1 if the target is crouching or taking cover under a table, behind a low wall or something like that.
5. Add 2 if the target is smaller than a head. (Or, if you can only see the head of your target.)

²If using a bicycle or vehicle use the appropriate skill to ride them.

³You can always try to hit, no matter how far away the target is.

6. Add 4 if you cannot see your target but it's still possible to hit the target; lobbing a stone, for example.
7. The TN cannot get any higher than 18, nor any lower than 6.

Example: Pip wants to hit a can that is 30 yards away, using his slingshot. The slingshot is a short-range weapon, so the TN for this roll is $6 + (30/5) + 2 = 6 + 6 + 2 = 14$. Had he tried to do the same with a huge rock, an extreme short-range weapon, the TN would have been $4 + (30/2) + 2 = 4 + 15 + 2 = 21$; which is cut down to 18 (the maximum TN as per point 7 above). Wish him luck.

Dodging ranged attacks

1. All missile and thrown attacks can be dodged⁴, *provided the character is aware of the attack and can see his attacker*.
2. The target number to dodge an attack is the number the attacker rolled.
3. Double the target number if dodging a bullet.
4. Each attack can be attempted to dodge just once.
5. There is no limit to the number of different attacks a *player character* can attempt to dodge.
6. A non-player character can only attempt to dodge as many attacks as the number of dice of his Agility attribute. (So a policeman with an AGI score of 4 wd, can attempt to dodge up to 4 attacks per turn.)

Movement and reaction phase

Every character, animal or vehicle in this game moves one pace per turn at their normal speed. The trick lies in that some paces are longer than others. For anybody younger than nine; one pace equals two yards per turn; for nine to 11, that's three yards per turn; for 12 to 14 it's four yards per turn, while

⁴Yes, this includes bullets and ninja stars.

those 15 years of age and older move at five yards per turn. The following table demonstrates some examples. The game master may adapt those for anything not covered here, such as giant apes or aliens from outer space.

That explains your basic walking movement, but there could be times when you want to go much faster. In those cases you have to roll on Athletics, Riding or Vehicles. Your choice depends on whether you are on your feet, riding a horse or using some modern vehicle. The target number should be determined by the game master, taking into account the state of the ground, the weather and any other appropriate circumstances. If everything is normal the TN should be 10.

After passing the test, the character doubles his pace⁵. Triple the pace if the character achieves a spectacular success.

However, if you fumble you only move half your pace and then suffer a mishap. If you are running or riding a bicycle when you suffer the mishap, you trip or fall to the ground, possibly getting a few bruises. Inside a vehicle, both driver and passengers could suffer life-threatening wounds⁶.

Movement Table

You are / You are using a	Pace
9 to 11 years old	3 yards
12 to 14 years old	4 yards
15 and older	5 yards
Swimming	Take 2 from your usual pace
Bicycle	Double your usual pace
Horseless carriage	13 yards
Steam tank	4 yards
Light horse carriage	14 yards
Horse	15 yards
Heavy horse carriage	10 yards

⁵Or that of the vehicle he's using.

⁶Details can be found in on page [86](#).

Close combat

1. Every character can only attack once per turn⁷.
2. A character who is facing an enemy at less than *two yards* or so, can attack in close combat.
3. The attacker rolls for the appropriate *weapon*, skill, or Fisticuffs, if fighting unarmed.
4. The attacker should add or subtract the appropriate modifiers that the game master imposes on the roll, to provide for special circumstances. A table with examples follows.
5. The defender rolls, using his Dodging skill.
6. If the defender rolls higher or equal to the attacker, the attack has failed.
7. If the attacker rolls higher than the defender, the attack has been successful and the defender will probably suffer some form of harm.

Close Combat Table

Circumstance	Modifier to Attack Roll
Low light	- 1
Restrained space	- 2
Defender in higher ground	- 2
Defender surprised (first round)	+ 3
Attacking from the rear	+ 5
Attacking from the side	+ 1

⁷Except in very special cases, as determined by the game master.

Damage

When your character gets hit, he will more than likely suffer some damage and in some cases death (unless you use one of your handy chits). Combat in this game as in real life, can be quite deadly. Fortunately, most often you will not be using real weapons. Honest traders do not sell real weapons of any kind to children, and weapon possession while lawful, is not common in New Paris City. Rarely, in most campaigns, will you ever see a gun used in anger. If you do you'd better run because those things kill fast.

The damage roll

- ☛ Test your Health against the damage rank of the weapon that hit you.
- ☛ The damage rank of unarmed attacks is equal to a roll of the attacker's Strength dice (STR)⁸.
- ☛ The damage rank of most hand-to-hand weapons is equal to a roll of the attacker's Strength dice plus some modifier.
- ☛ The damage rank of most missile weapons is a fixed number.
- ☛ The effects depend on the nature of the weapon and your roll.

Weapon Classes

Non-Lethal Weapons: These are those weapons which cannot normally kill an adult in a novel or story. In real life, it's perfectly possible to kill somebody with a cane or by stoning them, but it is stories, films and comics that we are trying to simulate; not real life.

Success: If your character has passed the Health check he is uninjured. He was tough enough and there's nothing to worry about.

Fail: If your character has failed the Health check you will receive a bruise. Each bruise gives you a malus of 1 for all your actions.

⁸Pip's Strength is three weak dice, so when he hits an opponent he'll roll three weak dice; the total being the damage rank of the attack.

For example: you are involved in a fight with a band of bullies. They hit you seven times in the face (ouch!). That means you have to test your Health seven times. You are lucky (or tough) enough to pass five of these checks. But you failed two of these so you received two bruises. Now you are at -2, so every time you roll the dice to check for a skill or attribute, you subtract 2 points to every roll. If you later receive another bruise, you'll be at -3 and you'll have to subtract 3 points to every roll, and so on.

Fumble: If you fumble the check you move down one step in the damage scale. This is explained on page 90. It means you go from swell to hurt, from hurt to grave and from grave to dead.

Toy Weapons: Toys that cannot kill an adult⁹. In fact, most may only cause embarrassment. We are speaking of such terrible instruments as cakes, splashing of water and such.

Success: If your character has passed the Health check he is uninjured. He was tough enough and there's nothing to worry about.

Fail: If your character has failed the Health check you will receive a bruise. Each bruise gives you a malus of -1 for all your actions. However, unlike the case of non-lethal weapons, all the *damage* that toy weapons cause is *healed* right after the end of the fight. Remember to record toy weapons damage separately.

Fumble: Your character is so embarrassed that he will not be able to act for one turn, and may be either crying as a baby or shouting ferocious, angry threats.

Toy Weapons vs Lethal Weapons: If any lethal or extremely lethal weapon is used in the action, toy weapons cease to cause any harm at all. When you see a shotgun nobody cares about being hit by a cake.

Lethal Weapons: Weapons that can kill somebody in a story, though most times the afflicted character survives. We are speaking of knives, the teeth of a strong dog and very small pistols such as a derringer.

⁹In real life silly accidents are always possible.

Spectacular Success: Luckily, the attack was too weak and your character is unharmed.

Success: If your character passes the Health check he is still bruised and you receive a - 1 bruise.

Fail: If your character fails the Health check he moves down one step in the damage scale that moves in succession from swell to hurt to grave and finally, to dead¹⁰.

Fumble: If your character fumbles he will die unless you spend a chit right away.

Extremely Lethal Weapons: Weapons that can kill an adult in one single attack, and often do so in stories. Examples include swords, revolvers, rifles or large fires. You are advised to be very careful when somebody uses them.

Spectacular Success: Even with a spectacular success your character receives one bruise. Consider it a scratch.

Success: If your character passes the Health check he moves up one step in the damage scale.

Fail or Fumble: If your character fails or fumbles he will die unless you spend a chit right away.

Weapons (and other sources of damage)

Weapon	Type	Damage	Range
Animal	Non-lethal	STR	-
Animal (dangerous)	Lethal	STR	-
Cane or stick	Non-lethal	STR +1	-
Giant mosquito bite	Non-lethal	9	-
Knuckle-duster	Non-lethal	STR +2	-
Stone or brick	Non-lethal	STR -1	Short

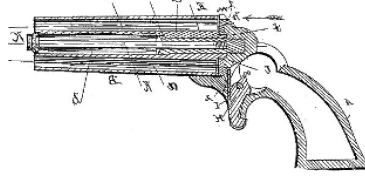
¹⁰More details are found in section 5.

Weapon	Type	Damage	Range
Large rock	Lethal	STR -1	Extreme short
Knife	Lethal	STR +1	-
Knife (thrown)	Lethal	STR	Short
Sword	Extreme	STR +1	-
Derringer	Lethal	13	Short
Revolver	Extreme	15	Short
Rifle	Extreme	15	Normal
Shotgun	Extreme	18	Short
Blowpipe ¹¹	Toy	9	Short
Fall	Lethal	2 per 3 feet	-
Small fire	Lethal	13	-
Large fire	Extreme	13	-
Run over by carriage	Lethal	13	-
Fallen debris ¹²	Lethal	12	-
Falling off a bike	Non-lethal	12	-
Falling while running	Non-lethal	9	-
Slingshot ¹³	Toy	10	Short
Cake	Toy	15	Extreme short-range
Bucket of water	Toy	12	Extreme short-range
Thrown tomatoes, etc.	Toy	10	Short
Rolled newspaper	Toy	STR	-

¹¹Blowpipes may use poisoned darts and any successful hit will deliver the poison. For more details see Section 8 on page 109.

¹²Fallen debris can be dodged, beating a TN of 11.

¹³Lethal for small animals; starving kids use them for hunting rats, sparrows and such.



Special weapons Some weapons are so special they cannot be easily included in a table. Let me introduce you to the following:

Cane-Sword: A sword in a cane. With just a turn of your wrist on the head of the cane, you will have a sword on your hands.

Pepperbox Pistol: The grandfather of the revolver. The pepperbox pistol has several individually loaded barrels that rotate as the trigger is pulled. Treat it as a revolver.

“My Friend”: A knuckle-duster pepperbox combo. This odd weapon is shaped so it can easily be held and used as a knuckle-duster.

Gaulois Pistol: The Gaulois pistol looks like an elaborate cigar case of A-grade, yet it’s intended for self-defense at close range. Use it as a revolver, but lower the range to extreme short.

Penknife Pistol: A penknife and pistol combination. Treat it as a derringer when shooting. If used in hand-to-hand combat, treat it as a cane.

Walking-Stick Gun: A carbine disguised as a stick. Use it as a rifle, but lower the damage to 13.

The damage scale

The damage scale is an easy way to say how hurt a character is. Every player starts at swell and during game time, they may be downgraded to hurt. From hurt a player worsens to grave, which is a serious condition, and then finally, dead. Each of these conditions have an effect on what a character can do. An explanation of these follows.

Swell: Your character is perfectly healthy and you have nothing to worry about.

Bruises are kept from the damage scale, so no matter how many bruises you get, you retain your swell status. You can be swell and still be at -5 bruises or worse.

Hurt: Your character is suffering from a wound or sickness that is serious enough to hinder your actions, but not to endanger your life. You are at -5 for all your actions (in addition to any bruises). So, if you have -3 bruises, you are down to -8.

Grave: Your character is in real trouble. You are wounded and at -5 for all your actions plus any bruises, just as when you are hurt. However, it hurts so much you need to roll for Health with a TN of 10, just for standing up. Walking requires a TN of 12. Running and other strenuous physical activities are next to impossible.

Dead: If you don't spend a chit immediately your character is quite dead. There is nothing your friends can do about it, except to arrange for a decent burial. The game master might let you say up to 25 last words.

Effects of damage on non-living objects

For non-living objects, the game master should assign a fake Health attribute. Bruised items will only need a paint job, suffering no harm. Hurt items lose one level of quality. Grave items lose two levels of quality. Dead items are considered destroyed for all functional purposes.

If an item drops lower than E-grade, it is also destroyed.

Checking for victory

Once all the characters have had the opportunity to act, the turn is over. Then the game master should check for victory if any of the following conditions have been met.

- ☛ The non-player group (and only the non-player group) has been surprised in this turn.

- ☛ It's not a serious fight¹⁴ and the non-player group has suffered more bruises than the player character group in this turn.
- ☛ The non-player group has suffered more hurt (or worse) results than the player character group in this turn.
- ☛ The game master considers that the non-player group has little chance to win.

To check for victory, the game master rolls three normal dice. The usual TN is 11, but the game master can increase or decrease this number according to the circumstances of the fight.

Success: The non-player group keeps fighting another turn.

Fail: The non-player group will try to break off combat right away, saving their belongings and helping the injured members of their group, if any. If the players decide to run after them, uninjured non-player characters will defend themselves if attacked; hurt or worse non-player characters will surrender as soon as they are in close combat range.

Fumble: The non-player group will run away immediately, as fast as they are able, dropping whatever they are carrying and forsaking any injured members of their group. If the players decide to run after them, the non-player characters will surrender as soon as they are in close combat range.

Healing

Bruises: Healed after a good full night of rest.

Bruises from Toy Weapons: These are healed immediately after the fight is ended. (Write a small "t" on your character sheet to tell these from regular bruises.)

Hurt or Grave: A hurt or grave character needs some form of medical attention. The healer (doctor, nurse or amateur) should roll for Healing with a TN of 11 if the character is hurt or 14 if he is grave. This roll encompasses all the Healing attempts in any given day and can only be tried once a day.

¹⁴Like in a cake throwing battle.

Fumble: The character's condition worsens. Hurt worsens to grave and grave worsens to dead (unless the character spends 1 chit).

Fail: Roll one die. On a roll of 1 the character's condition worsens, as if the healer had fumbled. On a roll of 2 to 4 the character remains hurt or grave. On a roll of 5 to 6, the character's condition improves. Grave worsens to hurt and hurt recovers to swell, but with five bruises that will heal normally after a good full night of rest.

Success: The character's condition improves. Grave improves to hurt and hurt recovers to swell, but with five bruises that will heal normally after a good full night of rest.

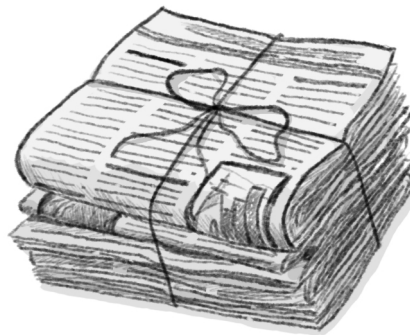
Exceptional Success: The character's condition improves. Grave recovers to swell, but with five bruises that will heal normally after a good full night of rest; hurt recovers immediately.

If the character receives no medical attention, roll one die. On a roll of 1 or 2 the character's condition worsens. On a roll of 3 to 5 the character remains hurt or grave. On a roll of 6, the character's condition improves. Grave improves to hurt and hurt recovers to swell, but with five bruises that will heal normally after a good full night of rest.

6. Rumors and follies

The streets of New Paris City are paved with rumors, mysteries and urban legends. Many of them are completely false. Yet, even the most uncanny could be true, or at least somewhat resemble the truth. Some are linked to a location like the ghost children who haunt the New Paris sewers, or a date such as the extraordinary opportunity for jobs at Christmas.

In Part 2, you will find a selection of rumors, most of them linked to places or dates. Adventures and campaigns can include their special rumors to add some variety to the game. Moreover, the game master and the other players can suggest other rumors at any time, even in the middle of a game.



Rating rumors

Rumors are rated with the standard grades from A to E, with A being the most plausible and E the least likely to be true. “Tomorrow it’s sales at Wesson & Wesson General Store” would probably be a B-class rumor, while “There is a goblin hidden at Wesson & Wesson General Store” would certainly be an E-class rumor. A game master can choose which of the rumors are true or not,

based on his preferences and the needs of the game, or he can roll three normal dice and consult the following table.

Rumors Table

(Roll three dice, add them)

Grade	Truth	Half-Truth	False
A	9+	5 to 8	4 -
B	12+	7 to 11	6 -
C	14+	9 to 13	8 -
D	16+	12 to 15	11 -
E	18	12 to 17	13 -

12 +, for example, means "12 or higher";

5 to 8 means "5, 6, 7 and 8";

4 means "4 or less".

Truth: The rumor is true exactly as told, with perhaps some minor difference that could be adapted to the adventure being played, and the previous actions of the players.

Half-Truth: At least one of the major elements of the story or prophecy is false. For example: let's suppose a rumor says "there is a ghost dog that attacks newsies on sight every night at 2 a.m. in some unnamed alley. A half-truth result could be interpreted that the dog is not a ghost, it does not attack newsies, or that it is a friendly ghost puppy.

False: The whole story is false, either because it never happened, it did happen but has ceased, or because the real events are so divergent from the truth they're of little consequence. For example: the goblin at Weson & Wesson General Store is nothing but a decorative statue.

New rumors

Both game masters and players can introduce new rumors at any time, even in the middle of a game. In the case of the game master, he chooses the grade of the rumor. Even if a player suggests a rumor, it would be the game master who assigns its grade. The game master can veto a rumor if it's just too wacky.

When to choose or roll for rumors? Unless the specific rules from an adventure tell you otherwise, the game master is free to choose the time to roll for rumors. You could roll for rumors when preparing the game, when the player characters first enter a location, when the players defeat some enemy or just when you want to add a little spice to the game.

You can also roll for rumors when you go to check a situation or event in the game world for which there is no specific rule. For example: suppose the characters are breaking and entering into some dusty cellar and you'd like to know if there are any cops nearby. You could treat the situation as the rumor; "There are a couple of policemen within hearing distance" and grade it with a D. After rolling an 11 on three dice you determine there is no immediate police trouble (or help) for the player characters¹.

¹There is no need to tell them, though!

7. Character advancement

Player characters advance (i.e., improve their scores) on some special days, the most important of which is their birthdays. It is one those days that the efforts of an adventuring campaign will pay off.

It's your birthday!

This is what you get

Before you start an adventure, the game master should (at the very least) tell the players the season in which the adventure begins. If a character's birthday falls in that season (that's right, season, not day), the character immediately reaps the following benefits¹:

- ☞ Roll one normal die, you get that many chits.
- ☞ One attribute point.
- ☞ One skill point, plus one skill point for every "won" adventure since your last birthday.
- ☞ Obviously, age is raised one year. Tap yourself on the back; you are a little older.

Attribute points (AP) are used exactly as they were used in creation rules, which are repeated here from Section 2.2.2.

With those attribute points you can buy dice for your character's attributes. Every weak die costs 1 AP, while a normal die costs two APs. You can also upgrade a weak die to a normal die for 1 AP. *Adult*

¹These benefits are, of course, received just once a year.

characters can have allocated up to six dice in any single attribute. However, these are all non-player characters played by the game master.² Every attribute must have at least one die allocated to it.

In case you are wondering, you can't buy swell or fool dice. Your character's *skills* can *upgrade* your normal dice to swell dice, or in some cases, *downgrade* your weak dice to fool dice. See Sections 1.2 and 3.2.1 for additional references.

School

Characters who don't attend a school of some sort regularly, cannot raise their Education attribute on their birthday.

Spending attribute points

1. Weak dice are worth 1 AP each.
2. You can upgrade a weak die to a normal die for 1 AP.
3. You can't buy swell or fool dice. Buy your dice and split them among your attributes.
4. Your character can't have more than four dice in any attribute.

Spending skill points

Each skill point entitles you to one of the following:

1. Upgrade a skill that you are *bad at* to *OK at*.
2. Upgrade a skill that you are *OK at* to *good at*.

²As normal dice are not twice as powerful as weak dice, read a 6 as if it were a 5. It is a good idea to buy weak dice until you have four dice in any single attribute. If you still need to improve that attribute upgrade those weak dice to normal dice.

Other effects of your birthday

Clothes: Your clothes no longer fit, as they are one size too short. If you keep them, you can still use them, with some mending, though their quality will drop one level. A becomes B, B becomes C, C becomes D, D becomes E and E just can't get any worse.

Other Equipment: It's not necessary to roll for other equipment; it's too time-consuming for such little effect. But if you have the time³, you can roll for any item your character has. On an odd result, the quality of that item will drop one level.

Turning 15: On your 15th birthday your character will no longer be considered a child. Revel in the glory of knowing that from now on you can have up to six dice in any attribute. A more unfortunate effect is that you can no longer stay at the Newsboy Lodge. You will have to look for a home or room to rent, so you should plan well in advance. Get an education and if possible, a good job, perhaps as a journalist. Surely you've learned a bit about what the public wants to read by now!

Turning 17: *Newsies & Bootblacks* is a game about boys and girls. Once you turn 17 your character becomes a non-player character and it can only be played by the game master as he sees fit. Let her or him go. Create another character and keep having fun.

Seasons

In *Newsies & Bootblacks* there is quite literally, an adventure every season. Once the adventure is over the characters return to their usual ordinary lives selling newspapers, cleaning boots, doing errands, dodging bullies, studying, having fun and in general, trying to live a swell life. Yet, even in those less glamorous times, there are some great days to remember. Each of those special days grant special benefits for the player character.

If those days happen while the characters are involved in an adventure session, the game master should grant the benefits suggested in their appropriate

³Or, the game master wants to keep the players busy while he's checking his notes.

sections as soon as it makes sense within the game⁴.

If those days fall between adventures, the game master should grant the benefits they provide before the start of the next game session.

Spring

April Fools' Day

April Fools' Day is not a festivity celebrated by any self-respecting gentleman in New Paris. Among kids however, it is a day of complete mayhem and fun, though a few could get as the saying goes, more than they bargained for.

Player characters who decide to participate in the festivities should choose their risk level and roll one normal die in the following table.

April Fools' Risk and Roll Table

Roll 1 nd ⁵	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
1	Lose 1 chit(9)	Lose 2 chits(9)	Lose 3 chits(9)
2	Find clothes (1)	Find a lead (4)	Find a contact (7)
3	Bedraggled (2)	Bruised (5)	Hurt (5)
4	Find \$1	Find \$2	Found! (6)
5	Luck swap (3)	Luck swap (3)	Robbed (8)
6	Earn 1 chit	Earn 2 chits	Earn 4 chits

1. Somehow, you ended up with a full clothes kit that some rich kid lost during all the action. He is too ashamed to look for it and so, you have acquired a B-grade clothes kit in your size.

⁴If the character has been kidnapped by a mad wizard on Christmas, they will probably not see any presents until they escape from the criminal.

⁵normal die

2. Somebody should have told you not to trust *new friends* on April Fool's Day. Unfortunately, you were too naive and you and your clothes are covered with a mass of eggs, paint and mud that will not be cleaned easily. Lower your clothes rank one grade⁶ and get a haircut.
3. Luck swap: Choose another *player character* at *random* and swap his chits with yours.
4. Somebody has told you something about a treasure. The game master should give you a hint about a secret treasure or an important element of the next adventure; but be aware that it could all be a good joke.
5. Hurt: Sometimes pranks go too far, and this is one of those instances. You have been hurt as per the *Fights and Chases* rules (see Section 6.7 "Damage"), and you are going to need some medical assistance.
6. Found: You found some special items or \$5; the game master chooses.
7. Find a contact: Your pranks have been so much fun that you have impressed somebody. Choose any neutral non-player character to be a good support to you. Warning: if the non-player character reveals to be a secret enemy he will just pretend to be your friend.
8. Robbed: You have lost all the money you didn't have in safe storage (either at the Lodge or a Bank).
9. You did something you would rather not remember and your self-trust has suffered.

Summer

July the 4th

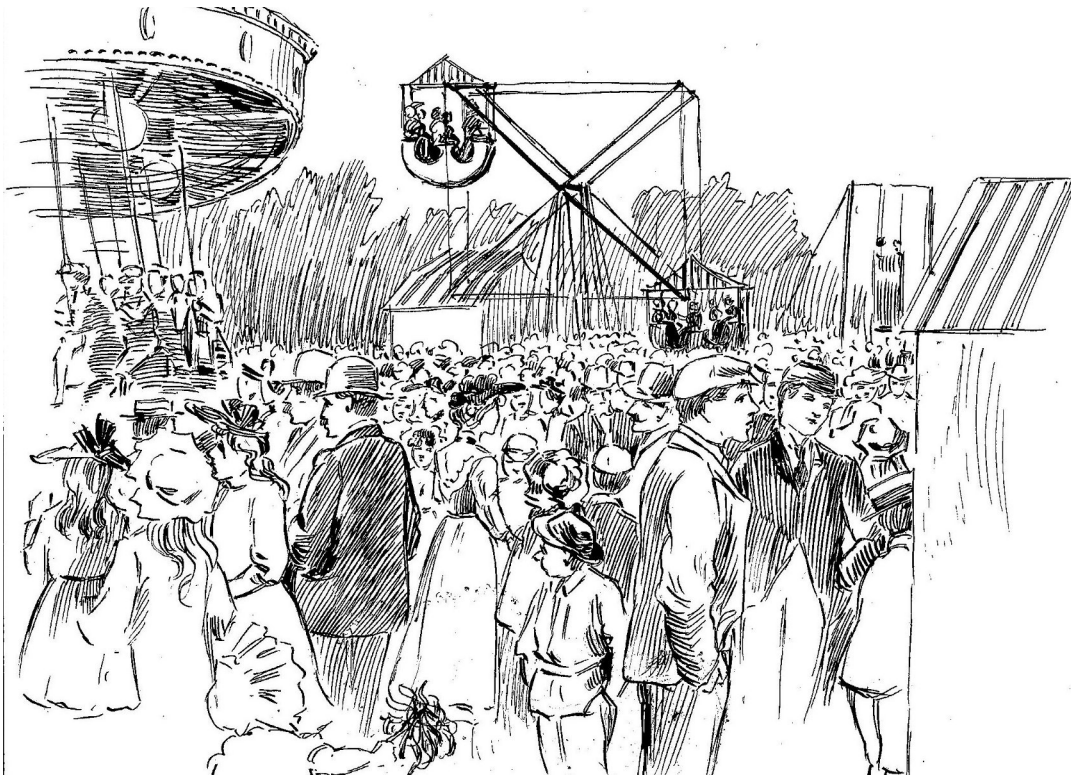
July the 4th is the only major summer festivity in New Paris. It is considered both a national and local event, as New Paris was able, like New Orleans in the south, to keep the British at bay. Many New Paris citizens dress up as *patriots* or *redcoats* and present pantomimes and re-enactments of the combat.

⁶A turns to B, B to C, C to D, D to E and E remains at E.

The “ragged pirates regatta” is the heyday of the festivities with hundreds of makeshift boats sailing – or rather, struggling to stay afloat – from New Harbor to Royal Island, to commemorate a frustrated assault of the *redcoats*. The traditional prize for the first group of children is a pushcart load of sausages, donated by the local butchers.

Benefits

☛ Roll one swell die, you get that many chits.



Fall

Halloween

Only children celebrate Halloween in New Paris. Even so, there are strange events happening on this date. If Halloween arrives while the characters are playing an adventure, game masters are entitled to re-roll once all rumors have failed checks of grades D and E. There are no special benefits on Halloween, though.

Rumors

- ☞ E: A team of recruiters from a school of wizardry in Scotland is looking for suitable candidates.
- ☞ C: A group of rich teenager pranksters is hiding in or near one of the cemeteries of New Paris, ready to wreak havoc on unsuspecting children.
- ☞ E: Ghosts can take an almost human form in the cemeteries.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is not a major festivity in New Paris, especially among the Royal Island gentry who consider it an “English thing”. However, the Newsboy Lodge holds a special dinner with a singing contest on the Plus Ultra⁷ park in West Gate that attracts donors and the general public.

Benefits

- ☞ One chit.
- ☞ Roll one weak die, you get that many chits if your character is *good at* Performance.

Winter**Christmas**

Christmas in New Paris is very special. Snow covers the streets. If it has not snowed before, it starts to snow on the dawn of December the 24th, and keeps snowing until the streets are covered in white. Yet, all that snow will not hinder the merriment of the people from New Paris who will no doubt, take to the streets to congratulate each other and, of course, to buy the *Christmas Special Edition* of their favorite newspaper as if their lives depended on it.

⁷Latin for “beyond”.

Each player character gets:

- ☞ Three free chits.
- ☞ One present from Santa⁸.
- ☞ Extra money from selling the *Christmas Special Edition*: \$1 + 6 swell dice in cents.
- ☞ Your character must spend at least 10% of his money in presents for friends; these can be other player characters.

Rumors

- ☞ E: The devil is chained this day. No crimes will be committed on Christmas Day.
- ☞ E: Santa is searching for a good child or children to:
 - do something very special, or even fantastic;
 - give him a magical present; or
 - to recruit a new “elf”.
- ☞ C: The New Paris Children’s Hospital is hiring “elves” to deliver presents to children who are hospitalized there. They pay 50 cents for just one evening of smiling. Good carol singers (those who are *good at Performance*) can be paid up to \$2. Those wearing D-grade clothes or worse, need not apply.
- ☞ B: The New Paris and New York Telegraph company is looking for messengers to work from December the 24th through to the 25th, paying 50 cents for each eight hours. Ownership of bicycles is not required, though the company will not be providing any.

New Year’s

The general merriment of this day is clouded by the many gangsters who take benefit of the crowds; pillaging and plundering the unsuspecting merrymakers.

⁸For example: oranges, candy, a cheap toy or musical instrument such as a harmonica or perhaps some clothing.

Benefits (Decide if your character spends New Year's night at the Lodge.)

- ☛ If your character spends the night at the Lodge, you earn 1 chit.
- ☛ If your character takes to the streets at night roll one die.
 - On a roll of 1 to 5 your character earns 4 chits.
 - On a roll of 6 your character is assaulted and robbed. You are hurt, as per the damage rules. Your clothes are downgraded to E and you lose all the money you didn't have in safe storage.

Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras is one of the second-largest celebrations of the New Paris calendar. From the grandest ballroom in Royal Island to the darkest slums of Decree, people dress in costumes, dance, play music, sing and play all kinds of pranks. It is common for friends to pretend to “*goblin-away*” (kidnap) the children of their friends and hold them in supposed confinement for a sleepover. Parentless children, such as the heroes of the game, are almost never “goblined”.

Each player character gets:

- ☛ One chit.
- ☛ Extra money from selling the *Mardi Gras Special Edition*: \$1 + 6 dice in cents.

Rumor

- ☛ E: Elves appear on this date to exchange their own children for humans and everybody 13 or younger is eligible.

8. Optional rules

This whole chapter is optional. The Game Master and the players should agree which of these, if any, they want to employ in their games. Generally speaking, they should not be used by novice players, but they can be introduced gradually as the players become more and more comfortable with the basic rules.

Good-for-nothings

There are heroes, and then there are cowards or people who are worthless in a fight. The game master may want to classify these as Good-for-nothings (GfNs).

Rules

1. Non-player characters are the *only* ones who can be classified as Good-for-nothings.
2. GfNs are defeated as soon as they are hit with a non-lethal, lethal or extremely lethal weapon. The game master should consider they are running away, have surrendered or are incapacitated, according to the situation.
3. In a non-serious fight, such as a cream cake battle or a game, GfNs are defeated as soon as they are hit; even if with a toy weapon.

Weather

In *Newsies & Bootblacks* we define weather in terms of how the characters feel its effects; not by Celsius or Fahrenheit degrees. There is no thermometer

in the Newsboy Lodge; most newsies don't understand degrees anyway. The weather can be hot, warm, cool, cold or frozen, as described below:

Hot: Usually good news for newsies, bootblacks and all kinds of peddlers. Temperatures in New Paris are almost never too hot and except for sweating, there is not much to worry about on most days. The sun is shining, the clouds are little more than a decoration in a perfectly blue sky, and kids have fun playing in and around the fountains. However, hot weather sometimes brings strong winds and or rain showers, which would pretty much ruin the day for selling. Sickness is more common during hot weather, so mind where you buy your food.

Warm: This is the best possible weather for selling any kind of wares on the streets. It could rain, which might spoil the days, but not very intensely.

Cool: Welcome to the most common day in New Paris. The temperature is tolerable, but the sky is overcast and rain is almost constant. Seniors get their coats and start complaining, though newsies can still handle it, even if barefoot and wearing a threadbare shirt. Fog could appear and mix with the smoke of chimneys, making it difficult to see the end of the street; beware of who could be lurking.

Cold: The climate becomes uncomfortable. It's not only the temperature itself, but the heavy rain, wind, and even snow that are often associated with this weather. These are the days that give newsies with D or E-grade clothes and especially those who are homeless, cause for concern. Selling will usually drop in the streets, though it is still possible to sell your wares in the cafeterias and public places.

Frozen: Extremely cold temperatures are exceptional in New Paris. Winter weather is often accompanied by heavy blizzards that pretty much paralyze the city. Sleeping outside during this kind of weather could be fatal.

The game master has considerable leeway to interpret these categories. How warm is warm? That's up to you. How constant is the rain? Again, use your good sense; ask yourself, "Would it be good for the game?", "Would it be good for the story?", "Would it be fair to the players?". Let your answers to questions like these guide your thoughts.

What about tornadoes, hurricanes and other truly exceptional events? New Paris is not completely devoid of these, but these situations could dominate the story so much they should only be introduced when the adventure requires it. The game master may choose to ignore the following table and assume the weather is warm in summer, cool in spring and fall, and cold in winter. However, if the game master wants to spice things up a bit he can either choose another weather condition, or roll with the following table before the adventure begins.

Initial Weather Table

Roll two normal dice, add the results and consult the column of the season in which the adventure takes place.

Dice (nd)	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
2	Frozen	Cold	Frozen	Frozen
3	Cold	Cool	Cold	Frozen
4	Cold	Cool	Cold	Frozen
5	Cool	Warm	Cold	Cold
6	Cool	Warm	Cold	Cold
7	Cool	Warm	Cool	Cold
8	Cool	Warm	Cool	Cold
9	Cool	Warm	Cool	Cool
10	Warm	Hot	Cool	Cool
11	Warm	Hot	Warm	Cool
12	Warm	Hot	Warm	Cool

For the following days, roll two normal dice. On a roll of 5 to 8 the weather does not change. For any other result, roll again using this table.

Poison

In *Newsies & Bootblacks* there are four types of poison: red or killing poison; blue or slumbering poison; green or paralyzing poison and white or slaving poison.

Red poison

Red poison is the most dangerous as it can easily kill a player character, especially if he's already been injured. The victim should test his Health attribute against a TN of 12¹.

- ☛ On a spectacular success: No effect.
- ☛ On a success: The character worsens one rank in the damage scale.
- ☛ On a failure: The character's condition is downgraded to grave if he was either swell or hurt. If he was previously in grave condition, he dies immediately.
- ☛ On a fumble: The character dies immediately, except if he spends one chit, as usual.
- ☛ You can use 1 or more chits to avoid this damage, as if you had been hurt in a fight.

Blue poison

Blue poison is the favorite of kidnappers as it makes the victim fall into a deep slumber and it's generally safe. Spies or criminals who want to avoid the complications of a murder often resort to this poison to "sleep" a bank guard or a newsboy who was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The victim should test his Health attribute against a TN of 13².

- ☛ On a spectacular success: No effect.

¹The game master can change this target number.

²The game master can change this target number.

- ☞ On a success: The character needs all his willpower to remain awake. He is under a malus of -3 for all his attribute and skill checks for the next hour. This malus does not accumulate to the consequence of bruises or a hurt or grave condition, as the blue poison acts as a painkiller.
- ☞ On a failure: The character falls asleep immediately, not waking until after 1 nd hours.
- ☞ On a fumble: The character falls asleep immediately. After an hour or so, the victim's respiration will become irregular and it will be evident that he needs medical attention. If the victim is not taken to hospital in 24 hours, he will never wake up.

Green poison

This poison is almost always used by certain living monsters and such animals as the mythical giant spider that lives in the sewers under Point South³.

The victim should test his Health attribute against a TN of 14⁴.

- ☞ On a spectacular success: No effect.
- ☞ On a success: The character has trouble coordinating his movements; he is under a malus of -5 for his Agility and Agility-related skills for one hour.
- ☞ On a failure: The character falls to the ground at once, unable to move any muscle in his neck for one full day. He retains the use of his senses and is still able to speak.
- ☞ On a fumble: The character dies, at once.

White poison

This poison is a myth of dime novels; the game master *may* treat its existence as a D or E-class rumor.

The victim should test his Health attribute against a TN of 11⁵.

³See page 166.

⁴The game master can change this target number

⁵The game master can change this target number.

- ☞ On a spectacular success: No effect.
- ☞ On a success: The afflicted character feels pain if he disobeys any command. For each act of disobedience he's harmed as if he had suffered one - 1 bruise. The effect wears off in one hour.
- ☞ On a failure: The afflicted character feels pain if he disobeys any command. For each act of disobedience he's harmed as if he had suffered one - 1 bruise. The effect wears off in one day.
- ☞ On a fumble: The character becomes a puppet and will not take any conscious action unless commanded to do so. If commanded, the character will do anything unless they understand it involves killing or harming somebody, even themselves. The effect wears off in one day.

Selling

Newsies & Bootblacks is not a game about selling newspapers, it's a game about adventure. You might assume the player characters make their daily sales, save a bit of money, pay their expenses and waste the remainder on candy or a new baseball. However, if the adventure requires it, or they are almost bankrupt, the game master might want to investigate their sales records.

Rules

1. Every character should check their Sweet Talk skill once for each hour devoted to selling.
2. The TN is 8 + the newspaper unit price in cents⁶.
3. Add or subtract the following modifiers to the dice roll.
 - a) Area: +2 if selling in a good area for that particular newspaper; - 2 if the paper sells poorly in that area.
 - b) Weather: +2 hot, - 2 cold, - 4 frozen.
 - c) Clothes: +2 A-grade, + 1 B-grade, - 1 D-grade, - 2 E-grade.⁷

⁶See Section 12 on page 142.

⁷Double the penalty if selling a fancy newspaper.

- d) *Extra edition*: + 1
- e) Time of day: + 1 from 7 to 9 a.m., - 1 from 12 a.m. onwards, + 1 from 3 to 4 p.m. (evening edition), - 12 for yesterday's edition.

Results

- ☛ On a fumble, the player character does not sell a single newspaper.
- ☛ On a failure, the player character sells 1 nd worth of newspapers.
- ☛ On a success, the player character sells 3 sd⁸ + 6 newspapers.
- ☛ On a spectacular success, the player character sells 4 sd⁹ + 12 newspapers.

Wages

If the player character receives any wages for his job, let him roll three dice every week, with the result being the number of cents he is able to save after he has been paid. Characters younger than 12 should roll weak dice, 12 and 13 years old roll normal dice, while those 14 and older should roll swell dice.

Earnings

Newsboys weekly earnings can be similarly determined by doing a Sweet Talk test and then subtract 8 to the total, the result, tripled, being the number of cents he or she has been able to save (or lost) that week.

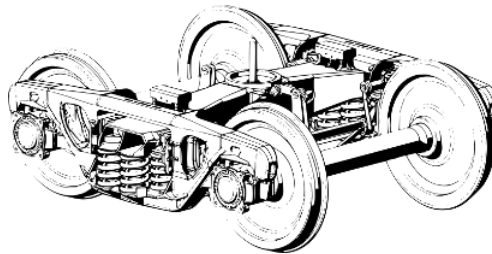
For example: Fred "Wardrobe" is OK at Sweet Talk, yet he only has 2 wd assigned to his Charisma Attribute. He rolls two weak dice, getting both 3's. That means he has come short of 6 cents this week ($3 + 3 - 8 = 6 - 8 = -2$ which is then tripled $-2 \times 3 = -6$).

⁸Swell dice, ignore any result lower than 3.

⁹Swell dice, ignore any result lower than 3.

Optional skills

Riding Horses (AGI), Riding Bicycles(AGI): Horses, mules and ponies are a common method of transportation, yet it is unlikely that a newsboy or boot-black would ever own, much less keep a horse of his own. Horses and other mounts require stable space, attention and grain. However, you may want to separate this from Riding Bicycles if the game moves to the great outdoors.



Inventions (EDU): Add this skill to the set if you want to add a bit of steampunk to the game. This skill is powerful enough to need very special rules.

1. Everybody begins being *bad at* Inventions. So 1 AP will rise that to being *OK at* Inventions; 2 AP will be needed to be *good at* Inventions.
2. Nobody can be *good at* or *OK at* Inventions unless he isn't *good at* Academics.
3. To make a new invention you need a small room for your laboratory, some materials and *at least* one week of concentrated work for a simple invention. These rules are very generous!
4. Every *attempt* to make a new invention costs 1 fd of chits, without regard for the outcome.
5. The game master should assign a TN of 13 for the finished prototype of a very simple invention. On a spectacular success the prototype is of D-quality; on a success the prototype is of E-quality and quite risky to use. So, don't take your Josephine to your flying machine unless it has undergone extensive trials.

6. Characters who are *OK at* or *good at* either Inventions or Mechanics, can *help*. But *only* those who are *good at* Inventions can start a new invention.
7. New technologies must be invented separately because a new invention can only incorporate one new technology at a time. If you desperately need a deep diving submarine with a ray gun, you'll need to invent your submarine and your ray gun separately.

Sickness

In *Newsies* & *Bootblacks* there are five classes of sickness, rated from A to E according to the condition of the character who suffers from them.

Not so well: A-grade (no hospitalization required)

Effects

- ☛ Weakness - 1 malus.
- ☛ Sneezing and coughing.
- ☛ May use the restroom often.

Healing

- ☛ Heals in one day without need for hospitalization or rolling for Health.
- ☛ If the patient spends time outside without proper clothing (C-grade or worse) in cold or freezing weather, roll to check for Health with a TN of at least 10. One fumble and your condition worsens; you are downgraded to a B-grade sickness. On a failure your condition isn't modified.

A bit sick: B-grade

Effects

- ☛ Weakness - 2 malus.

- ☞ Coughing, sweating and low fever.
- ☞ May use the restroom very often.

Healing

- ☞ Heals in one week, without need for hospitalization or rolling for Health.
- ☞ If the patient spends time outside without proper clothing (C-grade or worse) in cold or freezing weather, check for Health with a TN of at least 10. One fumble and your condition worsens; you are downgraded to a C-grade sickness. On a failure your condition isn't modified.

Sick: C-grade**Effects**

- ☞ Coughing, sweating, moderate fever and pain.
- ☞ May use the restroom very often.
- ☞ The patient should stay in bed.
- ☞ Weakness - 3 malus.

Healing

- ☞ Lasts one week.
- ☞ After one week of sickness, check for Health (or the doctor's Healing skill) against a TN of at least 12 (14 if the patient has spent significant time out of bed). One fumble and your condition worsens; you are downgraded to a D-grade sickness. On a failure your condition isn't modified, and on a success your condition improves to a B-grade sickness. On a spectacular success you are fully healed.

Really sick: D-grade**Effects**

- ☞ Coughing, sweating, high fever and pain.
- ☞ May use the restroom very often.
- ☞ The patient should stay in bed.
- ☞ Fatigue - 5 malus.
- ☞ Can walk with help for a short distance.

Healing

- ☞ Lasts one week.
- ☞ After one week of sickness, check for Health (or the doctor's Healing skill) against a TN of at least 13 (15 if the patient has spent significant time out of bed). One fumble and your condition worsens; you die (unless you spend a chit). On a failure your condition isn't modified, and on a success your condition improves to a C-grade sickness. On a spectacular success your condition improves to an A-grade sickness.

Gravely sick: E-grade**Effects**

- ☞ Coughing, sweating, high fever and pain.
- ☞ The patient must stay in bed.
- ☞ Fatigue - 7 malus.
- ☞ Cannot walk or attempt any physical action at all.

Healing

- ☛ Lasts two weeks.
- ☛ After two weeks of sickness, check for Health (or the doctor's Healing skill) against a TN of at least 13 (15 if the patient has spent significant time out of bed). One fumble and your condition worsens; you die (unless you spend a chit). On a failure your condition isn't modified, and on a success your condition improves to a D-grade sickness. On a spectacular success your condition improves to a C-grade sickness.

Medication

Medication of this era could be worse than the sickness itself, having been more often directed to alleviate the symptoms rather than assist with healing. Sometimes all you need is to alleviate the symptoms until the body can heal itself. So, they can still be beneficial.

- ☛ Proper use of medication adds +2 to Health and Healing rolls.
- ☛ Only a doctor or nurse (non-player character) can designate the appropriate medication for a particular sickness. If not prescribed by a doctor or nurse, roll one fool die; the result being the malus you add to the roll.

For example: some well-meaning friend notices you are ill and gives you a few pills she'd kept from the last time she was sick. Normally they would add 2 to your Health roll, but as this medication has not been prescribed by a doctor, you have to roll a fool die. You roll a 3. So, you still add your +2 bonus, but you have to subtract -3 malus for a total of -1. Better see a doctor next time.

- ☛ Rare sickness requires rare medication. The game master should assume every sickness is of the common kind (even if A-grade) except when the story requires a rare sickness.

Magic

Magic is not supposed to exist in the world of *Newsies & Bootblacks*. Respectable persons consider it nothing but superstitions and fairy tales, and those who speak about magic, mesmerism or what have you are nothing but obscurantists who impede human progress. The game master might consider the mere existence of magic as a D to E-class rumor. However, its effects are important enough not to leave this decision to a dice roll. One good compromise could be to consider magic as a mere fantasy unless the adventure played includes it.

Player characters should not be allowed to use magic except in very specific circumstances directly related to an adventure. That limitation should be enforced seamlessly to not look arbitrary and unfair. For example, the game master could allow players a spell to fight off vampires on a new moon. As vampires do not appear in normal life, this spell could only be used in adventures. Alternatively, the spell could demand such a hefty price, that the player characters would only use it in extreme circumstances.

Types of magic

Powers can either be labelled as Blessings or Curses. Blessings are ordained by God (or some good-natured source) while Curses are the province of evil. Generally speaking, only saintly characters (player or non-player) can cast Blessings. Curses, on the other hand, are offered by evil to anybody it woos, often as an attempt to snare them into leading them away from God (or the good source).

Powers (both Blessings and Curses) can be either subtle, normal or powerful. Subtle powers are those that produce effects that could have a non-magical source.

Elements of magic

Magic in *Newsies & Bootblacks* is described in terms of effects, limitations, skill and price.

Effects

This refers to the desired outcome of the powers and can be anything the game master can imagine.

Limitations to powers

In *Newsies & Bootblacks*, all powers suffer limitations of both time and place. Most powers can only be used in the 13 days surrounding Halloween (Curses) or Christmas (Blessings) and/or in specific locations such as a haunted house or a forest. Powers should be tailored to specific characters and the story, but every game master is free to create new powers and limitations, as long as it provides a fair experience to the players.

Some powers can only be cast a certain number of times per day, week, month or season, even if the magic user can cast spells more often; see the following subsection..

Limitations to magic users

A magic user can only cast a certain number of spells per day, week, month or season. The precise number and rate is for the game master to decide. Generally speaking, however, an apprentice magic user should not be allowed to cast more than three curses per week, while a veteran magic user should be able to cast up to six a day.

No magic user should be allowed to cast more than 13 spells a day.

Magic Skill

Magic is a skill linked to the Education attribute. All characters are *bad at* Magic, and hence, utterly unable to cast any Blessings or Curses, except when clearly determined otherwise by the text of an adventure or the decision of the game master. Player characters cannot learn Magic except by direct permission of the game master, normally within an adventure. Player Characters who learn Magic may only employ blessings and may never use or learn any curses at all, leave them for the bad guys.

To cast a subtle spell demands a TN of 13. Normal spells require a TN of 15. A powerful spell requires a TN of 17. In any case, characters who are *bad at Magic cannot* attempt to cast any magic spell at all.



Price

Casting curses in *Newsies & Bootblacks* is a disruption of the natural power and considered evil. Therefore, nature demands a price on magic users. Price is always unknown to the magic user until he suffers it. This price is often deferred in time, but sooner or later, in a time unknown to the magic user, it shall have to be paid. The table below is just an example. Game masters are encouraged to build their own table.

Demons and such are paying with an eternity of suffering and hence, do not have to pay any special price for casting powers.

- ☛ Blessings do not come with a price, but the magic user must spend 1 chit for employing each one. Non-player characters may have chits assigned for this purpose only.

Curse Table

Roll 2 nd	Subtle	Normal	Powerful	Time Deferred
2 or less	Scared	Unlucky, 1 week	Mole on nose -1 to CHA	4 nd months
3	Lose something	Mole on nose -1 to CHA	Roll twice on normal column	2 nd months
4	Unlucky, 1 week	Roll twice on subtle column	Sick (Section 9.6.4)	1 nd week
5	Mole on nose -1 to CHA	Slumber	Fire	1 nd day
6	1 year older	6 years older	Loss of memory	1 nd hour
7	Sick (Section 9.6.2)	Sick (Section 9.6.3)	Slumber	half an hour
8	Sick (Section 9.6.3)	Sick (Section 9.6.4)	6 years older	3 nd minutes
9	Slumber	Loss of memory	Monster	2 nd minutes
10	Loss of memory	Monster	36 years older	1 nd minute
11	Monster	6 years older	Dead	1 minute
12 or more	1 year older	Dead	Fate worse than death	None

☞ Roll two dice. Add 3 to the dice roll if a fumble, subtract 3 if a spectacular success.

☞ “nd” refers to normal dice

Explanations

☞ Scared: Paralyzed by fear the user can’t act until the next turn.

☞ Lose something: The game master chooses one item for the character to lose.

☞ Unlucky: Re-roll all dice that favor the magic user.

☞ One year older: Adjust age. The game master can adjust the magic user stats.

☞ Sick: Follow the rules referenced in brackets.

☞ Slumber: The character falls into a deep slumber, to awake only 1 nd year later, or if kissed by someone of pure heart.

- ☞ Loss of memory: The magic user becomes *bad at* a randomly chosen skill.
- ☞ Monster: A monster appears bent to kill the user.
- ☞ Death: The magic user is dead forever.
- ☞ Fate worse than death: You would not want me to tell you about that, would you?
- ☞ Remember that Blessings are granted by God (or angels, or the Mystery) and hence do not come with a price, except if the blessing is used to commit an evil action.

The following Curses and Blessing lists are merely examples. The game master may choose to use any or none of these and/or include any from his own imagination.

Some Curses

These have been taken from the primer and modified to fit these rules.

1. Avarice. (Normal) Gold nuggets will fall from the ceiling. Those who fail to avoid them (Dodge TN of 9) will suffer bruises for a -1 malus. This malus will not heal until after a good night of rest. This curse can be placed three times per day.
2. Blindness. (Normal) The victim can't see for one turn. Actions that are dependent on sight will be at -10.
3. Despair. (Subtle) The victim will begin to feel incredibly sad, bursting into tears (lose 1 nd chit points).
4. Fear. (Subtle) The victim is engulfed by terror. All actions that require bravery will be at -3.
5. Forsaken. (Powerful) The victim is forgotten by everybody who is not with him at the time of the curse. The magic user can only place this curse once per season; though it will remain for life unless they are defeated.

6. Gates to hell. (Powerful) A door will open in the middle of the room. Through it, the players will be able to see hell and its thousands of demons. The demons can't enter to earth, but if anybody steps into this spot willingly or unwillingly, there's no way back.
7. Nettle. (Normal) The room will be *instantly* covered with nettles, blocking the way. The nettles will wither and die within three turns. This curse can be placed three times per day.
8. Rag doll. (Powerful) The afflicted character is paralyzed from the neck down. This curse lasts until somebody does something kind for the afflicted person. The witch can only use this curse once per season.
9. Sick. (Normal) The victim will burst out in a sudden fever, and suffer pain and dizziness. All his actions are at -5.
10. Sloth. (Subtle) The afflicted player will fall into a slumber, not being able to act.
11. Triumph of the will. (Powerful) The victim will freeze in place until somebody commands him to do something. He'll then proceed to complete the task assigned to the best of his ability.

Some Blessings

1. Bless. The blessed player character receives 1 fd worth of chits. The blessed player character cannot be the magic user.
2. Lay-of-hands. The blessed character is healed from any sickness, poison or harm, recovering fully and instantly.
3. Message. The magic user may send any message to anybody in the world, which they will experience in their dreams.
4. Counsel. This blessing can only be cast on non-player characters who are not the main antagonists of the story. The magic user must be able to communicate with the affected character by any means. This cannot be used in a fight. The magic user must roll for Charisma, with a TN of 9 for a young pickpocket, or 18 for a hardened criminal. If the magic user

succeeds, the affected character would decide to stop doing wrong, while on a spectacular success the affected character decides to become a saint.

5. Protection. During one turn nothing bad can happen to the magic user or any of his friends.

Frauds

Frauds regarding the supernatural should be at least as common as real blessings or curses in a game of *Newsies & Bootblacks*.

Crimes, justice and punishment

Crimes

I do not expect any hero to commit a crime. Yet it is not impossible for them to go falsely accused. In most games this chapter will never be implemented, so feel free to skim through it, paying closer attention to E crimes; you never know when you might go overboard in a prank. While New Paris Criminal Law is as complex as any of the other states, *Newsies & Bootblacks* simplifies the crimes in the usual five grades from A to E. Each grade has a corresponding level of sentence.

E-grade crimes are the only misdemeanors you can get away with. The consequences could be no greater than a talk from the cop¹⁰ or having to fix the mess you made. E-grade crimes involve using offensive words in a polite setting, spitting, breaking a window while playing baseball, shortchanging someone, playing too rough, etc. However, don't get too happy committing E-grade crimes; you'll lose friends fast, people will end up thinking you are better to be left alone. The cops could become angry enough to judge you as if you have committed a D-grade crime. The beat cop judges E-grade crimes on the spot. There's no procedure for trial; just make sure you answer his questions.

¹⁰You lose 1 chit for the stress.

D-grade crimes are both petty and non-violent. Examples include shoplifting, pickpocketing a few cents, minor scams and insulting an agent of law, which does include cops. A newsboy under arrest would be escorted, most often unshackled, to the Precinct Constabulary House Jail. After a summary trial, the culprit would be sentenced to pay a small fine of up to \$5, spend one to 15 days in jail or perform up to 30 days of reformation work, which usually means cleaning the sewers or some other dirty job. The game master can get creative with this. Repeat offenders would be sent to a reform school for an indefinite, often short period of time.

C-grade crimes are either petty and violent, or non-violent and not so petty. In most cases, a boy condemned for such a crime would be sent to a reform school for at least one full season and up to four years. Through exceptional behavior while on the program, the sentence may be shortened and the newsie put on parole after serving at least the first quarter of the sentence.

B and A-grade crimes are actions that demand a serious response by the authorities, with the culprit spending many years in prison or worse. However, it is highly against the spirit of the game for a player character to commit those actions.

Police forces

New Paris City has two major arms of defense against crime and misdemeanor. First, is the New Paris Constabulary, a professional police force that is largely visible in Royal Island, both harbors, West Gate and Concordia and almost completely absent from Decree and sparse in the Outer and Inner Expanses. Its methods are primitive at best, with only a small number of detectives trained in methods of investigation. These are only available for the most important crimes. However, the vast majority of the Constabulary Officers are honest and fair enough to recognize when they are making a mistake.

Each precinct offers a Constabulary House complete with sleeping facilities for the officers, jail and a small hearing room for short trials of minor crimes.¹¹

¹¹D or rarely E-grade crimes.

The second arm of defense in New Paris City is the Night Watch, a volunteer police force, largely present in the Expanses and Concordia. Its members are mostly volunteers, some of which are retirees from the Constabulary or any branch of the armed forces. Their members can legally arrest but only as an immediate measure, taking the suspect right away to the Constabulary or a local court. The Night Watchers are much more likely to use their guns in a stressful situation, but again, most of them are honest and upright citizens trying to do a job for which they are not always qualified for or fit to carry out.

Punishment

The reform schools

As the New Paris main response to juvenile crime, the reform schools combine strict discipline, humiliation, token schooling and long hours of labor to try and turn “delinquents, vagrants, beggars, ruffians and pickpockets into honest citizens”. Recreation is limited to one hour on work days and Sunday evenings, and is often limited to an empty playground surrounded by high walls and armed guards. Material conditions, however, are generally acceptable, as the reform schools are not older than 10 years.

Children convicted for C-grade crimes are eligible for parole on the last day of each month. Children convicted for D-grade crimes can be freed at any time by the reform school principal.

Alternatives

First offenders of C or D-grade crimes who aren’t considered hardened enough, can be sent to some strict boarding school¹² or placed under the authority of a guardian which usually ends up enforcing some form of indentured servitude. Exceptions include Professor Regenstein, a soft-hearted and wealthy philosopher, and Rachel Borowitz a mystery writer, and some say¹³, supernatural detective.

This placement lasts for one season, though in a few cases it can turn into fostering.

¹²If their parents can allow its fees

¹³D-class rumor

Part II.

The World

9. The world and New Paris City

The world of *Newsies and Bootblacks*, a role-playing game, is in many regards, identical to that of the real Earth on the turn of the XIX to the XXth century. The game master can start his game in any year from 1890 to 1910, not bothering with exact dates. There are some differences, the more obvious being geography: the state and city of New Paris, located on the East Coast, somewhere south of New York and north of New Jersey. Of course that means the geography of the American East Coast is slightly changed to make space for it.

A second difference is that the American Civil War was more bloody than historically known, which had a devastating impact on American political thought. That has led to the rise of two new parties: the Centralist Party who desires to put an end to the states and reinforce the powers of the president, and the Utopist Party who is displacing the Socialists as the leaders of a revolution. Meanwhile, the Republican and Democrat Parties hold the upper hand in the elections, though that could change at the first economic recession.

Newsies & Bootblacks uses the real world as inspiration and a framework on which to weave adventures, not as a defined setting. Therefore, the game master is free to change both the geography and the history of the world as he or she sees fit. That said, it is recommended to retouch history rather than making a complete overhaul. In other words, add islands and some minor eastern European kingdom, or make Napoleon win the Battle of Waterloo. But think twice before adding continents or an eternal Roman Empire.



History

In which year are we?

We call the year in which the player characters begin their adventures as the first year. If the campaign continues long enough the following years would be called, in succession, second, third, fourth and so on. However, the game master if he so chooses, can use any year from 1890 to 1910, just before World War 1.

I feel there is no need to turn this game into a history book. These days the Internet is loaded with information and reference materials. A search for “Victorian”, “Edwardian” or “Belle Époque” should give you more than enough information to inspire any game.

History as rumors

I suggest treating history as a rumor. You may assume that any unchallenged, widely known fact of history is, for the purposes of this game, an A-class rumor. The more obscure, less likely and less known a fact of history is, the lower its grade.

For example: The name of the President of the United States of America at any given date would be an A-class rumor. The fact that Empress Sisi of Austria did love her husband, the emperor, could be treated as a B or C-class rumor. Pondering which nation was really the first to invent the submarine (or most inventions) could be treated as a C-class rumor, for these were widely debated issues. Whether or not the British used pork fat in their ammunition could be treated as a D-class rumor.

The fun lies in the idea that any player can ask to challenge a fact from the history of the real world as if it were a rumor; but only the first time it's introduced¹.

¹So, if you have already determined that the Wright brothers did invent their planes, you cannot later challenge that fact in case you'd like your character to be the inventor.

10. The Newsboy Lodge

Welcome to the Lodge

Somewhere in the Inner Expanses, near Newspaper's Row, you will find the Newsboy Lodge. This is where most newsies who live on their own sleep, eat and study. There are many reasons to go there in a newsboy's own words. . .

First, it is cheap because the New Paris Society for Children (NPSC) pays most expenses. They are a group of kind old ladies and a few young men with birds in their heads. But don't worry, you won't see them very often. Yeah, you still have to pay, but it's much cheaper than anywhere else, and you get a clean bed to sleep in.

Second, there are rules. Yeah rules. If somebody steals from you, is a bully or gets nasty, they will be asked to leave. The wardens and the rest of us newsies will see to that. Sure, rules can get stupid at times, but it's better than waking up to see somebody snatching away your boots.

Third, if you pay a bit more, you can have dinner and breakfast. Lunch? You care for that all by yourself. It won't taste like your mom's but that's OK. Well, you won't really know how well it tastes. After a honest morning, you'll just gulp it down.

Fourth, there is a school. And you only have to attend if you want to. But it's better if you do because you'll get an education and be able to find a job or work at a trade. You will have to bring your own pencils and other supplies, but if you ask nicely, they'll let you borrow supplies. You have to pay for the teachers.

Fifth, you get a locker so you can keep your important stuff safe. It ain't a warehouse, so be smart with what you keep. They'll also keep

your money, but you don't want to put it in your locker; it's not like it's a safe, you know. Speak with the clerk and he'll note it down in a book and put it in a safe or take it to the bank. When you want your money, just go to the office and sign a paper; it's that simple. The clerk does not ask any questions, most times.

Sixth, what better place to get along with many other newsies who can help you?



Prices at the Newsboy Lodge per week

♥ Stay (bed & breakfast) – D

- ☛ Stay (full board) – C
- ☛ Dinner only – D
- ☛ School – D
- ☛ Locker – E (free for residents)
- ☛ Money deposit (free, residents only)
- ☛ Loans. The Newsboy Lodge can loan small quantities of money to the residents without interest.

What's in the Lodge?

In most circumstances, there is not much reason to describe the Newsboy Lodge in detail, as it is a place of rest and a meeting place, not much unlike an inn from the fantasy literature and games. The game master has full liberty to tailor the Lodge to the needs of his campaign. However, there are a few guidelines that the author of this game considers reasonable to keep the flavor of the setting.

Minimum rooms

At least every Newsboy Lodge should have:

Dorms. At least one room per gender filled with double beds and little privacy. Usually there would be no other furniture with the possible exception of some shared wardrobes or personal lockers.

A kitchen. Completely forbidden to the users, this should be a fairly large kitchen with all the means to cater for the residents and other children (newsboys or not) who come to dine. Breakfast is served to residents only. Lunch is provided just for the sick.

A common room. The common room can be large, encompassing a full level of the Lodge or a number of smaller common rooms. These rooms would be divided by activities, gender or age, according to the need of the adventure

the game master is foreseeing¹. In any case, it should contain a library, some comfortable but old armchairs and sofas, a chimney, a pool and tables on which to play games or read.

A dining room. A large room with tables, chairs and a few cabinets for the cutlery and saucers. It should be large enough to accommodate all residents and a few more in no more than two shifts.

Two bedrooms. These are for the wardens and one shared bedroom for the janitors and other live-in workers, segregated by gender.

An office. This is for administrative purposes. It should have a small safe where newsboys can deposit their money. This is taken daily to a common bank account, reserving a small fraction to pay for minor expenses and to cater to the demands of the residents.

A school room. This area is equipped with cabinets and lockers so the newsboys can store their school stuff safely.

Bath and restroom. At least one of each category, obviously of the community kind, plus two staff toilets.

Infirmery. With one bed for every 20 residents or so, plus a small room for the nurse in case she or he has to stay at night.

Lodge personnel

The Newsboy Lodge is directed by a commission of trustees but these only visit the Lodge once per season. They make sure that the money invested by the New Paris Society for Children is well spent. At the head of the Lodge is the Warden who oversees other workers, a clerk or clerks (sometimes residents) help him with the paperwork. A janitor helps to maintain the premises and do a host of manual chores. There are at least three “sisters”, one of whom lives in the premises. While the residents are largely independent, the sisters provide some counseling, teach daily life skills and ensure rules are respected. The kitchen is staffed by two professional cooks who are assisted by four or five

¹Or his wishes.

residents. Teachers and other volunteers help in the various programs of the Lodge.

The Lodge Timetable

Again, a mere suggestion, though I hope this timetable can be useful to game masters.

Time	Weekdays	Sundays
4:00	Wake up, hygiene	.
4:30	Breakfast	7:00 Wake up, hygiene
6:30	Lodge closed	8:00 Breakfast
13:00	Lodge open - school	Lunch
16:00	School or A.L. ² .	Cleaning
17:00	School or free time	Recreation
19:00	Dinner	Dinner
21:00	Lights out	Lights out

As you can see, the residents wake up quite early so they can buy newspapers early. Most newsies eat their breakfast as fast as possible and run to ensure themselves the best selling spots. In any case, all healthy residents must leave the Lodge³ by half past six, so the Lodge can be cleaned and the wardens can finish their administrative duties. Children seeking admission can ask at any time, day or night.

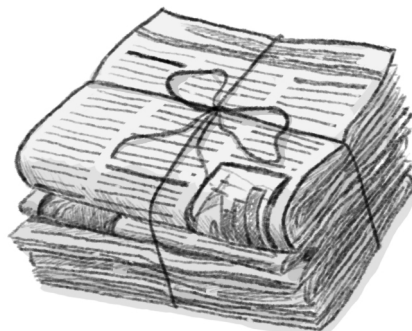
At one o'clock the Lodge opens again, but only for those who are paying for the midday lesson, which is roughly the equivalent of first to third grade. More advanced lessons are given during the evening. Both residents and non-residents are welcome in the school, provided they pay their dues.

The Lodge is fully open again at four o'clock, with the residents being able to attend school or use the common room for recreation, socialization or even doing their homework; dorms are out-of-bounds until eight o'clock.

Right after dinner one of the wardens shares a daily tip, story or message, reminds the residents of any rules they aren't following, gives a short good-night lecture or shares a story.

³The Lodge remains open under special circumstances, such as especially harsh weather.

On Sundays, the Lodge is never closed. There's always some common recreation offered at five o'clock, which usually involves some form of comic play and music.



11. The Newsboy Code

Every human organization has some rules which its members are supposed to follow. Newsies are a class or a group of reference, more than a group of belonging. In other words, newsies do not consider each and every newsboy or newsgirl their family, but feel somehow linked to them. So, in truth there is no Newsboy Code; there are many small bands of newsies and each band has its own code. In most cases, but for a pack or two of newsgirls, the code is more assumed than written or even spoken. Rather than being a law, the code expresses what other newsies of your same pack are expecting from you, and what you can expect from them. Players are heartily welcomed to create their own Newsies Code. However, speaking in general terms, most groups use a code similar to the following seven rules:

1. You care for each other.

That's fundamental. If you don't care for us why should we care for you? Can you live on your own? You don't need no help? You feel better if nobody is telling you anything? Then go with nobody and leave us alone. If you care for us, we'll care for you. We'll bring you to the doctor when you are sick and buy you medicine if we can spare the money. If you get into trouble we'll sort it out. And you'll do the same for us.

2. You don't get anybody in trouble.

If a cops asks about somebody and they have not killed somebody, kidnapped an old lady or bullied somebody smaller than they are, or something nasty like that, you don't go tellin'. Nor do you go and tell any lies or jokes about anybody, 'specially if they've been in the pens¹ before. Somebody could hear and he'd be

¹Reform school.

in trouble. And you too, we'll see to that.

3. You ain't no slacker.

We are all workin' hard to sell our papers. If you get lucky and sell yours early, you help those who aren't so lucky and they will help you another day. If you are too good for us, then you can just leave us alone. If you wake up too late or just care about sellin', or can live without butter, that's your choice. We believe it's tough being poor and the sooner we get rich, the better.

4. You ain't no coward. And if you ain't brave, you fake it.

We don't mind people peeing in their pants. We'll, by Jingo, laugh at it, but we don't mean anything wrong; it's just too funny. If you run away when the rest of us are in big trouble, then you'd better not come back. We could forgive you if it's something very, very scary... or not.

5. You care for toddlers and old people.

If you see a small kid cryin' all alone and there's nobody around helpin', you go and fix it yourself. You don't want a wee one endin' up like us, do you? Tell us and we'll all help him find his parents or find him a place so he doesn't have to sleep in the "pet"²; remember that? If you don't care about the kid, go to the next corner, turn west and keep walkin' till you get to California and then keep swimming until you see China.

Don't make fun of old people; it ain't funny at all. If you are sittin' in the pet³ and an old lady comes in, you give her your seat.

6. You keep yourself clean and tidy.

How clean? Boy, you don't need to rub your pants with a cotton ball to show us, but please, do not smell. And don't do something smelly, specially not when you're with a client; you'd give us all a bad name. And I don't care if you called us a girl or anything like that; we want no pigs around here.

²An underground train station.

³The New Paris Elevated Train Company (NPET).

7. You don't do no crimes.

So you don't steal, you don't shortchange⁴ and you make no fuss. If you do, besides being mean and evil, you put the whole group in trouble. You are givin' us newsies all a bad name. We aren't telling the cops if you do things like taking an apple, but we will be mad with you if you go bullyin', and if you keep doin' things like that without good reason. We will send you away. And if you do somethin' really wrong and mean, then we don't tell the cops, we will beat you up and take you to court ourselves.

⁴Some groups don't mind a little shortchanging or even pickpocketing.

12. New Paris City

Introduction

Foreword

It's some year between 1890 and 1910. Somewhere south of New York and north of Virginia lies the state and city of New Paris. This very first line drafts the spirit of this game; New Paris City is not and will not ever be defined. It's yours to develop, explore and live. I know there are many who prefer to have everything set up for them; they are lucky because there are many excellent settings for them to choose from.

I believe in the power of suggestion. Every work of fiction suggests: from Beowulf through Oliver Twist, to the last bestseller, an author kindles the spark of imagination that resides in the readers. It is them who finish his work, ever new with each generation and person. A narrative game, such as this, should do exactly that. My role as author is merely to provide the essential materials the game master needs to, in turn, spark the story in the imaginations of the gaming group who – pay attention – help him to create the adventure, to unfold the world and to build a better setting.

Who am I to fetter all that in words of stone?

A bit of history

New Paris began its life as a French settlement in the mouth of the River Onhattan. Isolated from other French possessions, too close to Virginia, it was promptly taken by the British, despite its magnificent defenses. Since then, it has shared the fate of what would become the United States of America.

New Paris was spared the worst of the Civil War, with only a few skirmishes fought inside its borders, and since then it has grown rapidly, to rival the likes

of Chicago or New York.

A bit of technology

New Paris, as the rest of the nation, is experiencing a period of technological progress. Though, this comes in different speeds, the wealthy take it faster, the poor more slowly. The first automobiles run alongside mule-drawn carts and while a few mansions can sport the novelty of electric lightbulbs, most people resort to petrol lights. Pocket watches exist as a luxury item while most people resort to using church bells or the townhall clock to keep track of time. Steamers have taken their place as ships of the line and transatlantic traders, but sails are still a common sight in every harbor.

The common people are fascinated and frightened by all this new technology and the changes it's bringing. Science seems boundless. Who knows what some scientist could be doing somewhere: steam mans, flying machines, ships that could reach the moon, Mars, Jupiter or the far stars? Can electricity bring the dead back to life? Or, is the world to die through the negligence of some overly enthusiastic doctor?

New Paris and its precincts

New Paris is divided into six rough areas as seen on the map: Royal Island, Inner Expanses, West Gate, Outer Expanses, Concordia and the Decree Slums. Royal Island is a modernist dream: the place of the wealthy and the learned, filled with gaudy buildings, fashionable parks, libraries and museums. The seat of the New Paris Government is there, along with the main offices of the largest and more conservative corporations. A few newsboys are born into this place, the unfortunate children of a too trusting young maid and a bold young heir, or that's what the "prune ladies" say.

The Inner Expanses is the natural birthplace of the independent young boy. This previously affluent area is now home to mansions turned into tenement buildings by ever dividing its interior into smaller and smaller one-room homes.

West Gate has risen to become the home of a new class of entrepreneurs. The New Paris Stock Exchange is located there, along with the most important newspapers and lawyers. Money is the blood of West Gate and its heart is

always pumping. There is not a day or hour in which you cannot find someone working in a new business.

A sea of factories and warehouses, smoke and rushed traffic; that's the first impression a visitor has of the Outer Expanses. Yet this new and most important harbor of the city is there too. There are more than a few rows of tall, yet dirty and squalid apartment buildings to see. Many factory workers only walk as far as their job and back to their apartment, with little hope of saving enough money so their children can have a chance. Many die long before that.

Concordia lies south of the River Onhattan. Nice, ordered and clean, Concordia is much more mixed and varied than any of the other areas of the city. Concordians consider themselves tolerant, hard-working, lovers of innovation and change. Not all change is always welcomed, such as the traditional small shops who face a tougher and tougher competition from the department stores. Shopping and small workshops aside, the other major income of Concordia is recreation, in which the New Paris beach plays a large role. Though limited to the summer season, the beach and its promenade attracts crowds of vacationers around the nation of every station in life.

And then we have Decree, locked between the sea and the New Paris dump. Once, they were the home of the wealthiest, until the Great Plague of New Paris changed all that. Abandoned in days, it took years for the homeless, the poor, the criminal and the desperate to slowly fill it. Year after year, New Paris forgot about Decree, referring to it as if it were a country beyond the sea. Soon, street fights turned into an eternal war among gangs. This is a den of poverty, sickness and crime. Violence is rampant and rumor has it that some of their children end up as slaves in some exotic corner of the Earth. The newsboys, bootblacks and others who run from this place often keep their origins to themselves and make a point of never returning.

A bundle of newspapers

The most famous of the literally, dozens of competing newspapers¹ scattered all over New Paris are:

¹Most of which close in a year, only to see new ones open.

The New Paris Dove

Motto: “Not a single passive voice”.

Founded in 1850, the New Paris *Dove* produces a basic English, illustrated, 16-page newspaper targeted to housewives and working women. Its stories have a feminine focus and a local feel. It is supplemented with housekeeping, tips for administrative and clerical work, beauty and lately, political agitation. The *Dove* is particularly vocal on the suffragette movement and supports womens’ vote. This has branded it as being irresponsible in the eyes of the Conservatives.

Published daily, the New Paris *Dove* sells better in Concordia, than Royal Island, the Expanses or West Gate.

Price: 2 cents (unit) – \$1.50 bundle of 100

Reliability: B

Quality: C

The Republican Hawk

Motto: “Patriotic Truth”.

The most conservative daily newspaper in New Paris, *The Hawk* still officially operates from its offices in Royal Island, though most of the work is carried out in Newspaper’s Row. *The Hawk* has a strict policy for their newsboys, accepting only those who are *warranted* by other newsboys. Nobody wearing C-grade or worse clothes need apply.

The Hawk sells well only in West Gate and Royal Island, though it’s possible to sell a few in Concordia.

Price: 10 cents (unit) – \$4 bundle of 100²

Reliability: B

Quality: A

²Many newsboys pool their money to buy a bundle.

The Children's Newspaper

Motto: "News for the quick youth"

Packed with comic strips, the *Children's Newspaper* leaves little room for simplified news, tips about school, homework, housekeeping, good manners, religious practice, finding jobs and making friends. Published every Saturday, the *Children's Newspaper* sells better in Concordia, than Royal Island³ and West Gate, being hard to market anywhere else.

The *Children's Newspaper* is owned by the *Dove* and includes friendly contributions from very young persons⁴, paying 60 cents for a 300-word unsolicited article of average quality and interest.

Prices: 3 cents (unit) – \$2 bundle of 100

Reliability: A

Quality: B

The New Paris Star

Motto: "News in your hands".

The New Paris *Star* is little more than a four-page newspaper packed with large headings and dozens of minimalist articles written in very simple English and featuring "Mr. Oldstyle", a daily comic strip poking fun at the expense of the Royal Island gentry.

Newsies that sell the *Star* are nicknamed "inkpots", as the *Star's* ink takes hours to dry, staining the hands and clothes of their young sellers.

The *Star* sells well in both the Expanses and the poorest areas of Concordia.

Prices: 1 cents (unit) – 50 cents for a bundle of 100

Reliability: C

Quality: D

³Rich fathers consider the comic strips to be a questionable influence for their children, though mothers tend to think the opposite.

⁴The game master could ask for an Academics check, with a TN of 15 for the first trial, lower it to 13 on the second and successive trials. After the character has sold his first article, the TN could be set at 11.

The *Lighthouse*

Motto: “Truth and Honesty”.

A daily evening news publication, the *Lighthouse*’s bundles are available for distributors at four o’clock. The *Lighthouse* attracts its clients through non-partisan, well-written and researched news articles, and practical information about small business management and the economy.

The *Lighthouse* sells well in West Gate and Concordia, but it’s hard to market anywhere else.

Prices: 2 cents (unit) — 80 cents for a bundle of 100

Reliability: A

Quality: C

Rumors

- ♥ C: The *Lighthouse* holds a competition each year to choose three new journalists apprentices.

The *Prometheus Herald*

Motto: “Brave news for a brave new world”.

The *Prometheus Herald* is the voice of the Utopist Movement, a largely disorganized mass of young radicals with little in common but their desire of constitutional reforms and the wealth of their parents. The *Prometheus Herald* regularly features a column for translated articles from the most extremist philosophers in Europe and elsewhere.

Like *The Hawk*, the *Prometheus Herald* has a strict policy for their newsboys, accepting only those who are *warranted* by other newsboys. Nobody wearing C-grade or worse clothes need apply.

The *Prometheus Herald* has a relatively small but fanatically loyal following in Royal Island and Concordia, being hard to sell anywhere else.

Prices: 8 cents (unit) – \$3.50 bundle of 100⁵

⁵Many newsboys pool their money to buy a bundle.

Reliability: C

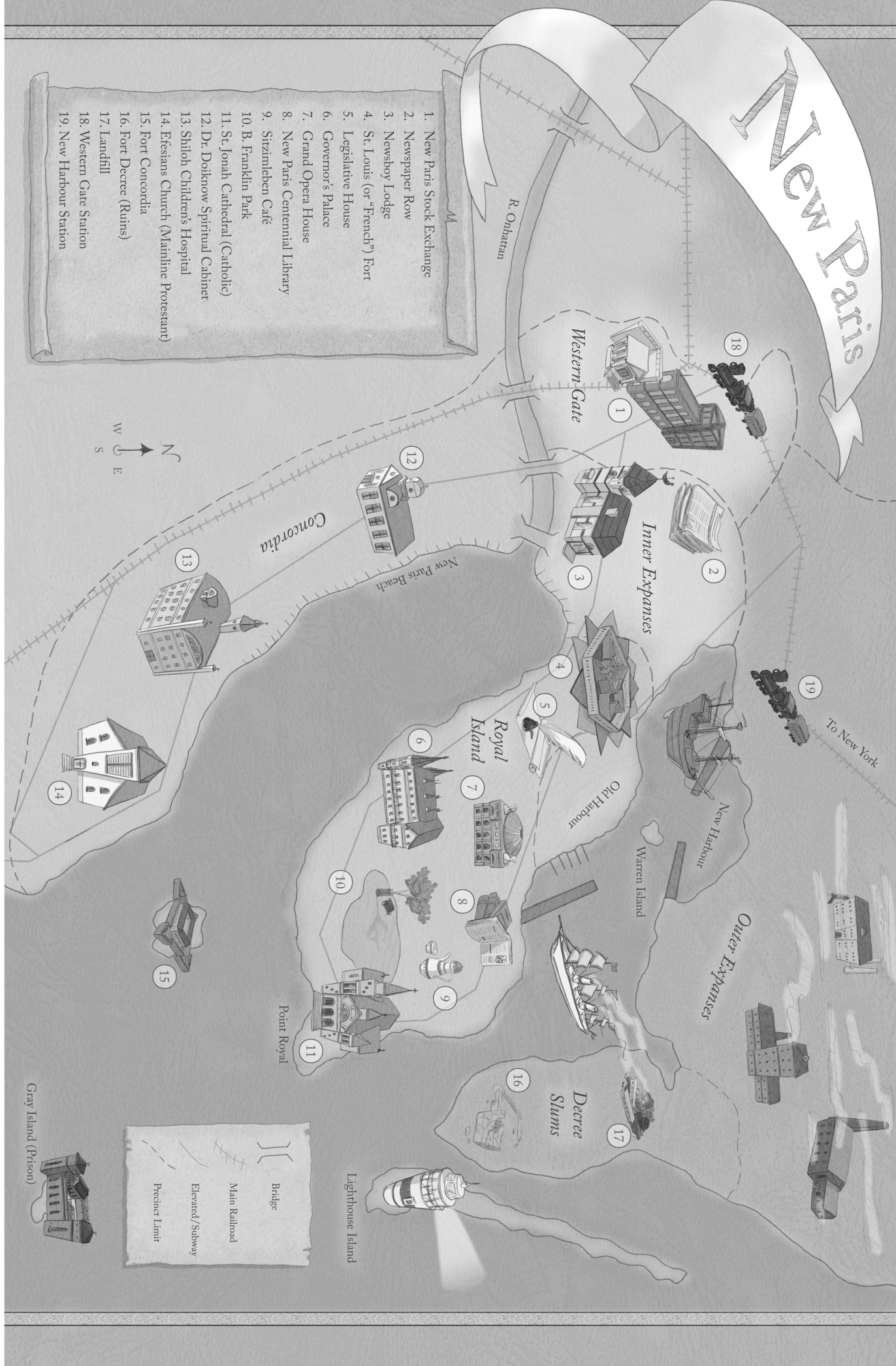
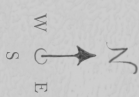
Quality: A

Rumors

- ☛ C: Newsies selling the *Prometheus Herald* have been arrested on occasion for no good reason, with their bundles confiscated.
- ☛ C: Mr. Hawk, controls both the *Prometheus Herald* and the Republican *Hawk*, and hires the same journalists for both newspapers.

New Paris

1. New Paris Stock Exchange
2. Newspaper Row
3. Newsboy Lodge
4. St. Louis (or "French") Fort
5. Legislative House
6. Governor's Palace
7. Grand Opera House
8. New Paris Centennial Library
9. Strainleben Café
10. B. Franklin Park
11. St. Jonah Cathedral (Catholic)
12. Dr. Doiknow Spiritual Cabinet
13. Shiloh Children's Hospital
14. Efesians Church (Mainline Protestant)
15. Fort Concordia
16. Fort Decree (Ruins)
17. Landfill
18. Western Gate Station
19. New Harbour Station



Gray Island (Prison)



Bridge

Main Railroad

Elevated/Subway

Precinct Limit

Royal Island

Royal Island is in fact, a peninsula where the French settlers landed in 1599. Soon surrounded by English colonies, it was ultimately captured in 1732 after months of siege by land and sea. Today, it is the most fashionable section of the city. Destroyed in the war of 1812, it was rebuilt, paying a close look to the most charming quarters, its European namesake. Since then, it has attracted the wealthy, the powerful and the intellectual. Few newsboys are native of this area, yet more than you might think at first sight, for not a small number of maids and servants live in their master's homes, and not all the love stories between a lovely maid and a sparking young gentleman have a happy ending.

If there is a place in America where people are conscious of their class, that is Royal Island. Royal Islanders will make a point to display their station in life both in public and in private, paying close watch to fashion, cultural trends and manners. Royal Islanders do not befriend their domestic servants or other “*communers*”, nor will they show sympathy to those striving for a share of the American Dream. Above all, they despise the “new-rich”, meaning those who have earned their own wealth instead of inheriting it.

Royal Island finds its southernmost limit in the St. Louis Fort(4)⁶, a star-shaped fortress built according to the specifications of the Marquis of Vauban, a renowned French Engineer, who being an orphan, slowly raised to the ranks of the aristocracy. Though officially renamed twice as Fort St. George and more recently Fort Liberty, the people of New Paris still refer to it as either the St. Louis or French Fort. Today, it serves as the permanent headquarters of the New Paris National Guard.

Royal Island's long, wide avenues with ample sidewalks, adorned by trees, art nouveau and neoclassic statues compete with the houses and public spaces in their display of beauty. Nothing that is dirty, blemished or plain is looked upon favorable in Royal Island.

The best architecture of the city is located around Flower Square. There lay the Grand New Paris Opera Palace (7), a modernist building decorated with motives of famous operas and classic plays. At its front, across the square, students and the odd professor enter or leave the New Paris Centennial Library (8) host, behind its sturdy neoclassical walls of thousands of volumes. The Hall of

⁶Numbers in brackets refer to the map.

Conferences found on the first floor of the Library has become internationally famous. The likes of Hegel, Darwin, Feuerbach, Maxwell and Carnegie have given vivid and hotly debated conferences here. Such an occasion congregates an audience open to the most expensive scientific and philosophical journals. More than one poor lad of quick mind has found a way to build up an education to promote his advancement in life just by listening to its weekly sessions and acquired contacts. In many ways, the Centennial Library offers ways of advancement to those with an academical bent.

During the night, Royal Island stays alive thanks to the many gaslight lanterns that line its streets. The blessing is being received with increasing disgust by the most conservative, who for some reason, object to seeing a too cheerful of a youngster shouting the last opera with an overly optimistic voice and a not fully sober mind. A D-class rumor has it, that some of these youngsters have been kidnapped by the servants of some angry old gentleman with ample means and good contacts.

On vacations, students from the nearby and prestigious University of Mount St. Michel are regular patrons; some say permanent residents of the most romantic cafés. There, listening to chamber music, whether in the Sitzimlebem (9) the Kaiser und Koëning, the Hope & Glory or the Mizpelt, they debate with furious passions the latest scientific theory, philosophical essay and the coming but always *not-yet* Utopist revolution. Meanwhile, some too conservative to be conservative students gather around a good glass of wine and the latest sensations on the piano in cafés like the New American, the Jingoist and the Tripoli.

There is a revolution for the dissolution of the states and the building of a strong central government. An even stronger military is often proposed as quickly turned down for another bottle. The Naiad Café is almost never the home of the student, but rather the rally point of young women who consider themselves "the spear point of the Avant Garde", the revolutionary philosophers who are to change the world from a feminist point of view and place of being. They are often ridiculed for their radical ideas which include the strange notion that women are mature enough to vote without assistance or influence from their husbands.

The Famous Four of New Paris City is the informal name assigned to its most important hotels. First things first, it is quite hard to get employment there

because they pay so well. Half of the staff, of which there are several hotel boys and apprentices, live and eat on the premises for a slightly smaller salary, with the remaining staff residing in the Inner Expanses or Concordia. The long hours of work and few free days, even at Christmas, do not leave much time for adventuring. The Glory of the Nile, filled with orientalist paintings and themed decor is looked at with some contempt as being the place of choice for the new rich. It sports its own theater, open to the general public, which offers a variety of Asian, Eastern European and Northern African music hardly found anywhere else around the nation. Contrary to the general belief spread by "My Love, My Light, My End"⁷, the Glory of the Nile does not admit unmarried couples as clients.

The New Paris Hotel, the oldest of the Famous Four, beats them all for their cooks and waiters. Indeed, it is not unheard of to register as guests for the pleasure of dining its delicacies. The Palace of the Moon has a reputation for being a nest of foreign spies and plotting politicians, though it is probably a false (D-class rumor). A more sober guide should tell you that the Palace of the Moon tends to attract a rather egocentric lot of guests and that its staff is the most helpful. Finally, Hotel Concordia offers a very conservative look in its neoclassical building. For their business guests, the hotel has a team of secretaries and clerks in the premises, as well as meeting and office rooms.

Rumors

- ☞ A: Librettos can be sold for profit.
- ☞ D: In a few days the best scientist in the world is giving a conference in the Hall.
- ☞ D: A famous person is looking for a young boy who asks no questions and can guide him through the worst of New Paris City.
- ☞ C: Speaking about "My Love, My Light, My End" to the Glory of the Nile staff will make your stay much less pleasant.

⁷A romantic novel on the misadventures of a writer who commits suicide after finding that he loves two lovers with equal passion, and yet believes true love must be devoted to just one woman.

- ☛ D: The Palace of the Moon has a reputation for being a nest of foreign spies and plotting politicians, though it is probably false.

Petit Street

Location: Royal Island, near the New Paris Library

Description: Informally known as Petit Street for ages, the name was officially recognized only recently. Petit only sports six buildings on each side, each divided into small single-room apartments, with no kitchen and a shared bathroom. The rooms are furnished with Provençal-style decoration. However, as both kitchen and bathroom are shared, these apartments are favored only by those maids who don't live at their master's and who cannot afford anything better. As it can be expected, the street is only lively on Sundays and holidays.

Businesses: There are only two businesses in Petit, the Petit Café, a four-table café and tea house and Mrs. Whitecotton's Shop, a small general store specializing in homemaking supplies.

Good Market: The *Dove*, Poems

Rumors

- ☛ E: Badly behaved children who do something nasty on this street can wake up transformed into were-mice for one full day. (Source: *The bully who woke up as a mouse*, a children's story.)
- ☛ B: There is a job notice board in Mrs. Whitecotton's Shop for housekeepers, maids, pages, errand boys, butlers and similar trades. Mrs. Whitecotton herself interviews the candidates and her recommendations most often guarantee a job.
- ☛ D: A tunnel network that connects the buildings of Petit Street, lead to an underground chamber where a group of suffragettes meet.

Old Harbor

Introduction to Old Harbor

While a part of Royal Island, the Old Harbor district is distinctive enough to deserve its own section. Here the preoccupation for art and culture quickly gives way to mercantilism and industry. For the last two decades, Old Harbor has been catering for local trade, while the New Harbor in the Outer Expanses serves as a hub for national trade. Yet, its importance even as a local port is declining with the arrival of the first automobile trucks.

New forms of industries are emerging on the facilities, starting with the yachts of the wealthy. These are attracting a new flood of goods and services maintaining those ships and catering to the needs of their owners and guests. Yawl sailing has become a sport of its own right and the building, selling and renting of these leisure boats provides not a small source of income. Less profitable but immensely more popular, especially among children, are the weekly Tiny Boats Regattas in which model boats compete against each other on closed lanes.



The Wesson & Wesson General Store

Description: Besides the wharves and the warehouses, the most distinctive building of Old Harbor is the Wesson & Wesson General Store, located at the precinct line between Old Harbor and Royal Island.

Built in the guise of an oversized gothic tower and considered by the most learned a "pastiche" of medieval and Renaissance art, it still succeeds at attracting crowds from the whole of New Paris and beyond. Its nine levels are renowned all around the nation for the superb quality, rich variety and heavy prices of the goods sold there. Nobody with C-clothes or worse would be admitted as clients. However, it could be a source of employment for boys and girls of any age as shopping aides who carry their client's parcels, or as apprentices in various roles; the company would provide

for their uniform, though entry requires good contacts, except in times of heavy sales.

Rumors

- ☞ E: There is a goblin living somewhere in Wesson & Wesson.
- ☞ D: A diamond was lost in the store.
- ☞ D: There is a man who kidnaps children who get lost there, never to be found again.

Captain James K. Tiberius Sailor School

Another place worthy of noting is the Captain James K. Tiberius Sailor School. This school accepts students sent by the court on probation, in exchange for a minor sentence, though most boys choose to enter on their own volition. While conditions are much less severe than those of a typical reform school where students are free to roam the streets on weekends, boys placed there by the court must remain until the grant of their Able Sailman certificate. This process usually lasts at least three years. Graduates from this school have very good prospects in both the merchant and the US Navy.

Rumors

- ☞ E: An angel visits this school on Christmas Day.
- ☞ C: The best pupils of the year will be chosen for an explorative journey to places where no American has gone before.

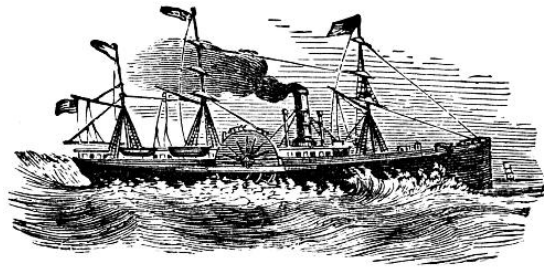
The Tiny Boat Regattas

Every Sunday at dawn, five veteran seamen arrive at the mostly deserted Rooster Dock and divide a section of it into a dozen narrow lanes. Then they share a breakfast of coffee and herrings. Slowly, a crowd of children and their families gather around them, waiting for the first 12 boats and their young skippers. The Tiny Boat Regattas will begin with the participants in the water holding

their models; then Tim “Old Sailor”, the self-appointed leader of the five veteran seamen will drop a buoy. The children swim alongside their models, trimming the sails and rudder as they go; taking great care not to push them too much and risk disqualification.

Old Harbor rumors

- ♥ E: The Flying Dutchman will *almost* dock here next Halloween.
- ♥ D: I know somebody who knows an old sailor who knows about the hidden treasure of Blackbeard, the Pirate.
- ♥ C: Next week, the Tiny Boat Regattas will feature wire-guided miniature steamships.



Inner Expanses

This area was the first one to be settled after Royal Island. It suffered much less during the war of 1812, becoming the fashionable part of the antebellum New Paris. However, after the reconstruction of Royal Island and the return of the old families to their heritage properties, the Inner Expanses became poorer and poorer. Today, the once proud homes of the wealthy have become tenant buildings, each



room housing an entire family of immigrants from all around Europe. Italian, German, Yiddish, Polish and French are among the many languages that compete with English.

The proximity of the Inner Expanses to West Gate and Concordia, through the river Onhattan, is bringing some prosperity back to the district. However, in some cases that has forced some residents to move elsewhere as more modern buildings and new businesses open to replace their old homes. The most vibrant of these is Newspaper's Row(2), an area of four streets boiling with the activity sprung by newspapers and publishing houses.

It is little wonder that the New Paris Society for Children bought and rebuilt an abandoned mansion here to serve as the Newsboy's Lodge(3). It came cheap and allowed its clients easy access to the newspaper houses, plus many opportunities for advancement.

Mrs. O'Dougherty's Apple Stand

Somewhere on a bend of a minor street, under an old maple tree, just a few minutes from Newspaper's Row, lies a humble booth filled with cheap yet fresh local fruit – mostly apples – and home-baked cookies. She opens a little before dawn, just in time for her favorite clients: newsboys and bootblacks eager for a cheap meal.

Mrs. O'Dougherty looks unbelievably old to newsboys, and equally wise. She always has time for a motherly counsel but not with the lazy or the pickpockets – not until they set themselves to honest work, that is.

Polio Tim, a six-year-old she adopted informally, and Sir Percy, a playful fox, are always with her. Tim walks around on his crutches, attracting customers with his graceful voice, while Sir Percy keeps both bullies and rats at bay.

Inner Expanses rumors

- ☛ D: The maple tree by Mrs. O'Dougherty's Apple Stand marks the spot where the New Paris pioneers signed peace with the Indians. Cutting it down would bring a horrible fate to the culprit and to New Paris.

- ☞ D: Some of the treasures of the rich were left behind, forgotten, when they returned to Royal Island.
- ☞ B: Mrs. O'Dougherty personally knows each and every child who is on his or her own in New Paris. Every single night she prays for them.
- ☞ A: Watch out for fires. The tenant buildings in Inner Expanses are prone to catching fire.
- ☞ E: Chief Seven Thousand Tears, the leader of the local Indians at the time of the colonization, roams the night as a ghost, cursed to cry for all eternity, until somebody reveals to him the location of the remains of his seven daughters.

West Gate

Introduction

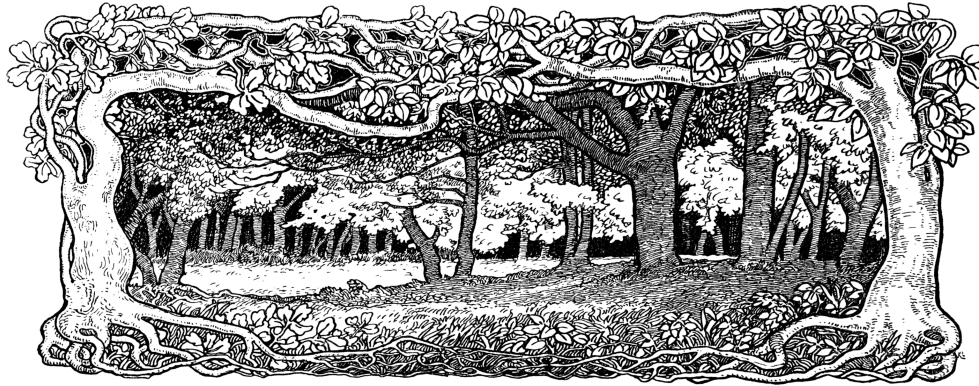
West Gate means business; big business. Here is where you see the Free Enterprise Tower, the tallest building in the world. This is also where you will see armies of clerks heading every morning to their jobs and back home again. It's a great market for both newsies and bootblacks early in the morning and for food vendors. West Gate features the New Paris Stock Exchange⁽¹⁾, the most important financial institution in the Western Hemisphere, if not of the world. Only a selected few of the newsies can sell their papers there, but those who get inside would not only be able to sell a few bundles daily; they could, with persistent effort, great charm and a happy day or two, make great business contacts. A whole campaign could be devoted to this endeavor.

Plus Ultra Park

Plus Ultra⁸ Park is the most modern public garden in New Paris, built to commemorate the exploration and colonization of the American continent. As such, it is widely used for patriotic events and it's the place where the Newsboy Lodge holds its annual Newsboy Singing Contest on Thanksgiving.

⁸Beyond.

Besides an open air auditorium and a series of small neoclassic shrines dedicated to the explorers of America and famous Native nations embossed with allegorical designs, the park features four botanical gardens displaying the flora of the United States, Mexico, South America and Europe.



The Midnight Café

Description:

The Midnight Café guests enter through a narrow oak door to discover a short hallway fashioned with a fountain. There they will be welcomed by a barefoot page dressed like the prince of an orientalist painting, and who will offer a piece of bread and a sip of tea.

At first sight, the Midnight Café looks just like any other New Paris café. Inside, there are two rows of square tables and a bar, only with an oriental theme.

Yet, a curious guest might notice the rather plain stairs that lead to the second level. Once there, the newcomer should be ready for a surprise. The whole level is empty but for a long and narrow low table that spirals whimsically throughout the room in the likeness of a serpent. Guests, and even staff on occasion, sit crosslegged by this table on the rich carpets where they calmly converse. It is not strange to find a chimney sweep speaking to the son of a lawyer, nor a young gentleman spending time with an old porter. Once in a while you will find somebody sharing a story, singing a song, playing an instrument or showing some piece of art.

The third level, closed to guests, is where the staff lives. Rooms are small but cozy, decorated in the most mundane fashion with ample common space.

Location: The Midnight Café should be located in West Gate, in some out-of-the-way alley; yet, it would not be out of place in Concordia or even in the Inner Expanses.

Rumors

- ☞ D: It is said that you can only find the Midnight Café by chance, on a cold, rainy day.
- ☞ C: Those who cannot pay by any other means can still eat a basic meal and drink a hot beverage, provided they spend a few hours working.
- ☞ E: Angels in disguise enter the world through a trap door on the second level.
- ☞ B: Everybody is welcome in the Midnight Café.
- ☞ D: A sinister cult runs the Midnight Café.
- ☞ C: A philanthropic society runs the Midnight Café.

West Gate rumors

- ☞ C: George “Owl” Henson, a lawyer, is looking for a new errand boy and an apprentice, to live-in at the office. They must be well-mannered, properly schooled, honest, discreet and hard-working.
- ☞ D: The foundations of The New Paris Stock Exchange are weak and could fall overnight.

Outer Expanses

The Outer Expanses is the main industrial area of New Paris, concentrating the vast majority of factories and other industrial facilities that deal mainly with manufactured goods. It also includes the New Harbor where most of the trade arrives in New Paris; the old harbor in Royal Island has become increasingly inadequate.

Children make up a substantial part of the workforce. The hours are long, the pay is short and conditions can be dangerous, prompting a large number of children workers to seek self-employment as newsies or in other trades. Many of the workers come from the Inner Expanses and the Decree Slums, with a few from Concordia; though these tend to occupy the highest ranking positions.



The Hook

The Outer Expanses industrialists saw an opportunity for profit by housing their own workers, and so the neighborhood known as the Hook was born. The area is a closely packed group of tall buildings filled with small apartments just north of New Harbor Station. They are bursting with immigrant families from Italy, Ireland and Poland.

The vast majority of the residents are working for the corporation that owns their homes, a circumstance that places them in a weak position at the bargaining table.

The Farwells

The Farwell family operates a small ketch that serves both as a home and a business. They deal in books, tools, spices, exotic dried fruits, teas, novelties and other specialty wares, brought according to demand and their own preference, from Europe, Africa, China and the islands of the Southern Seas, where they spend their winters.

Their colorful ketch, the *Fair Moonlight*, anchors around Warren Island from two to three weeks, according to personal and business needs every year, usually in April.

Members of the crew

☛ Family members: Arthur 35 years old, Elizabeth 34 years old, Peter 16 years old, Susan 14 years old, Perceval 12 years old, Harry 11 years old, Lucy nine years old, Pip eight years old and Saddy, their golden retriever.

☛ Staff: Usually one or two seamen and possibly a few apprentices.

Rumors

☛ B: The Farwells will hire up to 12 newsies to market their wares as they arrive in New Paris.

☛ C: The Farwells could hire up to seven boys or girls of good disposition for their annual round-the-globe journey.

☛ E: The Farwells are in fact, a family of immortals, wizards or something like that.

☛ E: The Farwells often sail into worlds that are beyond the veil of dreams.



The Altberg Bank

Description: The Altberg bank is one of the many small banks of New Paris. It is among those that allow a savings account to be opened by any newsboy, no matter how young the chap is. Though, it demands a minimum first deposit of \$1.00 and failing this, a newsboy's best option is to deposit at the Newsboy Lodge.

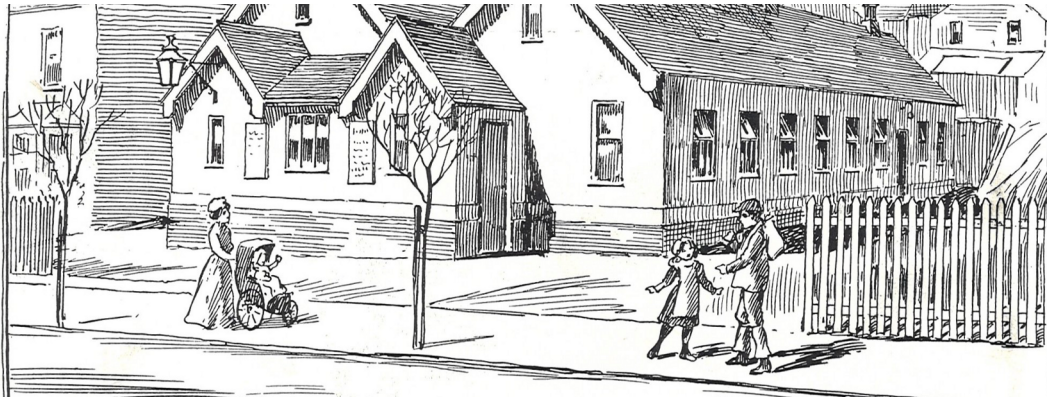
Location: The main office is in Newspaper's Row, with branches in Royal Island, Concordia and the Outer Expanses.

Rumors

- ♥ D: There's an open position for an errand boy (B-grade clothes or better).
- ♥ E: The Altberg Bank is about to go bankrupt.
- ♥ E: The vault of the Altberg Bank holds a secret chamber that leads to a time machine.

Concordia

Concordia is the most modern, middle class and liberal precinct in New Paris. Its residents see it as an assortment of four main areas, each one with its distinctive flavor. North to south, these are: the Beach, Cadened, L'Orient and Point South. The beach itself extends into the Old Expanses, yet when New Parisians talk of "the Beach" they're usually referring to the area located in Concordia. The area surrounding the beach differs slightly from Cadened for most of the year, except for the smaller number of children who live there and its reputation for being a dull place. However, as the summer sun heats New Paris and the beach is flooded with families searching for some respite, scores of businesses seem to sprout from everywhere like spring poppies.



Cadened

This is a mainly residential area, which is also the favorite of the poor students and artists for its alternative and cheap cafés and the occasional charming park. The whole place has the feel of a village that somehow became surrounded by the city. Inhabitants of Royal Island consider Cadened little more than a bad imitation of their own quartier. However, it is a pleasant place to live, devoid of serious crime, filled with nice, charming hard-working people who earn their living in small workshops instead of factories. This is the place where a young Cecil Fauntleroy might have lived.

Miss Seton's School for Orphan Girls

This school is in fact, a cute, small home for 12 children of up to 13 years of age. Miss Seton died ten years ago from old age, and today two of "her girls" run the home. Anne, 14, the youngest of the two, chose to remain there, caring for the "wee ones", earning some money as she finishes her education at the Sangers Secretaries and Administrative Studies Academy, not far from the school. Sylvia, 25 years of age, manages the paperwork and supervises the older girls. Tuition is given by volunteer teachers sent by the New Paris Society for Children. The place has three bedrooms for the girls, split into different age groups, and three more for the resident workers, one of which, Miss Seton's room is kept unused but clean, just as she left it at the time of her death. Though most of the girls growing up here end up earning scholarships for further education and/or typically searching for jobs as teachers or in clerical positions, it is possible that one or two more prone to adventure decide to begin their own businesses.

Dr. Doiknow's Spiritual Cabinet

The most curious building in the whole Cadened area is Dr. Doiknow's Spiritual Cabinet. It is promoted as a "place of spiritual healing and communication with the never-departed". The cabinet itself looks like a church with stained-glass windows. In contrast to Biblical scenes the windows depict flying ghosts, empty coffins, chains of everlasting flowers, pyramids and mummies. The sign on the door reads:

"Knock thrice and the mystery of the ages shalt be revealed to thee."

Clients who oblige and offer a donation of at least \$1.00⁹ are led to a small, dimly lit, red room with a bare mahogany table in the center, where Dr. Doiknow or some of his hired mediums "consult the spiritual lights" and "serve as passages to the Spiritual Grand Parallel Plane"¹⁰. The gaudy outlook of its walls and whimsical gargoyles, the smell of incense and the sound of a distant piano only help to make the experience much more intense.

⁹That covers only the most basic spirit reading for new clients. Once the doctor is able to fool their clients he will quickly increase his prices to as high as he can get.

¹⁰Consider the whole operation as a D-class rumor.

Dr. Doiknow's Spiritual Cabinet always closes on Halloween, a time when his neighbors often see – or imagine – strange beings through the windows or around the home.

The New Paris Beach

At sunrise, with the first low tide of the day, a small group of women and children search for seafood on the sands of New Paris Beach, braving the chilly waters of the Atlantic in their bare feet. The rest of the day, throughout most of the year the whole place is almost deserted.

During the summer, however, the landscape changes radically as those who can afford a break from their work laze on the sand. With vacationers, come a host of workers: first, those who construct and maintain the changing booths so ladies can change in private; teamsters leading goat-drawn buggies and calm donkeys that take children for a ride; peddlers of every sort who come to sell their wares to collect spare change from parents. It makes a great opportunity for selling newspapers, sweets and refreshments, yet the enterprising newsboy should be wary of the pickpockets, especially if he's tempted to have fun by the sea.

New Paris Beach sports every kind of modern facility: from lines of rope that provide respite to weak swimmers to a long pier; from lifeguard towers to a station of rental paddle boats; from a huge water toboggan to a long bowery range.

Fashionable swimsuits in New Paris consist of a two-piece black wool garment; the upper covering the trunk, with sleeves reaching to the elbows, and the lower portion hanging to the knees. Poor kids, however, just swim in their undies.

Older newsboys who are good at swimming might be hired as lifeguards for the summer season. Apprentice lifeguards need to have at least one month of training and must live-in at the premises. The Lifeguard House, perched on a rock by the sea, is a lively building consisting of seven rooms: the apprentices' dormitory, the lifeguards' dormitory, an office, a storage room, a kitchen, a common room that doubles as a lunchroom, and a hall where ceremonies take place.



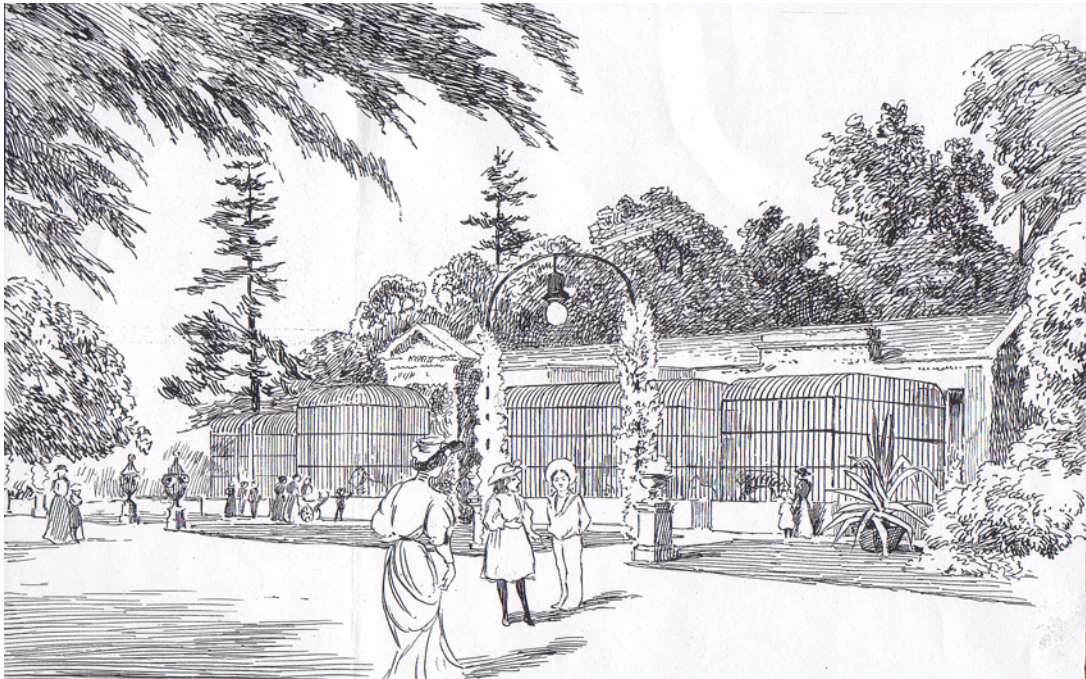
L'Orient

Located between Cadened and Point South, L'Orient was born when affluent settlers from elsewhere in the United States and Europe did not find a warm reception in the then more fashionable Inner Expanses. L'Orient is today famous for its shops, attracting clients from all over the state of New Paris. The higher classes of Royal Island would never be seen shopping in the department stores of the nouveau-venu¹¹, preferring the more luxurious shops of their own quartier. They are not above sending their maids in search of some good sale.

L'Orient sports a zoo, which is but a glorified park filled with rows of small cells for animals, including an old mountain lion. The alligator's pond was recently transformed into a fish pond after a strange incident took place two years earlier. Anybody with the slightest empathy will see that the animals look stressed and sad.

The Shiloh Children's Hospital is a charitable institution that provides cheap care for sick or injured children up to the age of 15. No child is ever denied treatment for lack of money, though money helps with such extras as not having to share the room – or the bed.

¹¹“Newcomers”, an insulting term meaning “well-to-do” persons from somewhere other than Royal Island”.



Point South

Point South is an experiment in human habitation created by the so-called father of the Utopist Movement, Mr. Prometheus Goodwill. He took inspiration on the spider's web for the disposition of the streets and beehives for the homes. The result was a whimsical neighborhood of twisted streets and hexagonal-shaped two-bedroom apartment buildings that failed to attract the intellectual elite, the "new cabin philosopher class", with which Mr. Goodwill dreamed.

Mr. Prometheus Goodwill Home

Mr. Goodwill Home is a radical construction shaped in the guise of an Egyptian temple surrounded by a large, wild garden in the very center of Point South. Vacant since Mr. Goodwill's death, the deserted house strangely enough, is in pristine condition.

Concordian rumors

- ♥ C: An Egyptian pagan priest lives in Point South; D: He or she has strange powers to bless and curse.

- ☞ D: An outcast member or members of a minor royal family lives secretly in Cadened.
- ☞ E: There is at least one ghost child haunting the Shiloh Children's Hospital. They can be seen praying or mourning when some doctor or nurse makes a mistake.
- ☞ D: The crocodiles from L'Orient Zoo escaped and live in the sewers.
- ☞ E: A man-sized spider lives in the sewers under Point South. The critter is poisonous and is smart enough to open a manhole at night as it waits for rats, a stray cat or some other unsuspecting victim.
- ☞ D: If a kid gets lost somewhere in New Paris, he could wake up in a cell in Point South, head shaved, dressed only in a long white tunic, his hands tattooed with strange Egyptian/Sumerian/Pagan symbols.
- ☞ E: There is a haunted house near the Dr. Doiknow's Spiritual Cabinet; C: Even those who mock the doctor fear that house.
- ☞ C: The wolves at the L'Orient Zoo are in fact, dogs; B: If somebody helps them escape they will prove to be independent beasts, yet fanatically loyal to their liberators.

Decree Slums

Introduction



Nicknamed the “Den of Perdition”, this is the place where you end up when you have run out of choices. Though the slums are a city in themselves and some areas are more akin to the Hook, in most cases row after row of decrepit houses and one-family-to-a-room apartments fill its streets. Like the Inner Expanses, it used to be a rather wealthy neighborhood. After a sudden epidemic in 1890, its residents fled the place, which was later colonized by the desperate.

The only way to get to the slums is to cross the narrow muddy path that runs through the New Paris Landfill. When a boy born in Decree dreams about escaping to the big city, the first obstacle he sees is this wall of rotten despair.

Decree is a maze of narrow streets (at times not much wider than a man), underground passages, covered bridges and secret cellars. Many among the newsies are born here, though it is the worst place to sell papers, as clients are more likely to steal than to buy. In fact, rampant violence is one of the reasons many boys decide to try their luck somewhere else.

The Constabulary force has, for the most part, left the Decree Slums to its own residents and only when pressured by the public, do they execute a raid that usually ends up in the arrest of the unlucky who get in their way.

The reputation of the Decree Slums is so strong that newsies from this area tend to keep their origins to themselves; they know the general public will see them as pickpockets and ruffians, and it's tough to sell newspapers that way.

On the coast of the Decree Slums, in sight of Lighthouse Island, there is a low cliff. It is easy to climb down in calm weather. From this shore a good swimmer may fight the strong currents that surround Decree and reach the rock of Bizkaia Islet. They will find a cave that once served as the solitary home of Mary Martian, a philosopher; her pages, inventions and findings might still be there (D-class rumor).

People from the Decree Slums place a very high value on burial ceremonies, saving every bit to ensure a "respectable tombstone"; most newsies from this area follow this custom.

Decree rumors

- ☛ B: The slums are built on an ancient burial ground.
- ☛ C: The residents may resort to lynching.
- ☛ A: There are several pickpockets and beggar hideouts led by adult fagins.

- ☛ D: If you dig deep enough or have maps, you'll be able to find treasure.
- ☛ D: A few residents have coffins filled with gold and stolen valuables.
- ☛ D: Decree roaches are large enough for a boy to ride on them; E: Some do! They will not go anywhere in plain daylight, though.



The sewers and the underground

The sewers

Under the ground of New Paris is a world of which most of its residents are unaware. This is the kingdom of rumors, criminal conspiracies and strange stories. Getting to the sewers is easy. Before the New Paris Society for the Protection of Children opened the Lodge, hundreds of children made the sewers their home, especially in the cruelest days of winter. Even today, a few bands of stray children live there.

First, find an open manhole, which is easy in the Inner Expanses, hard elsewhere and impossible in Decree; the sewers do not extend to the Slums. Failing that, try to force the lock with a lever (Strength TN of 15) or pick its lock, which is rather easy (Locks TN 10). Climb down the iron steps where the brightest daylight fades quickly into total darkness. Guided by a petrol lamp, you discover a narrow canal of bubbling black water with a wet, slippery walkway on each side. You walk on, braving the putrid air and the fear of sickness, hoping for the treasure that must be waiting for you, somewhere. A startled rat jumps into the stream, roaches climb on walls that you do not dare touch. The canal bends and then forks into three branches where a filthy iron bridge tempts you to cross. What was that in the water? Could something live there? And what is that unnerving noise; that distant wailing?

That is how an adventure could begin in the sewers. It often ends with a bunch of kids lost in a maze of tunnels who finally come to their senses and escape through the first manhole they are able to find. The sewers have good use for the young pickpockets who can move discreetly across the city, escape persecuting crowds to hide their earnings from the fagins and bullies who prey on them. Everything else is just a rumor.

Sewer rumors

- ☛ D: There are secret doors in the sewers that lead to underground cells where the criminals of New Paris imprison their kidnapped victims.
- ☛ D: An alligator, escaped from the Zoo, made his way into the sewers and lives there, preying on rats and the occasional overly curious kid.
- ☛ D: A pack of seven newsboys play here in the tunnels, dressed up as knights and wizards. They play a strange game about dungeons and goblins and things like that. They obey some strange leader who calls himself a game master.
- ☛ C: The Flea Treasure.
 - The Flea was a famous thief of the 1850s who poisoned people. He was hanged for his crimes without ever revealing the location and nature of his treasure. His mother died exactly one year afterward

and a letter written about the treasures, signed by the Flea, was found half burnt near the stove. Unfortunately, most details were lost and all attempts to recover it failed.

- B: The cache includes a fine selection of poisons.
- E: One of his potions will stop aging (including growing up) for 1 nd and six years.
- E: An undead of some sort guards the treasure.

The underground

As dark, and much more sinister than the sewers is the myriad of underground tunnels that slither beneath the surface of the city. Most are not connected with any other: the hideout of a gang, the temple of blasphemous cultists and the secret laboratory of an evil scientist are built to keep off prying eyes. A few, however, have secret doors or passages leading to the sewers or to less than reputable saloons.

A chief example among these is the dungeon of Yeroe-Athian (C-class rumor), the infamous pirate of the Wild Islands of the Southern Seas. His junk, the *Evil Moon*, does not dare to attack in American waters. Instead, each year, on the night before the 4th of July, he sneaks off to New Paris and lowers two boats that will take two dozen unfortunates to serve as palace slaves for some Eastern Prince. Two months before, his partners in New Paris will begin to scout for likely victims: tramps and orphans who will not be missed. With some they will use promises and lies, with others they'll drop blue poison into their beverages, and for the rest they will resort to violence. In any case, they will be escorted, bound, blinded and gagged through the sewers, to the dungeon of Yeroe-Athian.

The dungeon is always a surprise to its inmates. Instead of a row of damp, dirty cells on a narrow corridor, they find a subterranean palace of Eastern splendor. Their relief is short-lived, as they are soon put to work, learning their new duties until the time is right for the *Evil Moon*.

The New Paris Elevated Train Company

That’s its official name, but most New Parisians, and every newsboy, call it the NPET or even the “Pet”. As in “I’m taking the *Pet* to school”, when they refer to the urban rail. There are only two circular lines: clockwise and counterclockwise or just “clock” and “counter” in New Paris slang. Both lines are mostly underground, though a few elevated sections remain.

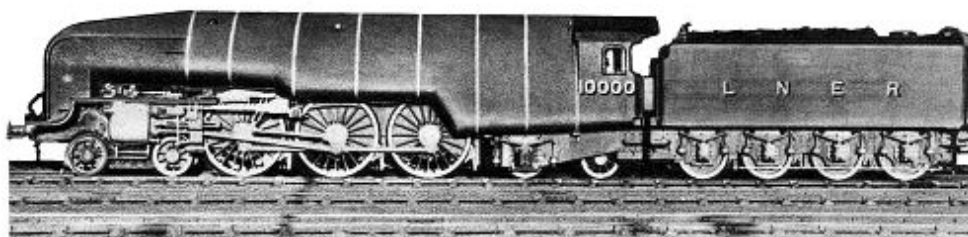
Clients access the trains through mechanical gates that must be fed with tokens (Price 2 cents, rating E). It is possible to sneak under these and fool the NPET workers, but if caught it would be considered a D-class crime¹², -so it isn’t worth it. During winter nights, homeless adults (and children who distrust the Lodge), hide and sleep in the underground stations and tunnels until the NPET workers or cops make them leave. Though it’s technically a D-class crime, charges are rarely pressed; station workers have forcefully evicted these offenders on occasion.

The Elevated Train Lines, despite their name, travel at ground level for most of the journey, and are raised only in the most crowded areas. In Royal Island the lines travel underground; the future of the New Paris transportation system.

Travel

Average Times	Walking	Urban Trains	Carriage or Omnibus
Within Concordia or Outer Expanses	1 hour	15 min	25 min to 1 hour
Within other precincts	30 min	5 min	15 min to 30 min
To an adjacent precinct	1 ² / ₃ hour	30 min	30 min to 1 ¹ / ₃ hour
To a non adjacent precinct	2 hours	45 min	1 hour

¹²See section 8 on page 124.



Adventures

Adventures are the heart of every role-playing game. Perhaps one of the many virtues is that you can play any adventure you can dream of. With a little ingenuity and some effort, you can adapt the rules to your own liking and setting. Designing your own adventures is even easier. It may seem daunting to the novice game master, but once you design two or three games you will agree the only thing you needed was confidence.

So, I could have left *Newsies* with no adventures at all, trusting that the gamer would figure out what to do; just as I learned by myself long ago. However, I also know we are often starved for time, and that stress and responsibilities affect our creativity. So from its very inception, I designed *Newsies* with the idea that it would be a complete game, without a strict need to add any expansion. In the end, I decided to compromise, using a technique I first encountered on the pages of the sadly discontinued Spanish role-playing magazine *Líder*. This is a technique that fine games such as *Prince Valiant* or *Time Lords* have used, and what I'm calling the summary adventure.

Instead of page after page of prose, you have a few paragraphs with the essential information needed to run the adventure; no more. I know that once the foundations of an adventure have been established, it is easy to fill up the other details during the game and that, no doubt, it's much easier to adapt to the player characters that the players have actually created.

For the sake of being a little systematic, and to help the novice game master, I've set up an Adventure Structure, that has been explained in the following section. You are, of course, not required to follow this structure when you design your own adventures, but it is important you understand it if you want to use the sample adventure included in this book. More information will appear on the game's web page at <http://minimrpg.com>.

A. Adventure Structure

1. "Extra, extra, read all about it!": Abstract. This is a narrative summary or hook for the adventure.
2. "Start here.": Initial situation, explaining what the players are doing when the game begins. It could be pretty well an action scene.
3. Friends, foes and innocent bystanders.: A detailed list of non-player characters, with the needed stats. It could include notes about the player characters too if, for example, it's important for the story that all are able to swim.
4. "All you want is...": Goal or goals of the adventure.
5. First act: The first act introduces the characters and the conflict. Often, an act will have two or more alternative exits leading to some other acts. Obviously a summary adventure cannot cover all possible ideas that players can come up with, or every situation that could arise within a game. Address only the most likely variants. It is a game, so accept that you cannot control everything; let it flow.
Adventures can be divided into smaller chunks called scenes, which allow for finer detail. This alternative requires a little more work when designing the adventure, yet it makes game-mastering much easier at play time. Acts allow faster adventure creation and preparation at the cost of being a little harder at play time. Use acts if you love improvisation.
6. Second act: The second act deals with the efforts of the player characters and their opponents to solve the conflict.
7. Third act: (And, fourth, fifth, etc.). The third act deals with the resolution of the conflict itself, and what surprises could be in store. Most adventures should last for three acts only.

8. "It all turned out to...": In this section, the author of the adventure should detail the possible rewards for the players if they “win” the adventure or the sad consequences of defeat. This should include things like money, equipment, chits gained, contacts made and skills gained, if any. Rumors and variants: If you discover the players are having too easy a time, this section adds rumors and possibly variants that you may include in the scenes or acts, either to spice them up or increase their difficulty. Of course, with increased difficulty comes an increased reward and the number of chits gained could possibly change according to the variants you use. It goes without saying that you can design your own variants for the adventure.
9. Bits and notes: This section is optional. Use it for anything that doesn't fit anywhere else, such as optional rules or special equipment; a pair of steampunk night vision goggles, for example.

B. The Hidden Prince

“Now cracks a noble heart. Good-night, sweet prince; And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.” ~ William Shakespeare

“Extra, extra, read all about it!”

After a long, terrible adventure, fatty Prince Arthur of Borgonnia¹, having escaped from the Prussian plot that doomed his family, and a friend who was unfortunate enough to look almost like him, has arrived as a stowaway to New Paris.

Initial adventure notes

Prince Arthur, the youngest child of the Borgonnian Royal Family, who was destined to inherit a castle and as many non-crown princes, became a general of the Borgonnian Army. A Prussian plot changed all this when, while he was playing hide-and-seek in the Royal Residence Gardens, his entire family was killed before his very eyes, along with Pierre, his best friend and many other nobles of every age and gender. Not knowing what to do, he disappeared into the forests surrounding the palace until he was able to board a French ship in Caen that he believed was destined for England; Borgonnia’s best ally.

In the confusion, the plotters did not discover the boy’s survival until three days later. Since then, they have done all that is possible to cover that fact so they can kill him secretly. Meanwhile, they are acting high and low in the Borgonnia House of Commons to nominate a Prussian noble as the next King of Borgonnia; one who would sell the crown to the Prussian Emperor. Several anarchist terrorists have already been arrested by the Prussian Criminal Police.

¹Located between France and Germany.

The Prussian authorities will, as a matter of course, deliver the poor scapegoats to the Borgonnian authorities for trial. Of course, the unfortunates will die in transit, while “trying to escape”, one week after the beginning of this adventure.

Arthur was found by one of the ship’s mates on his second day, and was put to work as a cabin boy before being forced to leave the ship in New Paris.



What players should know

- ☛ German unification did not happen in the alternative history of this adventure. Instead, Germany gathered into four nations: Prussia, Bayer, the Northern German Confederation and Saxony. Of these, the most warlike and powerful was Prussia.
- ☛ Borgonnia is considered French by the French and German by the Germans, though most of the population consider themselves Borgonnian.
- ☛ The Borgonnian language is considered by many foreigners to be a mix of German and French, though the Royal Borgonnian Academy considers it a proper language on its own.

Friends, foes and innocent bystanders

Prince Arthur

Gender: boy, age 12, pace 4, chits² 8

STR 3 wd HTH 3 wd AGI 3 wd EDU 2 wd, 2 nd E&E 3 wd CHA 2 wd

Good at: Stealth, Academics, Fisticuffs, Riding, Languages, Observation

Bad at: Performance, Athletics, Pickpockets, Crafts, Locks

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: D-grade clothing, Golden Griffin, 50 cents in Borgonnian money

When the story begins, Arthur wears the rags of what used to be one of his many light summer outfits. He looks slightly overweight, after weeks of adventures and privation. He is also confused and doesn't know who to trust. His only remaining valuable possession is the Medallion of the Borgonnian Order of the Golden Griffin, of which he's a born member.

Prince Arthur is not used to dealing with low-class children and will act defensively. He excels at restraining his emotions, masking them under a sad smile if he finds himself in trouble. Unfortunately for him, his English is both extremely formal and plagued with grammatical mistakes.

Note: Prince Arthur should *usually* be a non-player character, yet an enterprising game master might offer this role to a veteran role-player.

Hans Dasistnorm

Gender: man, age 32, pace 5

STR 5 nd HTH 4 nd AGI 3 nd EDU 3 nd E&E 3 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Stealth, Athletics, Fisticuffs, Shooting, Languages, Observation, Pickpockets, Locks, Vehicles

²If used as a player character.

Bad at: Swimming, Performance, Sweet Talk

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: Always carried: B-grade clothing, revolver, derringer with two bullets; at the Prussian Consulate in Royal Island: blowpipe, seven darts, blue poison, red poison

Hans is a Prussian agent charged with the mission of discreetly eliminating the threat that Prince Arthur poses to Prussia's prestige and the eventuality of a war with the British Empire. He is ruthless, methodical and efficient, but feels lost in America. He is, of course, able to speak English, yet with a marked German accent. Hans is just one of the many other Prussian agents activated by Prussian embassies around the world, so he's not particularly hopeful of finding the Prince. Still, duty demands his best effort. Hans will not use his weapons, except as noted in the text; otherwise he seriously fears for his life.

Generic Prussian agent

Gender: man, age 20-something, pace 5

STR 4 sd HTH 4 nd AGI 3 nd EDU 3 nd E&E 3 nd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Stealth, Athletics, Fisticuffs, Shooting, Languages, Observation, Pick-pockets, Locks

Bad at: Swimming, Performance, Sweet Talk, Riding

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: B-grade clothing, derringer with two bullets, blowpipe, one dart with blue potion.

Generic Prussian agents will carry on with the rest of the adventure if Hans is arrested or incapacitated, or they will shadow the player characters (see variant 1). They are much less imaginative and easier to fool.

Tags: Disciplined, dull, methodical, fearless

“Start here”

Location: Liberty Avenue, a long commercial street in Point South

Season: Summer

Date & time: Around 1905 in August, on a Monday at 7:30 a.m.

Tell the player characters it is just another morning and they have newspapers to sell if they want to eat. Allow the player characters to buy one newspaper bundle of their choice and means³, and start the adventure with them gathered on some street in Point South⁴ from where they plan to disperse.

As they are about to say goodbye to each other, Hans Dasistnorm, the Prussian agent, will meet the group with a color⁵ photograph of Prince Arthur on his tennis outfit. To the player characters he will look just like another fat rich kid. The only sign of his royal status will be a small golden crown printed on the photo. Hans will tell the children that Arthur has fits of madness where he believes himself to be some tragic character, such as a prince or a duke.

The agent will claim that Arthur’s worried, well-to-do family are French wine-makers who have hired him as a private investigator. He will offer the newsboys the handsome quantity of \$50 if they discreetly deliver Prince Arthur to him or to the Prussian Consulate in Cadened, Concordia; he’ll explain that he has friends there. Before waving the player characters goodbye, Hans will share how sad Arthur’s mother is; “the boy might be a little deranged, but she still adores him⁶.”

Hans will refuse to hand them the photograph, nor will he advance any money for expenses.

³See Section 12 on page 142.

⁴See Section 12 on page 166.

⁵Though rare and experimental, color photography [did exist since the late XIX century](#).

⁶The game master may secretly check Hans’ Performance skill against a TN of 11, on a fail., He should tell the players that Hans does not seem completely sincere, and that perhaps he’s only concerned about the reward.

Scene 1: First sales

Inform the players that they can sell⁷ their newspapers as usual, while still keeping an eye out for Arthur. They have made quite an investment with their start-up money and will be concerned for the success of their business.

Scene 2: Bullies

After two hours of selling, they will see a group⁸ of bullies⁹ running after Arthur. The poor boy, still a bit overweight and not used to running, will trip over a basket of fruit that lay by a grocer's window. He will fall, belly first on a wagonload of tomatoes. The bullies will proceed to attack Arthur and rob him of his remaining valuables. In 1sd turn, the shopkeeper¹⁰ will appear, armed with a broom¹¹; in 2sd turns, two members of the New Paris Constabulary will arrive. The shopkeeper will attack any child in sight, treating them all as troublemakers, while the New Paris Constabulary will act with much more sense.

Should the player characters intervene, the bullies will fight them until defeated or until the arrival of the constabularies. With the exception of newspapers, the bullies will make their best attempt to steal all the valuables from the player characters, including shoes and coats.

Scene 3: An orphan from Caen

After the fight is over, the player characters may want to earn the trust of Arthur. The boy, however, will claim to be an orphan from Caen, France, who has just arrived at New Paris. He will stick to this story because he does not expect anybody to believe the truth, nor does he want to risk it. Under no circumstance will he go to the Prussian Consulate, though he might agree to join the player characters who are selling newspapers and seek admittance to

⁷See "Selling Rules" in Section 8 on page 111.

⁸Adjust according to the size, equipment and abilities of the player characters.

⁹See stats on page 195.

¹⁰Treat him as an "Average Adult", see stats on page 194

¹¹Treat as a stick

the Newsboy Lodge. The game master might hint to the players that it is hard to break the shields of a stray child, especially one who has just been in a fight.

Once the player characters earn Arthur's confidence, let them finish selling their newspapers, and then spend the rest of the day as they see fit; trying to earn extra money, having fun at the beach or exploring the city, with as much or little detail as the game master wants. It can go from the instruction "...and you spend the rest of the day together..." to a full adventure on its own.

Let the day end at the Newsboy Lodge.

Notes

- ☛ The bullies don't know anything about Arthur; they just saw him as an easy target.
- ☛ If the player characters intervene it would be much easier for them to earn the trust of Arthur.
- ☛ Don't roll dice to determine if the player characters win Arthur's trust or not; let them role-play it and award it if they play it that way. If in doubt, just flip a coin.



Scene 4: A sneaky truth

Location: Exterior, on Newspaper's Row

Date: Dawn, in August, on a Tuesday

Right after having their oats and quarter sausage breakfast, the player characters have arrived at Newspaper's Row as usual, to buy their bundles. While waiting in line for the warehouse to open, Arthur will open up a bit about his tragedy. If the player characters seem to listen, he'll share that there's some bad man after him; "He thoroughly detested my father and murdered him and he wants to murder me too." If the player characters suggest going to the Constabulary, Arthur will say something like; "I reckon my father had some unsolved matters with the authorities and I assume they believe I have also committed something very wrong."¹²

Scene 5: Kidnappers

The player characters spot Hans along with everyone in the group of bullies who was not arrested by the Constabulary officers. Hans is carrying his blowpipe with six blue poisoned darts under his coat. His plan is to make the player characters and Arthur run away, force them into some narrow, dead-end alley, put Arthur to sleep and take the boy to the Prussian Consulate at 63 Wolfe Avenue. There, he will wait for instructions from Berlin. Hans will leave the other children to the bullies, who will do their best to rob them.

At this time of the day, the Constabulary will not arrive until 1 sd turn after somebody is smart enough to shout for help. Once the policemen arrive, both Hans and the gang of bullies will run away.

Note: At this point, the adventure has so many options and variants for the players to try, it is more convenient to structure the adventure generally in acts. Only the most likely situations are divided into scenes.

¹²The United States have much more interest in Prussia than in Borgonnia, and while Arthur is no expert in foreign policy, he's not sure of how the American authorities would react, if they don't lock him up in an asylum in the first place. In that circumstance he would be forced to lie to a policemen and he has the good sense to know how bad an idea that would be.

Player characters would perhaps believe that the boy's parents were involved in criminal business of one kind or another.

Third Act (A): Prince Arthur escapes

If Arthur escapes, he will risk his chances sharing the truth with his new friends. Borgonnia lacks a consulate in New Paris and going to the embassy in Washington D.C. by train would be expensive and dangerous. Arthur doesn't want to contact the American authorities for the reasons explained in the previous act. Their best option is to try the British Consulate in Concordia at 177 Montcalm Street¹³, "just around the corner from the Prussian Consulate" at 63 Wolfe Avenue. If that fails, he'll beg the players to try again and visit Miss Abigail Hardpole, his former governess who resides in a small home near Boston.

The scenes proposed for this act are not in sequence. Instead, they should be used as needed.

Scene 6A: The British Consulate

In a last-ditch effort, Hans will guard the British Consulate, anticipating the moves of Prince Arthur. Five clerks¹⁴ from the Prussian Consulate are at their disposal. They will try to block, distract, hold and otherwise keep the player characters from helping Arthur, while Hans tries to kidnap him again. As a last resort, he will possibly use red poison. Hans will only resort to using his guns if his own life is at risk.

A couple of constabularies will come 1 sd after somebody calls out for them, causing the clerks to run away. This time Hans will face the cops to the bitter end.

Once our heroes are able to knock on the door of the British Legation, it will be opened next turn. It will remain so for 1 fd turns. If Arthur is able to get in, the Prussians will run away and the player characters will be safe. If not, the officers of the British Legation will close the door on the case, assuming it appears to be a street brawl. The case will not be opened for eight hours.

¹³Suggested name

¹⁴Treat them as an "Average Adult", see stats on page 194.

Scene 7A: Convincing the British Consulate

Once the players are at the British Consulate, they will be received by an assistant who will inquire about the fuss outside. The assistant will appear to be overly skeptical, but will lead the player characters to the Consulate if they insist, or if the Golden Griffin is shown.

The Consul will appear to be a very gentle, easygoing man, but would not believe one single word of the player characters' story. No matter what they say, or what evidence they bring, the Consulate is convinced that this is just some childish prank. He will invite the player characters to leave. If necessary, he will call on the assistance of the legation staff or even the police if necessary.

After this scene, Arthur will tell the player characters about his former governess, Miss Abigail Hardpole, who lives in Boston. He will beg them to go there. Arthur pretty much expects the same reception in the Borgonnian Embassy. She is his last hope.

Scene 8A: Railroad block

Location: West Gate station

The Prussians are not aware of Miss Hardpole, so they would not be anticipating Arthur's journey to Boston. Nevertheless, they will place two agents at the West Gate station as it is the most important hub of communication in New Paris.

They would not dare to kidnap or harm Arthur; instead they will discreetly investigate their destination and, pretending to be Government agents, will coerce the train staff to not let the player characters in.

If the player characters try to resist, they will get nothing good from it. A confrontational attitude would only confirm to the railroad staff that they are involved in something fishy. This could soon escalate with the Constabulary men arresting them for misbehavior (a D-rated crime), resisting arrest (a C-rated crime), or worse.

Their alternatives are to either act as good kids, abandoning the train to find another way of transportation, or attempt to sneak into the train. (See scene 9A: "Getting to Boston").

If the players try to sneak back onto the train, let them make up some plan and solve the scene accordingly. Notice, however, that the Prussian agents will keep an eye out for them. If they are able to fool both the railroad staff and the Prussian agents they will board the train, suffering no further complications until they arrive in Boston. Proceed to “It all turned out to...”.

Scene 9A: Getting to Boston

The greatest obstacle the players will have in this scene is desperation. After the disappointment at the British Consulate and the incident in the railroad station, the players could feel that everything is against them. Younger players might need a little reassurance from the game master, though all they need to win the adventure is to arrive in Boston.

Their first alternative might be to board some merchant ship or a fishing boat that is on its way to Boston. Although not impossible, that would require some research and planning. They may have to stay for up to 2 nd days until an appropriate ship departs. Even then, a number of up to 1 wd Prussian agents will be checking the docks in Old Harbor; twice as many in New Harbor, trying their best to fool the characters. If the players sail in sight of the agents (six hours later), the agents will hire a boat two knots faster¹⁵ and persecute them at sea.

Their second alternative is simpler: walk to a nearby city and board a train there, or walk to Boston. Both alternatives would succeed as long as the players are not being shadowed (see variant 1 and 2 on page 192) and as long as the players do nothing that attracts undesired attention. Proceed to “It all turned out to...”.

Third Act (B): Arthur is captured

If Arthur is kidnapped and the players still want to win the adventure, the thing to do would be to find where Arthur is being held and rescue him. Up to this time, the player characters cannot be certain of Arthur’s true identity and what is at stake.

¹⁵Around 3 mph faster.

Scene 6B: The investigation

Defeated, the player characters would regroup near the Newsboy Lodge. There, they can get medical attention, a loan¹⁶ if needed, and more importantly, read the news.

The newspaper reports on the story of the Royal Borgonnian Family's funeral, which is attended by a host of diplomats, sovereigns and presidents of nearby countries, including King Edward of the United Kingdom himself. As a side note, while the whole Royal Family is believed to have been murdered, the body of young Prince Arthur has not yet been found. The Borgonnian police reckon that the regicides concealed his body first, but could not do the same with the rest of the Royals. His disappearance has caused the delay of the ceremony. A photo of Arthur, overweight and wearing a Lieutenant's uniform, is printed to the right of the article.

The Constabulary would never believe that Prince Arthur has been kidnapped in New Paris, especially from the testimony of a bunch of newsboys; but let them try if they so wish. The newspapers will be as skeptical and at most, will publish a small article in their next edition about a missing French child or a fight among street rats.

If the player characters continue with their mission, their remaining choice is to investigate the story themselves. Tracking the leads of Hans would be next to impossible, as passersby would have destroyed all evidence just by stepping on it. At most, if they spend at least one hour searching for evidence, an Observation check (TN 13) would reveal a laundry receipt obtained at Abraham Plains Laundry, in Concordia, near the consulates of two dozen foreign nations.

Following the lead at Abraham Plains Laundry can produce better results. Indeed, their best hope is to discreetly ask the staff; one of them is a boy who has recently arrived from Prussia who will immediately recognize Hans' accent.

If the player characters decide to go for the bullies, it would take them at least two hours to investigate; asking in ale houses and similar places of low repute to learn that they live in a bleak house in the Inner Expanses, but little else. Befriending them enough so that they share their stories would take them the rest of the day. Eavesdropping might be faster, but it would be equally dangerous. In any case, all they learn is that the bullies were met on the street

¹⁶Up to \$3 each to be returned in one week.

by the same German man who asked them about Arthur, and that they believe Arthur will “*meet de devil fo’ dinne’ befo’ soon.*”

Scene 7B: Sneaking in the Prussian Consulate

The building is a two storey Gothic-looking structure with a cellar where Arthur is kept, distressed, barely awake and chained to his bed.

The players have up to 11:00 p.m. on the day after the kidnapping to save Arthur. At that time, a telegram from Berlin will order Hans to “execute the special command”. During work hours Hans, together with the Consulate, one porter, two maids and four clerks, all staunchly loyal to the Prussian Government, remain and work on the premises. They will slowly return to their homes at 5 p.m. At night only Hans, the Consulate and two Prussian agents will remain, one of who will remain at the cellar door guarding Arthur at all times.

The Consulate lacks special security measures¹⁷; the doors and windows are ordinary and even the main door will only be closed at night. During office hours, the Consulate proceeds with its usual operations.

If the players succeed at rescuing Arthur, there could be a short flight to the British Consulate, as if Arthur had not been kidnapped (proceed to scene 6A), with just the modifications brought by the course of action and the story.

"It all turned out to..."

Supposing that all goes well and Arthur arrives in Boston, they’ll have the task of finding Miss Hardpole. The game master might choose to let the first passerby know the location of her home, let the players do a little investigation (like asking messenger boys, local pastors or postmen) or convert it into an adventure on its own. However, in the standard game, Miss Hardpole’s home will be just outside Boston, near enough to the railroad lines that Arthur will be able to see her from the train.

Once they meet Miss Hardpole, she will take Prince Arthur to the Borgonnian Embassy in Boston. Heavy diplomatic maneuvers and bribes will keep the

¹⁷See variations on page [192](#).

news of the Prussian involvement from slipping into public knowledge to advert the possibility of a world war, which in the short run, will be devastating for Borgonnia and in the long run terrible for Prussia. Instead, Prussia will agree to pay a secret compensation and order the homicides to be kept on a British prison ship for life.

In two days, newspapers will sell the story that Prince Arthur has been kidnapped by one of the murderers and taken to Boston, where he escaped. The culprit is supposed to still be at large.

Prince Arthur will return to his homeland to be cheered by all, and proclaimed by the Borgonnian House of Commons as Crown Prince and future King. Arthur will invite his new friends to go with him, (this time in the HBMS¹⁸ Audax, the Borgonnian flagship¹⁹), to live in the palace. If the player characters agree, the adventures are not over, for the Prussian's plots against Borgonnia will continue. Let them divide three normal dice worth of chit points among their characters.

If the player characters would rather remain newsies – which doesn't seem quite realistic – let the players divide three sd worth of chit points among their characters. Add to the lot a contact in the Borgonnian Embassy. Whenever they are in trouble, or short of money, a telegram to the Borgonnian Embassy will mean certain, yet perhaps delayed help.

Rumors and variants

Rumors

1. D: A slow but ponderous mechanical man guards the Prussian Consulate.
2. E: A ghost appears at the cellar of the Prussian Consulate every Halloween night. He, she or it has remained undetected, as people rarely go to the cellar at night.

¹⁸His Borgonnian Majesty Ship.

¹⁹The Borgonnian Navy has its main base in Antwerp, Borgonnia.

Variants

1. For a more challenging game, have two Prussian agents shadow the player characters at all times. They will not intervene unless attacked, if the players abandon the city precincts, or if they go to an area without witnesses where they make an easy target. In this case the agents will do their utmost to capture Arthur.
2. Let Hans use white poison on player characters.
3. If the players walk to Boston, you might want to add a few small encounters along the way or even turn it into an adventure itself.
4. Warning Wagners (see “Bits and notes” below) could be guarding the Prussian Consulate.
5. Give any Prussian agent a Mechanical Dragonfly (see “Bits and notes” below).
6. When the players arrive in Boston, they discover that Miss Hardpole, while hiding from Prussian agents, has left them a secret message. The player characters must decipher that message, find Miss Hardpole, dodge the Prussian agents and safely arrive at the Borgonnian Consulate.

Bits and notes

If you want to go a little steampunk, you could add any or both of the following two cool spy tools:

Mechanical Dragonfly

Made of silk and thin aluminum, the Mechanical Dragonfly works on a diminutive gasoline engine. It's equipped with a needle that will harm no one unless it's loaded, as usual, with up to three doses of poison.

The Mechanical Dragonfly follows human heat, thanks to a super-science Prussian heat detector. Ten seconds after being activated, it must be guided in the general direction of its victim.

Pace: 6

STR 1 wd HTH 1 fd AGI 4 nd EDU – E&E 3 wd²⁰ CHA–

Good at: Athletics (mostly flying), Observation, Dodging, Fighting

Bad at: Every other skill

OK at: Nothing

Equipment: Up to three doses of any potion.

Warning Wagner

In the guise of small bronze Valkyries, these will play an extremely loud version of a famous Wagner piece if stepped on or touched. Two of these will be placed on the floor of the Prussian Consulate, right under the cellar window. If the player characters aren't careful,²¹ make them check Agility against a TN of 13 to avoid setting them in action.

²⁰Heat following sensor only.

²¹They aren't watching for traps, etc.

C. Generic Non Player Characters

Caveat This list of non-player characters and monsters has not been generated following the rules for player characters and they are not designed to be used as player characters.

Human averages

These stats are for the minor non-player characters (NPC) of your game. The bartender, a passerby, an old lady who asks for a favor or a random pickpocket from the street. These can be introduced in any story and the game master can trim the stats to care for their players, the story or just to add a little variation.

Average NPC adult

Pace 4

STR 4 nd HTH 4 nd AGI 3 nd EDU 3 wd E&E 3 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Crafts

Bad at: Nothing

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: B-grade clothing, usually around \$3.00 in pocket money, cheap watch, two NPET tokens

Average NPC boy or girl

Age 12, pace 4

STR 4 wd HTH 3 wd AGI 3 wd EDU 3 wd E&E 3 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Nothing

Bad at: Nothing

OK at: Every skill

Equipment: C-grade clothing, usually around 20 cents in pocket money, baseball or cheap toy, tools of his trade, if any

Average bully or young mugger

Age 13, pace 4

STR 2 wd 2 nd HTH 4 wd AGI 3 wd EDU 1 wd E&E 3 wd CHA 2 wd

Good at: Fisticuffs, Dodging, Throwing, Athletics

Bad at: Academics, Healing, Performance, Sweet Talk

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: C-grade clothing, usually around 30 cents in pocket money, baseball cap, slingshot, sometimes an improvised weapon

Veteran pickpocket

Gender: boy, age 14, pace 4

STR 3 wd HTH 2 wd AGI 4 wd EDU 3 wd E&E 4 wd CHA 4 wd

Good at: Athletics, Observation, Dodging, Pickpockets, Locks, Performance

Bad at: Academics, Vehicles, Mechanics

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: B-grade clothing, 30 cents, four sets of caps and handkerchiefs to change his appearance on the spot, penknife

“Tender feet” pickpocket

Gender: boy, age 10, pace 4

STR 2 wd HTH 2 wd AGI 4 wd EDU 2 wd E&E 4 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Athletics, Observation, Dodging

Bad at: Academics, Vehicles, Mechanics

OK at: Every other skill

Stuff: D-grade clothing, 5 cents

Note: This kind of pickpocket is desperate for affection and will follow almost any adult, good or bad, anywhere.

Newsboy, average

Gender: boy, age 12, pace 4

STR 3 wd HTH 2 wd AGI 4 wd EDU 2 wd E&E 4 wd CHA 4 wd

Good at: Athletics, Performance, Sweet Talk, Shooting

Bad at: Academics

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: C-grade clothing, baseball, newspaper bag, \$2, \$10 in the bank

Animals**Giant mosquitoes**

Pace 7

STR 1 fd HTH – AGI 4 d EDU – E&E 4 wd CHA –

Good at: Fighting

Bad at: Every other skill

OK at: Dodging

Notes

☞ In game terms a giant mosquito bite is a non-lethal weapon with a damage strength of 9.

☞ Giant mosquitoes are killed by any hit they are not able to dodge.

☞ Giant mosquitoes attack in groups of 12, but only at night.

Giant mosquitoes are the most hated residents of New Paris Slums. With a length of three inches and as voracious as their smaller brethren, these vampires can turn any night into a nightmare. Giant mosquitoes are most often found in and around the New Paris Landfill. They prefer to attack sleeping animals, but when hungry they will take any risk to fill their abdomens.

Dog, Alsatian (German shepherd)

Pace 5

STR 2 nd 1 wd HTH 3 nd AGI 4 nd EDU 1 wd E&E 3 wd CHA 2 wd

Good at: Dodging, Observation, Fisticuffs, Athletics

Bad at: All human skills

OK at: Every other skill

Cat

Pace 4

STR 3 fd HTH 3 wd AGI 5 nd EDU 1 wd E&E 3 nd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Dodging, Observation, Fisticuffs, Athletics, Stealth

Bad at: Locks, Pickpockets, Riding, Vehicles, Academics, Crafts, Healing, Mechanics, Streetwise, Shooting, Languages, Performance and Sweet Talk

OK at: Every other skill

Horses

Pace 15

STR 6 nd HTH 3 wd AGI 5 nd EDU 1 wd E&E 3 nd CHA 2 fd

Good at: Dodging, Observation, Athletics

Bad at: Locks, Pickpockets, Riding, Vehicles, Academics, Crafts, Healing, Mechanics, Streetwise, Shooting, Languages, Performance and Sweet Talk

OK at: Every other skill

Horses, mules and carriages are still more common than automobiles in New Paris, used especially for transporting cargo. These stats are for an average horse; reduce them for a mule or donkey.

Giant roach

Pace 4

STR 3 fd HTH 2 fd AGI 3 wd EDU 1 fd E&E 3 fd – CHA –

Good at: Dodging, Stealth

Bad at: Locks, Pickpockets, Riding, Vehicles, Academics, Crafts, Healing, Mechanics, Streetwise, Shooting, Languages, Performance and Sweet Talk

OK at: Every other skill

These roaches, the size of a kitten, can only be found in the New Paris Landfill and in the deepest places of the sewers. Giant roaches have a poisonous bite, equivalent to one single dose of green poison, yet they are timid, attacking only if cornered or if running away from a greater danger.

Crocodile

Pace 5

STR 6 nd HTH 6 nd AGI 4 wd EDU 1 fd E&E 3 wd CHA 1 fd

Good at: Observation, Fisticuffs, Swimming

Bad at: Locks, Pickpockets, Riding, Vehicles, Academics, Crafts, Healing, Mechanics, Streetwise, Shooting, Languages, Performance and Sweet Talk

OK at: Every other skill

Monsters

This is a list of examples of what could be in stock, should any of the most uncanny rumors ever be true. These monsters are extremely rare and they have not ever been seen by any sane person; or if they were, at least they did not come back to tell their story. As their very existence is a rumor, the game master should feel free to change any of their details in any way. Just remember to keep it fair for players.

Zombie

An E-class rumor, page 3

STR 4 nd HTH 1 fd AGI 2 wd EDU 1 wd E&E 2 wd CHA 1 fd

Good at: Nothing

Bad at: All skills

OK at: Nothing

Zombies will either be working as slaves or guards in the secret hideout of some mad wizard or doctor¹.

¹While zombies have a terrible appearance, they are literally crumbling down in pieces and are a much easier target than in other games. There is no need the players know this, of course.

Giant spider

An E-class rumor, pace 4

STR 3 nd HTH 4 nd AGI 4 nd EDU 1 or 3 wd E&E 3 nd CHA 3 fd or 3 wd

Good at: Fisticuffs, Dodging, Athletics, Observation, Streetwise (sewers only)

Bad at: Locks, Pickpockets, Riding, Vehicles, Academics, Crafts, Healing, Mechanics, Streetwise, Shooting, Languages, Performance and Sweet Talk

OK at: Every other skill

This monster takes refuge in the sewers and for the most part, eats cats, small dogs and rodents, though it could attack anybody. The giant spider is no larger than a dog, though its green poison makes it dangerous. Once subdued, the victim will be rolled in silk and then transported to the web for later consumption.

The game master might choose to make the giant spider sentient and able to speak. In that case, Education and Charisma scores should be at least 3wd, allowing the monster to negotiate with its subdued human prey, to attain more complex objectives.

Apollinarian

An E-class rumor

☞ Note that there are no stats for Apollinarians; just add 1 sd to the Charisma score of any creature raised as an Apollinarian.

The Apollinarian² is a strange kind of undead creature, created by powerful sorcerers using a secret ritual on a moribund body. Though an E-class rumor states that the angst for losing a loved one could also create one. In any case, death should not be older than two months at the time of its creation. Once the spell is cast, the body transforms within hours into the perfect servant.

An Apollinarian resembles the person (or animal) it once was. However, it is free of any ailments, sickness or other impairments. Moreover, they are

²I first created the Apollinarian for True20, being a fan of that game, yet I could not resist adding it here too.

strikingly beautiful and apparently of a young age. Apollinarians appear to be of any of three ages: 13, 23 or 33. Those who died at age 12 or younger are “risen” as 13 years old, those who died older than 12 and younger than 34 are “risen” as 23 years old and those who died at 34 or older are “risen” as 33 years old.

If harmed by a weapon they won’t bleed, and when smitten or otherwise “killed”, they will fall to the ground asleep and will not awake until the ritual is repeated. An Apollinarian can get sick or poisoned, but if it survives the first 24 hours it will recover instantly by the next dawn.

An Apollinarian is at all times very polite and warm, never to be angered, show fear or related emotions, though it could cry in sympathy. They will obey every command that they receive, and if ordered to kill or harm someone they will do so with the utmost courtesy for their victim. They retain the basic skills and knowledge from when they were living, but again, will only use them as ordered to.

Apollinarians cannot leave a designated area of roughly one acre or less. So, they are normally used as laborers and house servants, where they work without a single complaint for ages. If an Apollinarian is ever forced out of their area, they will become paralyzed from the neck down until they are returned.

Apollinarians only eat ambrosia³, needing one spoonful per day, otherwise they fall into a deep sleep until fed.

An Apollinarian can be restored to mortal life by taking it to a church or other sacred space. Their emotions will return to normal, but they will retain their appearance. From that point on the Apollinarian will age normally. Apollinarians will wake up gravely injured, sick, burned, starved or in other grave conditions as appropriate to the cause of their first death⁴.

To change any creature into an Apollinarian, just add 1 sd to its Charisma attribute.

Mechanical Guard

A D-class rumor, pace 4

STR 6 sd

HTH 6 sd

AGI 3 fd

EDU –

E&E –

CHA –

³Honey mixed with milk.

⁴As in gravely sick in game terms.

Good at: Nothing

Bad at: Every skill except Fisticuffs

OK at: Fisticuffs

The Mechanical Guard is programmed with punch cards that are inserted into a slot in its head, programming it to perform in a circular route. It will attack anything that gets in its way, sounding a loud alarm. Its battery lasts for two hours of continued operation; models designed to work inside a home or structure are fed⁵ with a cable or trolley pole.

China Children

A C-class rumor, page 3

STR 3 wd HTH 2 fd AGI 3 wd EDU 3 wd E&E 3 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Nothing

Bad at: Nothing

OK at: Every skill

China Children look like life-sized porcelain statues of children. China Children are created by a mysterious sewer virus that slowly turns the skin of those infected into the palest white. Their hair falls out and the whole body becomes frail and brittle. The sickness also affects the victim's behavior, causing them to dread human company and stay hidden in the sewers. China Children can sleep for months with no need of nourishment.

Those who touch them or their personal belongings will be infected if they fail a Health Check (TN 12). There is no known cure.

Adults are more sensitive to the China Virus, dying in hours after the infection, to rest forever in the likeness of a china statue.

⁵The one at the Prussian Consulate, see rumor 1 of the "Hidden Prince Adventure", uses a cable and a small five-minute battery.

Giant centipede

A D-class rumor, pace 4

STR 3 wd HTH 3 wd AGI 4 nd EDU 1 fd E&E 3 nd CHA –

Good at: Stealth

Bad at: Locks, Pickpockets, Riding, Vehicles, Academics, Crafts, Healing, Mechanics, Streetwise, Shooting, Languages, Performance and Sweet Talk

OK at: Every other skill

Note: Acid bite. A giant centipede attacks as if its Strength rating were 3 sd.

Another underground dweller, the giant centipede is a solitary predator. The beast hides in a tunnel, waiting for easy prey.

Giant rat

A B-class rumor, pace 5

STR 3 wd HTH 3 sd AGI 4 wd EDU 1 fd E&E 3 wd CHA 1 fd

Good at: Dodging, Observation, Fisticuffs, Swimming

Bad at: Locks, Pickpockets, Riding, Vehicles, Academics, Crafts, Healing, Mechanics, Streetwise, Shooting, Languages, Performance and Sweet Talk

OK at: Every other skill

Giant rats are the size of small dogs, only tougher. Giant rats have found their dream home in the New Paris Landfill and sewers, according to the rumors that also speak about lost children who never return.

White Lady

An E-class rumor, page 9

STR 3 nd HTH 3 nd AGI 3 nd EDU 6 sd E&E 3 wd CHA 6 sd

Good at: Healing, Athletics, Dodging, Observation, Fisticuffs, Swimming

Bad at: Vehicles, Mechanics, Riding

OK at: Every other skill

White Ladies appear to be young women, always dressed in delicate long robes, who come to earth from some spiritual plane. They meet the player characters, always at night in desolate places. They beg for favors or some truly heroic and dangerous deed.

If the player characters agree, they will each be given a blessing (and 3 sd worth of chits). If they refuse, the White Ladies will give them a white shroud and a miniature tombstone with their names engraved on it. (Each one of them would lose 1 chit in the process.)

If the player characters ever give up their new quest for more than one day, the White Ladies will come during the night to lure them to the cemetery and leave them there, without a single word spoken. Due to fear and shock, the player characters will lose all their remaining chits.

D. Pre-generated characters

Danny, the Professor

Age 14, birthday July the 4th, pace 4, chits 6

STR 3 wd HTH 3 wd AGI 3 wd EDU 3 wd 1 nd E&E 3 wd CHA 2 wd 1 nd

Good at: Performance, Sweet Talk, Shooting, Crafts, Healing, Streetwise, Observation, Stealth

Bad at: Pickpockets, Locks, Vehicles, Shooting

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: B-grade clothes, \$1.80, whistle, football, bicycle

Background: USA (New York), father is dead, mother is missing

Suggested role: Danny is a good Samaritan, always helping those in need. He looks for new kids and tries to keep them out of trouble. He teaches them the basics of the newsboy trade until they are able to fend for themselves. Danny is mostly self-educated; his science is a strange mix of facts with little structure. He could do well at school and his secret vocation is to lead a congregation some day.

Mary “Magpie” Bruggess

Age 12, birthday July the 4th, pace 4, chits 8

STR 2 wd HTH 3 wd AGI 2 wd 1 nd EDU 3 wd E&E 3 wd CHA 3 wd 1 nd

Good at: Performance, Languages, Sweet Talk, Shooting, Stealth, Pickpockets

Bad at: Fisticuffs, Healing, Academics, Locks, Vehicles, Throwing

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: C-grade clothes,, \$2.10, whistle, double-headed coin, harmonica

Background: West Gate, father is dead, mother is unknown

Suggested role: Mary did not know her mother and her father died when she was three years old. Parentless, she became an easy prey for a certain fagin¹ who made her steal until she felt strong enough to escape to a new life.

James “Dreamer” Farrell

Age 12, birthday July the 4th, pace 4, chits 8

STR 3 wd HTH 2 wd AGI 3 wd EDU 4 wd E&E 3 wd CHA 4 wd

Good at: Academics, Languages, Sweet Talk, Mechanics, Observation, Swimming

Bad at: Athletics, Locks, Dodging, Pickpockets, Performance, Healing

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: A-grade clothes, \$2.10, magnifying glass, bicycle, baseball, cat, whistle, warm sweater, New Paris City map

Background: Outer Expanses, father is missing, mother is dead

Suggested Role: James Farrell is a 12-year-old boy from the Hook in the Outer Expanses of New Paris City. His dad went west, trying to find a better future for the family and James hasn't heard from him in two years. His mother died nine months ago. Unable to pay the rent on his own, James Farrell survives at the Newsboy Lodge, selling newspapers. He's lucky to have kept his best Sunday clothes, because that means he can sell the best and most expensive newspapers. He can go where many other

¹New Parisian slang for the adult leader of a pickpocket gang.

newsboys won't ever be admitted; the Grand Opera House of New Paris being one example. James dreams of earning admission and a scholarship at some boarding school, so he can become a “learned, important man”, just as his mother advised him while on her death bed. Known as a nerd and somewhat of a rich boy among other newsies, he wishes to become a little more popular. Of course, he also wishes to know about his dad, who he fears could be dead, or much worse. Otherwise, he strives to spend time with adults, to be popular among them and perhaps gain a mentor of sorts; that would make his day.

Anne “Goldfinch” Hollister

Age 10, birthday July the 4th, pace 3, chits 10

STR 3 wd HTH 3 wd AGI 3 wd EDU 3 wd E&E 2 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Healing, Performance, Mechanics, Languages

Bad at: Pickpockets, Locks, Vehicles, Shooting, Throwing, Observation, Fisticuffs

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: D-grade clothes, \$1.50, cheap rag doll, flute, bowl, magnifying glass, pen & ink flask, matchbox

Background: United States (Virginia), parents are dead

Suggested role: Anne is a pretty absent-minded girl who has traveled all the way from Virginia to New Paris, after escaping from an orphanage of dubious quality. Since escaping, she has been able to feed herself by singing in saloons and doing all sorts of odd jobs. Her clothes are ragged after weeks of traveling by foot and jumping on livestock trains.

Fred “Wardrobe” Listz

Age 14, birthday July the 4th, pace 4, chits 6

STR 3 wd 1 nd HTH 4 wd AGI 4 wd EDU 2 wd E&E 3 wd CHA 2 wd

Good at: Fisticuffs, Athletics, Dodging, Streetwise, Stealth, Observation, Swimming, Throwing

Bad at: Languages, Vehicles, Healing

OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: C-grade clothes, \$1.90, New Paris City map, hammer, 3 NPET tokens

Background: Concordia (Point South), father and mother are missing

Suggested role: Fred is the kind of friend you want to have around during a fight. He’s not a genius, but neither is he dumb. He’s just not much interested in class, beyond the basics. Fred’s secret dream is to join the New Paris Constabulary someday. He can be quite patient, but once he’s angry you’d better run.

Billy “Mouse” Elliot

Age 11, birthday July the 4th, pace 3, chits 9

STR 2 wd HTH 2 wd AGI 4 wd EDU 3 wd E&E 4 wd CHA 3 wd

Good at: Stealth, Observation, Athletics, Sweet Talk, Streetwise

Bad at: Fisticuffs, Academics, Languages, Vehicles, Performance, Throwing

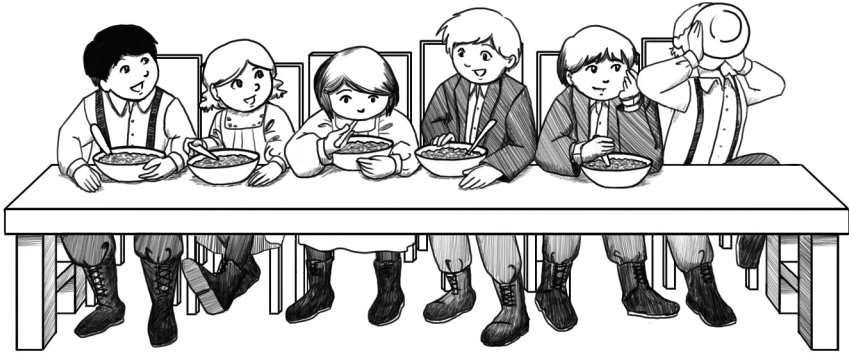
OK at: Every other skill

Equipment: E-grade clothes².

Background: Decree Slums, father is missing, mother is dead

Suggested role: Billy is the type of quick, easygoing and generally cheerful kid who will always try something new and hope for the best. Before becoming a newsboy, Billy spent two months hiding in the sewers; he feels confident there.

²Poor Billy was robbed of all his stuff.



A word from the editor

"I had the pleasure of working with Miguel while proofreading Newsies & Bootblacks. It was a delight to sift through the neverending details of the manuscript, and be entertained by the proposed adventures of the characters. This was one of the most fun proof-reading projects I have ever worked on.

Proofreading this was in fact, a game, as I was introduced to the many different terminologies that were new to me. Establishing patterns and designing a style guide to record the use of attributes and skills, chit points, target numbers and die rolls, to name a few, was enchanting. If you are a gamer, I have no doubt that this will appeal to you.

Have fun! All the best with your game, Miguel."

Davina Haisell | <http://www.ShadesOfCrimson.com> rendering the write impact

Business phone: 604 732 0902 (PST)

And thank you for all your work and dedication, Davina.

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Name:

Age

Pace:

Background

Attributes

Bruises
Hurt
Grave
Dead

STR:

AGI:

HLT:

E&E

EDU:

CHA:



Skills

Athletics (AGI)
Craft (EDU)
Healing (EDU)
Mechanics (EDU)
Pickpockets (AGI)
Swimming (AGI)
Sweet Talk (CHA)

Academics (EDU)
Dodging (AGI)
Languages (CHA)
Observation (E&E)
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Stuff

Liza

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