

Dark Ronin RPG

A rules-lite roleplaying game of Ronin in feudal Japan
Dark Ronin is a hack of Cthulhu Dark by Graham Walmsley



Your Ronin

-Choose a name for your Ronin, something Japanese sounding is best, and tell us what you look like. Now tell us what your melee weapon looks like, the more detail the better. Don't just say it's a sword. Now think about your past.

Face (On)

-Take one red six sided die (d6) and set it to the number six. This die represents your honor, your Face and your renown. The number on this die represents who you are, guard it well. Always remember its value.

The Face (On) die

-When you do anything that could tarnish your honor, make you lose Face, or hurt your On, make a Face roll by rolling this die. If you roll lower than its current value somehow you messed up and it drops by one point. Tell us or roleplay how you dishonored or embarrassed yourself. Remember the new value.

-That die is all that matters. In this world of feudal Japan you are what people know about you. Your actions, your honor and your story all add up to that one die. When it reaches 1 your life is over, you hate yourself and want to die. Seppuku is the only way to redeem what you have become or what you have done. Take one last day to be alive. When that day is over tell us how you die. Now make a new character and let's keep playing.

Doing things

-To know how well you do at something, roll:

> one d6 if it's honorable.

> one d6 if you use your weapon or flattery.

> your face die if you are willing to lose face.

-If your Face die rolls lower than any other die make a Face roll.

-Your highest die determines how well you do. Rolling a 1 means you fail, a 2 you barely succeed, and with a 6 you do brilliantly.

-Action Example: You are running through the city at night trying to get away from some city guards. If you roll a 1, you trip and are caught. Roll a 2 and you manage to duck into an alley and hide as they pass you by. Roll a 6 and you loose the guards, double back and watch them scratch their heads from a perfect hiding spot.

-Social Example: When rolling dice in social situations a 1 gets you nothing you desire and you are ignored by others, maybe even laughed at. Roll a 2 and you barely succeed with a one word answer. Roll a 6 and you leave the conversation with the information you desire and may be owed a favor. Please roleplay the social encounter after you roll. Remember if you rolled a low result on your Face die you may have embarrassed yourself and a face roll is required. Again, roleplay the terrible mistake you made if you lose Face.

Failing

-If another player thinks it might be more interesting if you failed, they describe how you might fail and roll a single die. If they roll higher than your highest die, you fail in the way they describe.

Rerolling

-You may reroll any roll once, but you must include your Face die and keep the new result.

Co-operating, Competing and Duelling

-To cooperate everyone involved rolls their dice. The highest roll determines the outcome.

-To compete with an npc or another player, both sides roll their dice and the highest result decides the outcome.

-Duels in Dark Ronin are usually one strike fights where someone dies. Please don't rush into duels. Katanas and other weapons are deadly, and since no Ronin can afford armor a hit usually means you die. In a duel each person rolls their dice and the highest wins. If a player character is on the receiving end of a deadly strike they may reduce their Face die by half to circumvent fate and survive a lost duel. This may only happen once per day. The disgust this cowardly act causes makes your enemy revile you and leave out of pity.

The duel is over and considered lost. Rerolls are allowed in duels. If you want to duel a Samurai in full armor it's best you run and hide. A 6 is required to win, all other results mean you lose.

Non Lethal Duels

-It is perfectly honorable to duel with nonlethal wooden weapons. Boken and other wooded practice weapons are generally available in most towns, villages and cities. Losing a duel with a wooden weapon results in the loss of 1 Face point on your Face die. Better than dying right? Some Ronin, usually Sensei, carry boken in addition to their main weapon.

Armor

-Ronin can't afford armor, end of story. Having a good weapon, some clothes on your back and a ball of sticky rice is the best they can hope for. Stealing some armor would bring the Emperor's magistrates and that wouldn't end well so don't bother.

Living and dying

-If a character wins a duel, or an important social challenge, their Face die is automatically raised by one point to a maximum of 6. If a character loses a duel and dies they have realized the harsh reality of being a Ronin in feudal Japan. Make a new character and start over.

Notes and Questions

-Where is the character sheet? There isn't one. Just remember your name, your story and keep that red die close to you turned up to its current value.

-GM section? I figured a game like this would be for experienced roleplayers and GMs. GMs please make up a loose story or adventure. Don't plan to much! A few minutes of planning is best or just watch more old Samurai movies.

End

-Feedback can be sent to matthelps@gmail.com or submitted at www.story-games.com. Image used is public domain. Please share, copy and distribute this game freely. Many thanks to all the wonderful folks at story-games.com. Mad props to gremlinlegion.blogspot.ca and thievesoftime.bigcartel.com. Also check out my blog at onenerdrpg.blogspot.ca for more RPG goodness in the near future.