

CINEMATIC ROLE-PLAYING

Empire of the Petal Throne © M.A.R. Barker, various.

Cinematic Role-Playing © 1997, 2009 (Except for concepts pertaining to the Tekumel/Empire of the Petal Throne setting) evilovertlord668@yahoo.com

Notice: This role-playing system may be used and distributed free of charge, provided credit is given to the author (me!). If you like it, please let me know.

The basis for *Cinematic* Role-Playing is simple - if you want a scenario (and hopefully the entire campaign) to be fun for everyone involved, the action and intrigue should flow like a movie. This requires a few concessions on the parts of both referee and players. The basic rules for *Cinematic* Role-Playing are shown below, then examples of play follow.

Cinematic Fantasy Role-Playing for ***Empire of the Petal Throne***

Attributes are chosen to describe the character. Examples are shown below:

- Strength
- Intelligence/Reason/Art/Craft
- Agility
- Fortitude/Stamina/Endurance
- Appearance
- Pedhetl (Psychic Reservoir)
- Psychic Ability

Roll 1d10 or 2d6 for each score.

Rating	d10	2d6
Poor	1	2
Average	2-3	3-5
Good	4-6	6-7
Excellent	7-8	8-9
Awesome	9	10-11
Superb	10	12
Legendary	*	*

*Legendary rating requires either referee's permission or a second roll of 10 (on 1d10) or 12 (on 2d6).

Talents - Characters receive a number of points equal to their Intelligence (or appropriate Mental Score) to place in the following categories as desired. Again, the exact name and type of Talent is chosen to describe the character.

Psychic Spells

Athletics

Scholar

Economic

Intrigue/Spycraft/Assassin

Languages (modern or ancient)

Combat

Ritual Spells

Creative

Wilderness/Swimming/Survival

Diplomatic/Charisma/Leadership

Communication

Ancient Lore

Determine Skill #. This is equal to (Talent + applicable Attribute)/2.

Skill # Checks. Determine the #'s for player and either NPC # or "difficulty" and consult the following table. Only one table is provided (for 2d6 System). It works the same for using 1d10 if you renumber the chart. If one axis is the player and the other is the skill # or difficulty # of the opponent or target, the player has to throw 50% to succeed in a situation against a difficulty or opponent of equal skill.

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12	12	12	12
3	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12	12	12
4	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12	12
5	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12
6	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
7	2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8	2	2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	2	2	2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	5	6

Contested throws

- In situations such as combat, both throws are made simultaneously. The throw succeeding by the highest margin takes effect first. This makes it hard for a novice to challenge an opponent of vastly greater skill - in this respect, it mirrors the real world.
- In the case of a tie, the "defender" succeeds.

Combat

- Roll on the above chart to strike opponent.
- The defender must throw against his/her/its "fortitude" score versus the skill of the attacking throw. Failure results in one "wound".
- A given object (including characters) can take a number of wounds equal to their "fortitude" or equivalent score. Each wound adds a cumulative -1 to all throws until healed.
- Armor or other protection adds to the Fortitude throw to resist the wound.
- Weapons or other considerations add to the throw to cause the wound.
- Generally, armor will provide no more than a +1 (light armor) or +2 (heavy armor) to the defense throw. Incredibly powerful spells or magical items might add more to the throw.
- The same holds true for weapons. "Heavy" weaponry such as polearms might add +2 to the damage throw while one-handed weapons should get no more than +1. Again, magical devices or weaponry might add a higher bonus.

The Variable Score

- In addition to the Attributes determined for the character, each character has a Variable score that rises and falls during the course of the scenario. In Empire of the Petal Throne, this Variable score might be called "Might" or "Honor" or "Nobility". In a Cyber Punk setting, the equivalent might be "Cool" or "Macho".
- This is typically equal to the character's best attribute or skill level. Modifications are then added to or subtracted from the Variable score depending on the situation.

- For example, if Vrahama hi Tsizea sets out from his clanhouse, leading his troops to the accompaniment of chanting priests, criers and with the blessing of the Governor of the City, his Might would be adjusted upward. If, later, the mighty Molkar was reduced to fleeing for his life, badly wounded and alone, his Might would be adjusted downward.
- The Variable score of noble Vrahama would compared to the Variable score (even if described differently) of his opponents. The difference between the scores can be used as a modifier to throws in the following manner.
- Vrahama has a Might of 6. His opponent, a Hlyss warrior, has a Ferocity of 7. This gives a -1 to all throws Vrahama makes against the Hlyss. Then the Hlyss is wounded and Vrahama's chanters urge him onward, chanting his praises to the Almighty Lord Sarku. His Might then increases to 9, giving him +2 on all throws against the Hlyss.

Cinematography

A role-playing scenario should keep everyone involved thoroughly entertained. This requires a few concessions on the part of both referee and players.

What sort of concessions?

- Previews. Describe scenes to the players before the game starts. Get 'em revved up about playing.
- Foreshadowing. Nothing wrong with cutting to the Bad Guy's point of view. Just don't reveal too much. For example, as the valiant and noble Vrahama races to stop the Mad Priests of the Pariah God from completing their Ignoble and Devastating Ritual, cut back in forth. 1) Vrahama slaying their minions...2)the priests beginning the final stages of their ritual...3) Back to the Melee...4) the Priest uttering the Final Invocation of Utter Doom...etc etc etc. Anything that keeps suspense and anticipation going is a good thing.
- Write the script. Face it, sometimes the characters will have to loose to keep the plot moving toward a truly Heroic conclusion. Conversely, sometimes they need to win regardless of their condition or die throws. Then DO IT! As long as it balances out, everyone should stay happy.
- Does this mean no one ever dies? Hell, no! Sometimes Heroic Deaths are needed - I just tend to make the NPCs bite it instead of the players. If a Character needs to die for the plot, discuss it with the player before hand.

By the way, you may have noticed (!) that these rules are skimpy and rely on the equal participation of players and the referee. Guilty on all counts! Personally, I dislike rule-heavy games and prefer interactive story-telling.

Any questions? Email me and I'll make up an answer for you.