

Heirs to the Lost World

Setting

The year is 1665 and the Americas are a land of mystery and adventure. Using their ancient powers of sorcery, the Aztecs have been fighting off Spanish conquistadors for almost 150 years. Although getting incredibly wealthy from their New World mines and the plunder from conquering smaller indigenous groups, the frustrated Spanish nonetheless continue their "righteous" crusade against these native warriors and their heathen spellcasters. Pirates and privateers from other European nations like the English, French, and Dutch prowl the Caribbean preying on fat Spanish galleons laden with treasure. American Indian tribes struggle against their traditional rivals as well as invaders from the East. Combining African magic with secret knowledge gained from both the Europeans and the New World cultures, escaped slaves form hidden colonies and wreak havoc on their former masters. In the midst of all of this, a comet streaks through the sky allowing a secret cult to open a gate to the Underworld Realm of Fear. Welcome to the Lost World!

You are a friend, member, or employee of a mysterious secret society called the Order of the New Dawn. Founded as an offshoot of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, the New Dawn has diverse members including American Indians such as Maya and Aztec, Africans, as well as Europeans. These dissimilar members are united in purpose to oppose the corruption, oppression, and tyranny that seems to be spreading through the Americas.

Mood: Cinematic over Realistic

The real world of 1665 was a grim place. Disease was common, life expectancies were short, and there was much suffering. On the other hand, the setting of *Heirs to the Lost World* is more similar to that seen in action-adventure movies rather than reality.



Rules

The abilities and talents of characters are represented with a collection of statistics recorded on a character sheet. Each character has scores in nine **traits**, further divided into **skills**. In addition, characters have a handful of regular dice, five **Effort** dice, and a single **Mojo** die. The Mojo die is a bonus die used in certain situations. Effort dice represent your character's health, and using these dice represents your character's focus and energy on a task. An Effort die is "spent" every time your character takes an action, sometimes the Effort die is rolled and sometimes it is not. Spending an Effort die unrolled is what an average person can do in one second without risk of failure (just set the die aside after spending it).

Skill Checks

When your character takes an action that has a chance of failure, the Game Director determines the appropriate trait and skill and sets the **difficulty** of the action. You, the player, then make a skill check by rolling a number of dice called your **dice pool**. The number of dice in the dice pool is equal to your skill rank, plus a number of Effort dice equal to your trait. You may choose to roll

fewer Effort dice to save some for later actions (important in action scenes, see below). By spending more or fewer Effort dice on an action, you decide where your character is focusing his or her energy and attention. The maximum number of Effort dice you can put in the dice pool is determined by your trait level. The minimum is a single Effort die.

Example: Foster is trying to climb a wall. The Game Director decides it is an Athletics skill check and the wall has a difficulty of 3. Foster has an Athletics of 2d and a BODY of 4e. Foster puts 2 dice plus 4 Effort dice into his dice pool.

Note that skill ranks are listed with a "d" after the number, and trait levels are listed with an "e" after the number. This is to help you remember that the skill rank sets the base number of dice in your dice pool while your trait sets the maximum number of Effort dice you can put in your dice pool.

Rolling dice in a skill check is a little more complicated than just adding up the numbers rolled. Each individual die that rolls a 4 or higher is considered a success. The roll's **result** is the total number of successes rolled. In other words, the result is the total number of dice that rolled a 4 or higher. If the result is equal to or greater than the difficulty, the action succeeds.

Example: Foster rolls the dice in his pool and gets a 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, and 5. Three of the dice rolled a 4 or higher. This gives him a result is 3. Since the difficulty was 3, this means he gets up the wall.

There is one additional rule when you roll dice. If you roll at least one 6 in a skill check, you **trigger your Mojo**. Your Mojo is that little something extra. This means you may roll your Mojo die as a bonus die and add its value (from 1 to 6) to the result.

Example: Simon wants to pick a lock. The Game Director decides this is a DEXTERITY - Thievery skill check against a difficulty of 5. Simon has a Thievery skill of 2d and a DEXTERITY of 3e. This means he can put up to five dice into his dice pool (two skill dice plus up to three Effort dice). Assume he rolled a 1, 3, 4, 6, and 6. The results is 3. In addition, Simon rolled at least one 6, so he gets to roll his Mojo die. Assume he rolled a 4 on the Mojo die so his total result is 7. This is higher than the difficulty so Simon succeeds in picking the lock.

Other Types of Checks

There are three other types of checks:

- **Opposed skill checks** are used when two characters are



competing so that each must make a skill check and the results are compared.

•**Trait checks** are used when there is no applicable skill. It is just like a skill check except you only roll a number of Effort dice up to your trait level. As in skill checks, you must roll at least one Effort die.

•**Reaction checks** are used when you are reacting to something else. It is just like a skill check except you only roll a number of dice up to your trait level (no Effort dice are rolled).

You may trigger your Mojo in these types of rolls, just like in skill checks.

Destiny Points

After any roll, you may spend a Destiny point. This lets you roll your Mojo die to get 1-6 extra successes on the roll. This Destiny point is then lost. Destiny points can also be spent to prevent a wound (i.e. one die of damage) right after you are damaged. Destiny points can also be used to add a detail to the plot or slightly change the story.

6's, 1's, Critical Success, and Fumbles

If your Mojo die in a successful skill check rolls a 6, then you achieved a **critical success**. If you fail in a skill check by rolling a success count of zero and rolling at least one 1, then you **fumbled**. The more 1's in a roll, the worse the fumble. In both cases, you become the narrator for the action and describe what happens within limits set by the Game Director.

Action Scenes

Each round the character with the highest **Initiative** takes his turn first down to the character with the lowest initiative who acts last. Ties are considered simultaneous. A Major Character can move up in the Initiative order and act earlier in a turn by spending Effort dice. Each Effort die spent in this way gives the character +1 Initiative for the round.

Spent Effort Dice and Refreshing

In action scenes you need to track your Effort dice more carefully. After your turn, place all Effort dice spent on actions or in skill checks aside, regardless of whether they were rolled in skill checks or spend unrolled. At the beginning of every round (before determining Initiative), you recover a number of spent Effort dice equal to your Fitness. This is called "refreshing" your Effort dice. The remaining Effort dice remain unavailable.

Combat

Combat actions are all skill checks against a difficulty equal to the target's **Dodge defense** or **Parry defense**. If the attacker's roll equals or exceeds the defense, then the attack hits. The defending character decides whether to use Dodge or Parry with these restrictions: Characters can use parry in armed melee combat. If unarmed a character can only use Parry if the attacker is also unarmed. If using a shield, a character can use Parry against thrown and bow attacks as well.

In **melee combat**, use the attacker's Blades, Heavy Weapons or Unarmed skill check vs. the target's defense. The target must be in the attack zone (normally, all hexes adjacent to the attacker). In **ranged combat** use the attacker's Firearms, Bow, or Throw skill check vs. the target's defense. The attacker must have an unobstructed line of sight to the target.

Defending Major Characters may increase their defense by spending Effort dice before the attack roll: each die increases it by

one. If both attacker and defender are major characters, the one who has lower Initiative must reveal the number of Effort dice he will use first.

If a character hits in combat, he makes a damage roll against the target's **Toughness**. If the damage roll is successful, the target takes wounds equal to the **Damage Size** of the attacker (often just 1). If the damage roll is unsuccessful, the target takes wounds equal to one half the damage Size of the attacker, rounding down. The base number of dice in your damage dice pool, called the **Damage Dice (or DD)**, is normally set by the weapon used. Unarmed attacks have a DD equal to the attacker's STRENGTH. In addition to the DD, characters can use a number of Effort dice up to their associated trait (either STRENGTH or DEXTERITY) in their damage roll dice pool.

Characters cannot take actions after attacking. In other words, the character's turn ends after attacking.

Movement: You can spend an Effort die to move a number of 2-yard hexes equal to your Speed. You can move twice each turn. If a character moves adjacent to another character with a higher Initiative, he exposes himself to an immediate **Intercept Attack**.

Wounds

You lose an Effort die for each wound. This die cannot be used until healed. This represents your declining effectiveness. When you lose your last Effort die due to damage, you are knocked out. If you take more wounds than Effort dice remaining, you are knocked out and must pass a FORTITUDE reaction check vs. the difference or die. For example, if you have one Effort die remaining and take two wounds, then you fall unconscious and must pass a FORTITUDE reaction check against a difficulty of 1 or die. If untreated, unconscious characters wake in 2d6 hours.

Stunts

Action scenes in *Heirs to the Lost World* should be full of wild, dramatic action, not just a dry series of die rolls. One of the ways the system encourages this is through Stunts. Stunts are all those interesting and exciting maneuvers like those that need stunt men and women in the movies. Whenever you want your character to perform a Stunt, you must describe this stunt in detail. For example, you should not just say "I jump off the ledge", but instead say, "I jump on the banister, flip off and grab the chandelier, and swing over to the bar so I land between the brawler and the barmaid."

After describing the Stunt, you should spend (unrolled) an Effort die, and the Game Director sets the difficulty and corresponding skill for the action. You then make a skill check to see if the Stunt succeeds. To reward you for attempting Stunts, you have a chance to earn Destiny points. In any Stunt, if any of your dice trigger your Mojo (i.e. if any dice roll a 6), then you earn a Destiny point.

Role-Playing Your Character

Your character's **motivation matrix** and **complication matrix** are two guides to role-playing your character. Your motivation matrix describes your character's guiding principles, loyalties, and personal desires. Your complication matrix represent flaws or other things that could get your character in trouble. Whenever you role-play one of these elements in an interesting way that puts you in danger or causes other problems, you can earn a Destiny point from the Game Director.