

# Fading Suns Storyteller Rules Primer

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## Game Time

- **Units of Time:**
  - **ROUND:** Smallest unit of time, a beat; used for action sequences
    - 1 round “lasts as long as the GM needs it to”
    - 1 round = 10 phases of equal length
    - Heroes have multiple actions per round (see Action Dice below)
  - **SPAN:** One scene, respecting the unity of time, space, and action; an entire action sequence, or any more complex encounter with the game world is one SPAN
  - **ACT:** A major plot point is resolved, which equals mostly one session of play; experience is gained at the end of every ACT
  - **DRAMA:** One story arc or adventure; extra experience is awarded dependent on achievements at the end of a DRAMA
  - **EPIC:** A series of DRAMAs, a meta-plot or chronicle
- **Time management** during action scenes:
  - **Step 1 – Determine Action Dice:**
    - At the start of every ROUND, players roll Wits+Observe (4)
    - Every success gives a player one Action Die (AD) to use this Round
    - No successes means a character is automatically given one AD with a result of 10
    - A botch on the roll means the character cannot act this ROUND
  - **Step 2 – Roll Action Dice:**
    - Roll your ADs and leave them on the table in front of you, organised in ascending order of results

- ADs don't explode and show which of the 10 phases of the ROUND the character gets to act in
- More than one action per phase per player is possible
- Step 3 – Use Action Dice:
  - Storyteller counts out phases from 1 to 10
  - If you have an AD showing the phase called, you can decide to:
    - a) Spend the AD to take an action and remove the AD from the table
    - b) Leave the AD on the table as a held action that you can take at any time after this point in the Round; held ADs do not change their result, match all later phases, and add to Initiative total normally until spent
  - Defence:
    - If a character is attacked, they can spend an AD of the current phase to defend
    - If they don't have a matching AD, they can use a held action or an interrupt action (see below)
  - If more than one character has ADs in the same phase:
    - Add a player's current ADs together to get their Initiative total; do not count already spent ADs
    - Higher Initiative total goes first; ties are broken by higher sum Wits+Observe, then higher Wits, then random roll-off with 1d10
  - Interrupt Actions:
    - Player can exchange any two later ADs for one AD of the current phase
    - Both dice keep their results for Initiative total
    - Interrupt Actions cannot be used for attacks
  - Unspent ADs at the end of phase 10 are lost

## Traits and Rolls

- CHARACTERISTICS range from 1 to 10, SKILLS range from 0 to 10
- A GOAL ROLL is used to decide success:
  - Goal Roll total: Total Characteristic and Skill (if used), apply Goal Roll modifiers to sum
  - Dice Pool: Divide Goal Roll total by 2 (always round down), take as many d10 as dice pool and roll them
  - Difficulty: Standard difficulty is (6) but can be adjusted by Goal Bonuses or Penalties (RAW values must be divided by 2 and inverted in value)
  - No skill: If a character lacks a required skill, the difficulty of the Goal Roll is raised by +1 (Not if no skill is required for the roll!)
  - Successes: Every die  $\geq$  difficulty is one success
  - Exploding dice (aka "Ten Again"): Every rolled 10 is counted as a success and can be rolled again; if it comes up 10 again, keep rolling
- EXCESSIVE TARGET NUMBERS:
  - Difficulty  $\leq 1$ : Automatic success, number of successes equals pool
  - Difficulty  $> 10$ : Additional successes required, one per difficulty beyond 10
- CRITICAL RESULTS:
  - Critical failure (aka "botch"): No success *and* at least one rolled 1
  - Critical success (aka "crit"): At least five successes *and* at least one rolled 10
- CONTESTED ROLL:
  - All contestants make their respective Goal Roll

- The highest number of successes minus second highest is the number of successes for the winner
- Status Quo wins in case of tie
- SUSTAINED ACTIONS:
  - Make a series of Goal Rolls to accumulate a required number of successes (determined by the GM according to RAW screen)
  - Every roll takes a given amount of time depending on the task (determined by the GM), which can be a critical factor under pressure
  - Failed roll: no successes added with this roll
  - Botched roll: sustained action fails completely
- COMPLEMENTARY ROLL:
  - Supporters makes their respective Goal Rolls (GM permission required)
  - Every success raises the supported character's Goal Roll total by 1 before dividing by 2 and rounding down
  - Supporter and supported can also be one and the same character
  - If supported by multiple rolls, only the best single result counts
- TRYING AGAIN:
  - Raise the difficulty for each subsequent try by +1
  - An adequate cool-off phase is required to reset this additional difficulty
- ACCENTED ROLLS:
  - Spend one point of Wyrd, then decide:
    - Be cautious, and per two dice dropped from your pool the difficulty drops by -1
    - Be a daredevil, and per two dice added to your pool the difficulty is raised by +1

- The maximum number of dice dropped or added equals the Skill rating used
- SPIRIT CHARACTERISTICS:
  - Inciting PASSION:
    - Define the focus for Passion to be triggered (must be epic!)
    - Spend one point of Wyrde
    - Roll Passion + appropriate skill, modified by the Passion chart (103, screen)
    - Each success is one additional die for impassioned Goal or damage rolls
    - The effect lasts for a maximum of one SPAN; once it wears off, all (!) actions are at +2 difficulty for just as long due to exhaustion
    - Critical success (crit) on the Passion roll makes the character obsessed with their goal: Nothing else matters and they cannot let go until the situation is resolved
    - Critical failure (botch) on the Passion roll makes the character lethargic: It is impossible to incite their Passion for the rest of the SPAN (or the full next one if it happens at the end of a SPAN)
  - Remaining CALM:
    - When character's emotions threaten to go out of control, roll Calm + appropriate skill, modified by the Passion chart (103, screen)
    - If successful, the player remains in control; if not, the GM takes over

- STEADY HAND:
  - Define a focus: It must be a task immediately at hand, no long term goals are possible
  - Spend at least 3 ROUNDS to focus before you roll
  - Spend one point of Wyr
  - Roll Calm + appropriate skill and modify by the Passion chart (103, screen)
  - Each success is one additional die on all Goal Rolls for the immediate task set
  - Effect lasts only for a short time (maximum one SPAN); if anything else but the focus task is done, it ends immediately
  - Critical success (crit) on the Calm roll makes a character totally absorbed by their task: They notice nothing else around them and are exclusively focused on the task
  - Critical failure (botch) on the Calm roll makes the character totally nervous and/or afraid: It is impossible to use Steady Hand again for the rest of the SPAN (or the full next one if it happens at the end of a SPAN)

## Karma

- GOOD KARMA:
  - Whenever players do something epic worthy of Passion Play, one die (d10) of Good Karma is added to the Karma pool
  - Good Karma can be used to save characters from catastrophe (or a botch):
    - One of the players who is not directly affected by the misfortune can take one or more Good Karma dice from the pool and

- expend them to take over as GM for a moment and describe why things are not quite as bad as they seemed and therefore only failure, not a botch.

OR

- roll them and challenge Fate: If the roll beats difficulty (8), the botch/catastrophe is turned into a success (!) by the Hand of Fate. If it fails (no success) it is softened into a normal failure, but if it botches the Good Karma dice are wasted and the catastrophe remains the same.
- It must be logically possible to save a situation to be able to use Good Karma

- BAD KARMA:

- Whenever players disturb or destroy Passion Play atmosphere, one die (d10) of Bad Karma is added to the Karma pool
- Bad Karma can be used to plunge characters into catastrophe:
  - Whenever a player succeeds, even critically, the GM can take one or more Bad Karma dice from the pool and
    - expend them to override any previous narration or rolls and make the players concerned fail automatically.

OR

- roll them and if the roll beats difficulty (8), the success is turned into a botch (!) by the Hand of Fate. If it fails (no success) it becomes normal failure, but if it botches the Bad Karma dice are wasted and the success remains the same.

## Leitmotif

- Defining the Leitmotif: At the beginning of each ACT (session), the GM draws one High Arcanum openly and it defines the Leitmotif of the current ACT
- Incarnating the Leitmotif: If players through their play (!) successfully incarnate the concept of the Arcanum in this ACT, they can claim one extra XP per adequate scene at the end of the session