

FINAL FANTASY

IV ED.

RPG

Final Fantasy RPG - Fourth Edition

CD 1: RPG in Final Fantasy

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Introduction

Before presenting this product, I would like to introduce myself. I am a RPG player and Game Master since 1994, and one of the people who was part of the Returners group of since the creation of FFRPG's first edition. I followed and helped to carry out the playtest of all "official" editions of the game, through the mIRC campaigns or playing offline. The group stayed together until the end of second edition's development, around July 2001. When the development of the famous third edition started, there began to be disagreements among the team, leading to the creation of the first FFRPG "spin-off", called ZODIAC, created by S Ferguson, which, from 2001 until today (the last version is dated 2013), has gone through three editions. The FFRPG (or Returners' FFRPG, as it became known to differentiate the ZODIAC FFRPG) took 8 years to complete the development of its 3rd edition, being officially launched in 2009. But even after such a long development time, it was released with various problems that generated other versions. There were the works of Fernanda Parker in Brazil, who translated the game to Portuguese; the SeeD group, formed by many of the original members of the Returners, but already without the leadership of Samuel Banner, who was project leader at the time of the 3rd edition, created another version, the FFRPG SeeD, more focused on online gaming via mIRC: according to the authors, the game is "impossible" to be played on a real table without computer assistance; Alan Wiling and his team created the FFRPG d20, based on Pathfinder; Scott Tengelin and his team also started another version, which was finalized by Dusk, who published, in 2010, the third edition of FFd6 system. Another game published was Chikago's Academia Bahamut, a Brazilian cross between ZODIAC and the original 3rd edition.

Thus, when creating this game, I try to stand on the shoulders of giants. All creators and games mentioned above were sources of inspiration when I build this version. Still, I do not consider myself writing the final or definitive version of FFRPG; as well as electronic games, pen and paper RPG continues to evolve and incorporate different concepts and reach different audiences. I hope that this work is just the kickoff to the fifth edition, sixth edition, and many others, created by fans of this ageless masterpiece: Final Fantasy.

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- Bruno Carvalho

Design Principles and Decisions

1) Recreate the "feeling" of the old JRPGs

The game's core concept is "nostalgia". As such, the game must be flexible and customizable enough so each group can emphasize the aspects they find most relevant to the gaming experience.

2) Avoid downtime

Downtime is defined as the time that the player spends "not-playing" during the experiment. It is basically caused by the fact that not all players can effectively act at the same time, due to the lack of Game Master's ability of the hear everyone at the same time. During the experience, all players must be involved in the action as much as possible.

3) Quick Production

It is best to deliver a small product that can be played with few options than try to describe all the possible options before finalizing the "Core Manual". The game should be modular, with space for "expansions", so the production and delivery is more agile. Use a design model that releases the basic rules as Dragon Age (all classes, few levels) or D&D 4e (all levels, few classes) so the game can be done quickly (rather than take the nearly 9 years it took the FFRPG 3e to be finished).

4) Group Focus

The game unit is the group. Use mechanical rules for the group of adventurers as design decision. The "group" should take into account not only the players ' opinion, but also of the Game Master.

5) Create 2 games

Yes. The idea is to two games. If you stop to coldly analyze what were the JRPGs of the golden era (8, 16 and 32 bit), you will see that basically the "RPG" is actually a strategy game and an exploration game (I'm talking of pure RPGs, not Action RPGs or Tactical RPGs). The moment of transition between the two games is the moment of combat. Thus, in order to emulate this spirit, I am divorcing the combat system from the "non-combat" system in order to clearly characterize the two moments. Actions out of combat will have another design mechanics, and will function differently from actions in combat. The CD 2 will present in detail the combat mechanics, while this CD does the rest of the system.

Game Setup

Group Creation

In an FFRPG 4e adventure or campaign, before creating the characters, you must create the Group. The Group is the game's drive; the game takes place around the Group. Thus, the creation of the Group is what defines what kind of stories will be played. It is a joint activity between the players and the GM, and it guides the creation of the individual characters. The Group has the following characteristics:

- 1. Name:** Self-explanatory. The Group may have a name like Returners, Knights of Ivalice, Heroes of Light, Shin-Ra Inc., SOLDIER, or any other name.
- 2. Roots:** What links the group? Why was it founded? What is its reason for existence? Are they the underground resistance to an oppressive empire? Are they members of a kingdom or a corporation? Are they young people from a village in the countryside?
- 3. The Evil:** Who is the main antagonist? Who threatens the Group's existence? Remember that this antagonist may (and probably will) change during the course of a campaign.
- 4. Traits:** These special features are the mechanical elements that will influence the way the game is played. Each group has three Traits, chosen from the list below. Traits strongly influence how the game will unfold, and should be chosen very well by the GM and the players.
- 5. Destiny:** Destiny Points is a Group feature that can be used by players to influence the story. Starting Groups begin with 4 Destiny Points. Details of how to earn or spend these points are in the Chapter 4: Destiny, starting at page 13.

Traits

Monster Hunter

This group was founded to kill monsters. You gain experience points (XP) by winning battles against beasts and other creatures.

The Good: You may spend Destiny Points to discover things about monsters.

The Bad: Monsters are always hostile to you. You need to spend Destiny Points to prevent a monster from being automatically hostile.

Sense of Duty

This group was founded to follow an organization. Define what is the specific organization, which may be a church, a kingdom, the army, a corporation, or something else. This Trait can be selected more than once, each time representing an affiliation to a different organization. You gain experience points (XP) by performing missions for the organization.

The Good: You may spend Destiny Points to receive help from the organization. This special aid will depend on the chosen organization.

The Bad: You can't refuse missions from that organization, even if it goes against the character's beliefs, unless you spend Destiny Points.

People's Hero

This group was founded to liberate people from tyranny. You gain experience points (XP) by removing corrupt officials, protecting the public and doing good deeds.

The Good: You may spend Destiny Points to call for assistance of the population. This help may involve shelter, food, hiding, and other support within the reach of the common man.

The Bad: You can't refuse a request for help from a humble man, unless you spend Destiny Points.

Relics from the Past

This group was founded to investigate the secrets of the past, either arcane or technological (depending on the campaign). You gain experience points (XP) by investigating ruins, discovering elder tomes or other ancient artifacts.

The Good: You may spend Destiny Points to find out stories about artifacts and other ancient legends.

The Bad: Many of the ancient things have profound and dire stories, carrying curses. You may suffer the curse that was upon something found, unless you spend Destiny Points.

Mercenaries

This group was founded to acquire wealth and power. You gain experience points (XP) by earning Gil or other material possessions.

The Good: You have contacts that appear in the most improbable moments. By spending Destiny Points in any situation, except if this imply risk of life, you can find someone interested in buying or selling you things, although not always for the right price, even if this merchant is a cat-man in the middle of an inhospitable mountain.

The Bad: People tend not to rely on mercenaries and will doubt your intentions when they know your motivations, unless you spend Destiny Points.

Nemesis

This group was founded to fight something or someone of great power. This enemy can be a person or organization. This Trait can be selected more than once, each time representing a different enemy. You gain experience (XP) preventing the plans of your Nemesis or defeating him or his lackeys.

The Good: As much as your Nemesis hate you, it always seems to leave a hole in his plans. Whenever you are in a situation of imminent defeat to your Nemesis, you may spend Destiny Points to figure out a way to escape, in order to face it again later. This does not count as defeating or preventing the nemesis's plan in any way: you only save yourself.

The Bad: Your Nemesis know your plans better than anyone. Whenever you try to spend Destiny Points to get any advantage over your Nemesis, you will need to spend twice as many Destiny Points.

Protégé

This group was founded to protect something or someone from harm. Although it is very important for several reasons, this protégé is unable to defend itself from harm, which can be physical or not. This Trait can be selected more than once, each time representing an different entity to be protected. You gain experience points (XP) by avoiding harm for the entity or by restoring it.

The Good: If your protégé is in danger, you may spend Destiny Points to gain a second chance on any Challenge that can save it.

The Bad: If the protégé is destroyed or killed, even if is possible to reconstruct, resurrect or any other way restore it, you lose Destiny Points.

Reputation

This group was founded to earn fame and success. You gain experience points (XP) when you can spread your reputation and become better known and loved. Alternatively, you may decide that your desired reputation is bad reputation and your goal is to become feared and hated.

The Good: Your reputation precedes you. You may spend Destiny Points to impress or even influence people based on your reputation.

The Bad: It's hard to go incognito. You need to spend Destiny Points, or else you will be recognized or otherwise affected by your reputation.

Character Creation

Each player character has its own characteristics. They are individually assigned by the player to his character, based on the concept the player wants to roleplay. The character features are:

- 1. Name:** Again self-explanatory.
- 2. Stats:** In FFRPG 4e, each character has four Stats, each related to a crystal: Earth, Air, Fire and Water. More details on these Stats are below. An initial character has a total of 200 (two hundred) experience points (XP) to spend on their Stats.
- 3. Traits and Quirks:** Each character has a total of 3 Traits and 3 Quirks. 2 of his Traits must be chosen from his Group's Traits, and the last one is chosen from the Trait list, and don't need to be one of the Group's Traits. The 3 Quirks must be chosen from the list below. Traits define how the character will earn experience points (XP) and evolve during the game, while the Quirks indicate how it can earn Destiny Points. Remember that the Destiny Points are shared by the Group, hence all Destiny Points income and expenses will come from the Group's total Destiny, rather than being individual characters' values. In addition, all Traits grant ways in which the characters may spend Destiny points.

Stats and Skills

Characters have four Stats, each connected to a crystal - Earth, Air, Fire and Water. Each Stat has a value and levels. For every 10 points in its value, the Stat earns another level. Stats's value vary from 0 to 255 points and, consequently, between 0 and 25 levels. The sum of a character's Stat levels is the Character level. For example, a 30th level character may have Earth 52 (5th level), Air 108 (10th level), Fire 80 (8th level) and Water 75 (7th level). Each Stat has 6 skills associated to it. Each time it gain one Stat level, a character can gain one Skill level in that Stat. Thus, the above character with Earth 52 and Air 108 has 5 levels to distribute among Earth skills and 10 to distribute among Air Skill. The skills are:

Earth:

Strength, Climbing, Swimming, Intimidation, Tolerance, Jumping.

Air:

Running, Stealth, Piloting, Riding, Thievery, Acrobatics

Fire:

Infiltration, Perception, Medicine, Survival, Technology, Wisdom

Water:

Willpower, Bluff, Handle Animal, Charisma, Performance, Magic

More details about the skills are in Chapter 3: Challenges and Skills, starting at page 10.

The Stat points are acquired using experience points. The cost of one Stat point is, twice the next Stat level, plus one. Thus, an Stat costs 1 experience point per Stat point while at level 0 (value from 0 to 9); 3 experience points per Stat point while at level 1 (value 10 to 19); 5 XP per Stat point while at level 2 (value 20 to 29); and so on. The Appendix I, starting at page 19, is a table with the total XP required for each Stat value.

Quirks

Arrogant: You don't back off from challenges and don't submit to the will of others. You may spend Destiny Points to resist intimidation. However, you do not take insults lightly and don't refuse challenges. Earn Destiny Points when this attitude causes you problems.

Bottomless Pockets: You usually have everything always at hand. Spend Destiny Points to find things you did not expect, as that wrench you were just looking for! However, sometimes you simply won't find something you were sure that were with you. When this causes you problems, earn Destiny Points.

Brute: You are very strong and heavy. Spend Destiny Points to overcome challenges whenever your muscle power really makes a difference. However, your weight and lack of reflexes can cause you problems, granting you Destiny Points.

Caustic: You attract dislike and people feel uncomfortable by your side. You may use Destiny Points to intimidate or otherwise impose your will on others. You receive Destiny Points when this lack of sympathy causes you problems.

Contacts: You have contacts to obtain information or favors. Decide what kind of contacts and what kind of favors they would be willing to do at character creation. To use these favors, spend Destiny Points. However, your contacts may ask dangerous favors or cause you problems, granting you Destiny points.

Compulsive Liar: For some reason, telling the truth is very hard for you. Worse, others believe! Use Destiny Points to make people believe your lies, especially the most ridiculous, and earn Destiny Points whenever your lack of honesty causes you problems.

Empathic: You attract sympathy and people feel comfortable at your side. You may use Destiny Points to attract sympathy and good impressions. However, people tend to not take you seriously. If this causes you problems, earn Destiny Points.

Fast: You are fast and light. Spend Destiny Points to use your speed to your advantage, but earn Destiny Points when your lack of strength or resistance causes you problems.

Feral: You were raised by beasts, monsters or a savage tribe. You relate well with animals. Use Destiny Points to attract animal sympathy and calm them. However, you are unable to get along with other humans and earn Destiny Points whenever that causes you problems.

Focused: You are focused on some issues (decide which). Unfortunately, this leaves you with little regard for other subjects. You may use Destiny Points to remember specific knowledge of your studies. Earn Destiny Points when your lack of attention to other matters causes you problems.

Intuitive Magic (Elemental): You may spend Destiny Points to manipulate fire, lightning and ice, creating little magical effects. Your magical skills, however, can't be used in combat. Sometimes, magic does not work the way or at the moment you want, and if this causes you problems, earn Destiny Points.

Intuitive Magic (Forces): You can spend Destiny Points to telekinetically manipulate objects, as well as air, earth and water, performing small magical effects. Your magical skills, however, can't be used in combat. Sometimes, magic does not work the way or at the moment you want, and if this causes you problems, earn Destiny Points.

Intuitive Magic (Illusion): You can spend Destiny Points to manipulate lights, shadows and illusions, performing small magical effects. Your magical skills, however, can't be used in combat. Sometimes, magic does not work the way or at the moment you want, and if this causes you problems, earn Destiny Points.

Natural Hunter: You feel more comfortable away from civilization. Forests are your second home. You can use Destiny Points to hunt, seek shelter and track in natural environments. However, you are already so used to kill animals that they avoid you and feel uncomfortable around you. If this causes you problems, earn Destiny points.

Lycanthrope (Racial): Your senses are much more acute than usual. You can use Destiny Points to track by scent or discover things that only your keen senses would find. But his bestial blood tries to take control of you, and you have a constant internal struggle to not act like an animal. Whenever this cause you problems, earn Destiny Points.

Paranoid: You're always aware of the dangers that can arise at any time. Spend Destiny Points to perceive things that only your keen senses may notice. However, you suspect everyone and everything, and if this causes you problems, earn Destiny Points.

Uncommon Beauty: You are very beautiful and can use your beauty to attract attention and get good impressions. You may use Destiny Points to influence other characters who would feel attracted to you. Whenever your beauty causes you problems, earn Destiny Points.

Visions: For some reason, you have visions that can give you tips of the future or just torture you. Spend Destiny Points for good visions and earn Destiny Points when flashbacks cause you trouble.

Challenges and Skills

Challenges

During an FFRPG 4e adventure, the characters will face challenges created by the GM to succeed in their goals. A Challenge is a situation within the game, which has, necessarily, the following characteristics:

a) *Chance of failure and success.* A Challenge must have a chance to fail and to succeed. Walking on the flat and solid ground is not a challenge, as it does not have chance of failure; walking in the air is also not a challenge, because it has no chance of success. Walking on a rope in a cliff can be a challenge because it has chance of failure and success.

b) *Punishment for failure.* A Challenge must have a punishment for the failure, although it may be retried. This punishment for the failure may simply deny the characters the success' reward. An attempt to open a locked door, using picks and thief's tools is not a challenge if the character can keep trying again any number of times to get the door open, but can be a challenge if the room is filling with acid or if the lock breaks after the first attempt.

c) *Storytelling impact.* A Challenge must have a significant impact on the story. Riding a chocobo has chance of failure and success, and has a punishment for failing (the fall). But in a 10-day trip riding a chocobo to journey between the two cities, the way the character will ride does not have impact on history significant enough to become a Challenge. However, if the character runs away from a castle on fire in the desert being chased by bad guys in giant robots, the way he rides can indeed be a Challenge.

To create a Challenge, the Game Master should indicate what is the Challenge's Skill and what is its difficulty. The Challenge's difficulty is its failure chance. Thus, the GM decides what is the Challenge's failure chance, indicated by a number between 1 (one) and 99 (ninety nine). For a character succeed in this Challenge, his player must roll 1d100 (a 100-sided dice or two 10-sided die, one representing the tens and the other the unit) and the die roll should be greater than the established difficulty. For example, if the GM establishes as 30 the difficulty of a challenge, the player must understand that he has 30% chance of failing, and consequently 70% chance of success.

Skills

The Skills are tools that the characters have to overcome Challenges. As mentioned above, each challenge must possess a Skill. Each Skill level means the player may re-roll once one Challenge related to that Skill. Once he has re-rolled once, he may not do it again until you have an eight hours rest. For example, a character with 3 levels in Strength Skill can re-roll the d100 3 times to overcome Strength Challenges, and after doing so, may only re-roll again after resting for 8 hours. Below is a description of each Skill and examples of Challenges associated with them.

- a. **Acrobatics (Air):** Ability to perform maneuvers and maintain balance in difficult situations. Can be used in situations where the character may lose balance, must walk on cliffs or wires, or in situations where it hangs on masts, chandeliers or ropes.
- b. **Bluff (Water):** Ability to lie, cheat, conceal and seduce. It can be used in situations to deceive, pretend, or otherwise attempt to conceive your true intentions.
- c. **Charisma (Water):** Personal magnetism and ability to impress. It can be used in situations involving the reactions of non-player characters, sometimes even without any specific action by the character.
- d. **Climbing (Earth):** Climbing speed and technique. It can be used in situations that involve climbing walls, mountains, trees and other obstacles.
- e. **Handle Animal (Water):** Ability to soothe and train animals and monsters. It can be used in situations requiring empathy with animals, to calm wildlife, train animals or prevent them from attacking someone.
- f. **Infiltration (Fire):** Ability to open locks and gain access to locked locations. It can include both the ability to unlock locks with lock picks as the ability to fake access cards in more modern environments.
- g. **Intimidation (Earth):** Ability to impose your will through coercion, threats and power displays. It can be used in situations where the character wants to impose its will in the most direct way possible.
- h. **Jumping (Earth):** Jumping capacity, involving both the distance as the height. It can be used in situations involving the ability to overcome pits or to reach high platforms.
- i. **Magic (Water):** Knowledge of arcane magic. It can be used in situations involving knowledge of the magical forces of the world and its mysteries.
- j. **Medicine (Fire):** Knowledge of anatomy, healing, herbal medicines and medical techniques. It can be used in various situations involving diseases, poisonings and remedies.
- k. **Perception (Fire):** Ability to distinguish detail with the five senses. It can be used in situations involving sight, hearing, smell, touch or taste.
- l. **Performance (Water):** Ability to act, sing, dance or perform other forms of art. It can be carried out in situations involving artistic performances, such as an opera.
- m. **Piloting (Air):** Ability to drive, ranging from chariots and carriages to giant robots and aircraft, depending on the scenario's technology.
- n. **Riding (Air):** Ability to ride animals such as chocobos. It can be used in situations involving the ability to ride animals, in pursuits or to do mounted maneuvers.
- o. **Running (Air):** Ability to walk and run fast and for long distances. It can be used in situations involving the running speed and endurance in long distance runs.
- p. **Stealth (Air):** Ability to hide and move silently. It can be used in situations when the character doesn't want to be noticed.
- q. **Strength (Earth):** Strength and physical ability. It can be used in situations involving the character's ability to lift, pull, push and knock down things.
- r. **Survival (Fire):** Ability to relate to the natural world and get food, water and shelter outdoors. It can be used in situations where the character needs to hunt and gather food and water in wild environments.

- s. **Swimming (Earth):** Ability to cross distances by swimming. It can be used in situations involving the need to cross rivers, lakes, seas or simply to avoid drowning.
- t. **Technology (Fire):** Ability to relate to existing technology on the world, varying according to the level of scenario's technology. It can vary from gear-operated primitive machines to the operation and maintenance of sophisticated computers.
- u. **Thievery (Air):** Ability to perform hands tricks, as making small objects exchange owner without anyone noticing. It can be used in situations involving theft, traps or sleight of hand.
- v. **Tolerance (Earth):** Ability to resist hot and cold environments, hunger, thirst, drowning and suffocation. It can be used in situations where the character must overcome physical hardship.
- w. **Willpower (Water):** Ability to resist pain, suffering and torture. It can be used to withstand suffering and to endure the physical and emotional hardships.
- x. **Wisdom (Fire):** Common sense and the ability to distinguish illusions, tricks and deceptions. It can be used in situations that require the character's judgment to avoid being fooled.

Destiny

Destiny is what distinguishes true heroes and villains from ordinary people. They are a representation of heroism and a tool for shared the game's narrative. The Destiny Points are a Group shared currency; so when a player earns Destiny Points, they add it to the Group's Destiny Points; when he spends Destiny Points, these points are deducted from the Group's total.

Earning Destiny Points

Some ways may give Destiny Points to the characters. The main one is through the character's Quirks. All Quirks have are ways in which they create problems and force Challenges, hindering the character's ability to achieve their goals. The GM should provide one Destiny Point for the Group when problems arising from the Quirk cause a Challenge that the characters have to overcome in order to avoid serious consequences; two Destiny Points if the problems causing is three or more concurrent or sequential Challenges that have to be overcome to prevent serious problems; or three Destiny Points if the characters cannot avoid the disastrous consequences of the problem caused by Quirk. In addition, the Game Master may grant a Destiny Point whenever the Group achieves a significant goal or according to the story. Finally, the Game Master may give a Destiny Points to force a player to re-roll a Challenge, even against his will.

Spending Destiny Points

Destiny Points can be earn in various ways. The list below summarizes these forms.

With Quirks

There are two ways of spending Destiny Points with Quirks. By spending one point, the player can re-roll any d100 Challenge if it is related to the Quirk. Thus, a character with the Brute Quirk can use Destiny Points to re-roll most Strength Challenges, but is unlikely to do the same in a Running Challenge. By spending three points, the player can declare automatic success on any Challenge that has to do with its Quirk.

Feat of Heroism

A character may spend four Destiny points to perform feats of heroism that exceed the normal limits of human capacity. The key word here is heroism: Holding a house that would collapse on helpless children with the power of your muscles, disarming a bomb that would explode the city in the last minute, jumping from a height of twenty meters to hold on to a rope and climb to the villain's helicopter, and so on. A feat of heroism is always successful, even if the character does not have any applicable Quirk. After a feat of heroism, the master can't continue the narrative with a "no", but at most with a "yes, but ...". "Yes, you hold the house and prevent it from falling on the orphans, but you can't hold it more than five minutes and someone will have to get them out of there!" is a good answer to a feat of heroism.

Getting Clues

For one Destiny Point, the players can get a clue or a hint from the GM on a problem. The easiest way to do this is to have an unscripted citizen say an one-liner like "Don Tonberry hate smoke!" or "You can't cross the Lethe river swimming" and then immediately disappear to where it came from.

Divine Intervention

By spending 6 Destiny Points, a character can dictate the outcome of an event or include things in the world. This divine intervention can only be invoked to save character(s) from an extremely dangerous situation or to increase the scene's drama, but never to generate an anticlimax. Dictating that "The Shadow Lord is overcome with grief and decides to kill himself" is not an acceptable intervention, but saying that "When the group is surrounded and everyone is beginning to fall into the abyss, a group of giant eagles comes and grabs the characters, flying them away" is a possible intervention. If you use divine intervention when a character is dying, in a way that the character does not avoid his death, costs 4 Destiny Points instead of 6. Remember that using divine intervention by 4 points means the character will surely die at the end of intervention, and nothing that the characters can do will avoid this (except Cheat Death, below).

Cheat Death

For 10 Destiny Points, a player can restore a dead character to life or otherwise escape from something that surely would kill him. This "resurrection" is never immediate; the character will always come back only after everyone has already given up. Remember also that Cheat Death does not mean that the character will not have consequences; he may have broken bones, health problems and mental disorders that can leave him at least temporarily incapacitated. The player must decide how, exactly, the character survived (or even came back from hell itself).

Avoiding Disadvantages

Traits mention ways in which the character can receive penalties. If this happens, he must spend between 1 and 3 Destiny Points, GM's discretion, to avoid them.

Solving Controversy

When two players cannot agree on something, just have the two spend any number of Destiny Points. Whoever spends more points is right, and the other player is forced to accept his argument.

Adventuring in Final Fantasy Worlds

Creating Adventures

Most adventures are designed around a structure that looks like this: You start a scene, linearly follow it for over a set number of scenes that occur in a predetermined sequence, and it comes to an end. Occasionally you might see someone want to vary playing a pseudo-option, where characters can go through 2 or 3 alternative scenes before returning to the main script. But you're still looking at an essentially linear path. Although the exact form of this linear path may vary depending on the adventure in question, ultimately, this form of design is the linear approach: A happens, then B does, and then C happens.

The main advantage of the linear approach is its simplicity. It is easy to understand and easy to control. When you are preparing the adventure, it feels like assembling a task list or telling the plot of a short story. While you are running the adventure, you always know exactly where you are and exactly where you should be going. But this approach has two major drawbacks:

Firstly, lack flexibility. Each arrow in the designed flow chart is a bottleneck: If the players do not follow that arrow (because they do not want to or because they do not realize what they should do), then the adventure will grind to a halt. The risk of this painful derailment (or the need to railroad your players) can be mitigated, but if the players realize you are guiding the actions of their characters, they can feel like you're playing in their place. (This, ironically, can cause them to rebel against your best plans.) Second, because it lacks flexibility, linear approach is the enemy of players' agency. In order to finish the adventure, the characters must follow the arrows. Choices that do not follow the arrows will break the game. And for a game that values player empowerment since character creation, to create linear adventures goes against the rest of the system.

Of course, it is easier said than done, as one of the reasons that people prefer the linear approach is that it provides a significant structure of prepared situations: It says exactly where to go and how to do to get there. Without this kind of structure, it is very easy for a game session to derail. Certainly it is not impossible to simply let the players loose, improvising everything and end up somewhere interesting. Similarly, it is quite possible to get in a car, driving aimlessly for a few hours, and have a nice exciting trip to tell. But is often helpful to have a territory map.

This line of thought, however, often leads a dilemma. The logic is like this: (1) I want my players to have meaningful choices. (2) I need to have a framework for my adventure. (3) Therefore, I need to prepare for each choice players can do. The result is an exponential expansion adventure path. The choice of "A" leads to two paths, A1 and A2, which have the choice "B" which takes four paths, A1B1, A1B2, A2B1, A2B2, which have the "C" choice that takes eight paths, and so on. The problem with this project should be evident: You are preparing several times more material to provide the same amount of playing time. And most of the material you are preparing will never be seen by the players.

In a way, of course, this is an extreme example. You can simplify your task by collapsing of some of these options, like having A2B1 and A1B2 choices lead to the same place. But still you are designing several scenes in order to provide only three real game scenes. You're still specifically designing a material you know that will never be used. And, if you think about it, in fact this example is not as extreme as well: The initial example assumes that there are only two possible choices at a given moment. In fact, it is quite possible that there are three or four or even more choices. And each additional option adds a whole new series of contingencies you need to account for.

Ultimately, this kind of adventure "Choose your own path" is a dead alley: No matter how much you try to predict ahead of time, your players will still find options you never considered - forcing you back to the position of artificially limiting the choices to keep intact your preparation or leaving you with just the same problem you were trying to solve in the first place: to avoid excessive improvisation. And even though this is not true, you're still burdening yourself with a preparation process filled with unnecessary work.

The solution to this problem is node-based design. And the root of this solution lies in reversing the Three Clues Rule. This rule states: **"For any conclusion you want players to have, include at least three clues."** The theory underlying this rule is: if you present three different options, it provides sufficient redundancy to create a robust scenario. Even though the characters lose the first clue and misinterpret the second, the third clue provides an ultimate safety net to keep the scenario working. This logic, however, also leads to the reversal of the Three Clues Rule: **"If the characters have access to three clues, they will get at least to a conclusion."**

In other words, if you need it players reach three conclusions (A, B, and C) and the characters have access to three clues (each of which theoretically allow them to achieve these conclusions), then it is very likely that they will in fact achieve at least one of these conclusions. Understanding this reversal of the Three Clues Rule allows us to embrace all the flexibility of node-based design. Imagine an adventure that begins in a node (or scene), containing three clues- one pointing to the node A, one for node B, and one for the node C. Using the inverse of the Three Clues Rule, you know that players will be able to conclude that they need to go to at least one of these nodes. Suppose they go to the node A. There, there contains two additional clues - one pointing to the node B and another that points to the node C. At this point, the characters have access to five different tracks. One of them led them successfully to the node A and can now be discarded. But that leaves them with four clues (two pointing to node B and two pointing to node C), and, because the inverse of the Three Clues Rule, once again we see that they have more than enough information to proceed further. Let's assume now go to the node C. Here they find clues to nodes A and B. They now have access to a total of seven clues. Four of these clues now point to nodes that have been visited, but the three last clues point to the Node B. The Three Rules shows that they now have access to enough information to complete the adventure.

Although there was no change between linear adventure and the node-based adventure apart from the event order, the simple fact that the players are sitting in the driver's seat is important. Even if the choice has no lasting impact on the final conclusion of "good guys win, bad guys lose," the fact that the players were the ones who decided how

the good guys did win is important. And this becomes even more relevant when Traits come into play. Traits should be placed as key points when creating nodes, as they are exactly the characters' main objectives, and, most importantly, point the stories that your players chose to play! Thus, the clues that lead from one node to another should talk to the characters through their goals.

Character Development and Rewards

Experience

The game speed depends on the will of the group about the campaign's duration. FFRPG characters start the game with 200 experience and can reach a maximum of 25,120 experience points. Starting the game between levels 4th and 8th and reaching the 100th level with 25,000 XP. However, it is recommended that the game ends around level 65, or about 10,800 XP for each character. At this level, the characters are already powerful and experienced enough to overcome most of the possible challenges without too many problems. With these numbers in mind, the GM can plan the campaign's progress according to the time available to play it. A campaign that lasts one year, playing once per week, for example, in "normal speed" may give, on average, about 200 xp per session (assuming two things: first, 200 XP times 52 weeks equals 10,400 XP at the end of one year, and second, the sessions of the campaign's start will give less than 200 XP and the campaign's final sessions will give more than 200 XP). This speed can and should be adjusted for the campaign's estimated time, the size of the story being told and frequency of play.

At each node on your adventure, identify which Traits are covered by that node. A node that involves a mother's desperate pleas to save her son from the clutches of a ferocious monster can, for example, involve the Traits Reputation, People's Hero and Monster Hunter. Let's say that the GM has stipulated a total of 160 XP for that node; it may give 80 XP if the characters save the child, reducing to only 40 if it is wounded in the process; give a bonus 0-20 XP based on characters' actions and their ability to become famous with the situation in the eyes of other villagers; and give also 20 XP if the characters manage to kill the beast, rising to 60 XP if they deduct, based on the given clues, the reason for the attack and decide to only scare away the beast in order to follow her into the villain's lair. Thus, characters can earn between 0 and 160 XP for this node, based on their actions and their Traits. When deciding their Traits, players pass a clear message about what kind of situations they want to face. Use this to your advantage to create exciting adventures for your group.

Between sessions, players can spend experience points to increase their Stats, gaining levels and skills. Alternatively, the master can decide the experience points may only be spent between adventures or in "training periods" defined by the GM.

Traits and Quirks

During the course of a campaign, the characters will evolve in a different way aside from the mere accumulation of experience. Fundamental changes in a character's goals,

personality and characteristics may imply changes to its Traits and Quirks. For example, a character may see the problems caused by his Arrogant personality and decide to become Empathic, or maybe the death of a Protégé when an NPC stick his sword in her back can turn the story into a tale of revenge against this new Nemesis.

Anyway, whenever a character has a significant reason to change their way of being, independent if that reason is internal or external, it can, between sessions, change his Quirks. To do so, the player declares this to the Game Master and changes it. In the case of the Traits, whenever one of the three Traits chosen by the Group change by players consensus or the imposition of narrative (the heroes may beat a Nemesis, redirecting their goals to something else, like fetching Relics of the Past), all players, regardless of their own character's Traits, may change them, to reflect the change of group goals.

Appendix I: Experience Table

Lvl	Pts	Total XP	Next	Lvl	Pts	Total XP	Next	Lvl	Pts	Total XP	Next
0	0	0	1	5	52	272	11	10	104	1.084	21
0	1	1	1	5	53	283	11	10	105	1.105	21
0	2	2	1	5	54	294	11	10	106	1.126	21
0	3	3	1	5	55	305	11	10	107	1.147	21
0	4	4	1	5	56	316	11	10	108	1.168	21
0	5	5	1	5	57	327	11	10	109	1.189	21
0	6	6	1	5	58	338	11	11	110	1.210	23
0	7	7	1	5	59	349	11	11	111	1.233	23
0	8	8	1	6	60	360	13	11	112	1.256	23
0	9	9	1	6	61	373	13	11	113	1.279	23
1	10	10	3	6	62	386	13	11	114	1.302	23
1	11	13	3	6	63	399	13	11	115	1.325	23
1	12	16	3	6	64	412	13	11	116	1.348	23
1	13	19	3	6	65	425	13	11	117	1.371	23
1	14	22	3	6	66	438	13	11	118	1.394	23
1	15	25	3	6	67	451	13	11	119	1.417	23
1	16	28	3	6	68	464	13	12	120	1.440	25
1	17	31	3	6	69	477	13	12	121	1.465	25
1	18	34	3	7	70	490	15	12	122	1.490	25
1	19	37	3	7	71	505	15	12	123	1.515	25
2	20	40	5	7	72	520	15	12	124	1.540	25
2	21	45	5	7	73	535	15	12	125	1.565	25
2	22	50	5	7	74	550	15	12	126	1.590	25
2	23	55	5	7	75	565	15	12	127	1.615	25
2	24	60	5	7	76	580	15	12	128	1.640	25
2	25	65	5	7	77	595	15	12	129	1.665	25
2	26	70	5	7	78	610	15	13	130	1.690	27
2	27	75	5	7	79	625	15	13	131	1.717	27
2	28	80	5	8	80	640	17	13	132	1.744	27
2	29	85	5	8	81	657	17	13	133	1.771	27
3	30	90	7	8	82	674	17	13	134	1.798	27
3	31	97	7	8	83	691	17	13	135	1,825	27
3	32	104	7	8	84	708	17	13	136	1,852	27
3	33	111	7	8	85	725	17	13	137	1,879	27
3	34	118	7	8	86	742	17	13	138	1,906	27
3	35	125	7	8	87	759	17	13	139	1,933	27
3	36	132	7	8	88	776	17	14	140	1,960	29
3	37	139	7	8	89	793	17	14	141	1,989	29
3	38	146	7	9	90	810	19	14	142	2,018	29
3	39	153	7	9	91	829	19	14	143	2,047	29
4	40	160	9	9	92	848	19	14	144	2,076	29
4	41	169	9	9	93	867	19	14	145	2,105	29
4	42	178	9	9	94	886	19	14	146	2,134	29
4	43	187	9	9	95	905	19	14	147	2,163	29
4	44	196	9	9	96	924	19	14	148	2,192	29
4	45	205	9	9	97	943	19	14	149	2,221	29
4	46	214	9	9	98	962	19	15	150	2,250	31
4	47	223	9	9	99	981	19	15	151	2,281	31
4	48	232	9	10	100	1,000	21	15	152	2,312	31
4	49	241	9	10	101	1,021	21	15	153	2,343	31
5	50	250	11	10	102	1,042	21	15	154	2,374	31
5	51	261	11	10	103	1,063	21	15	155	2,405	31

Lvl	Pts	Total XP	Next	Lvl	Pts	Total XP	Next	Lvl	Pts	Total XP	Next
15	156	2,436	31	18	189	3,573	37	22	222	4,930	45
15	157	2,467	31	19	190	3,610	39	22	223	4,975	45
15	158	2,498	31	19	191	3,649	39	22	224	5,020	45
15	159	2,529	31	19	192	3,688	39	22	225	5,065	45
16	160	2,560	33	19	193	3,727	39	22	226	5,110	45
16	161	2,593	33	19	194	3,766	39	22	227	5,155	45
16	162	2,626	33	19	195	3,805	39	22	228	5,200	45
16	163	2,659	33	19	196	3,844	39	22	229	5,245	45
16	164	2,692	33	19	197	3,883	39	23	230	5,290	47
16	165	2,725	33	19	198	3,922	39	23	231	5,337	47
16	166	2,758	33	19	199	3,961	39	23	232	5,384	47
16	167	2,791	33	20	200	4,000	41	23	233	5,431	47
16	168	2,824	33	20	201	4,041	41	23	234	5,478	47
16	169	2,857	33	20	202	4,082	41	23	235	5,525	47
17	170	2,890	35	20	203	4,123	41	23	236	5,572	47
17	171	2,925	35	20	204	4,164	41	23	237	5,619	47
17	172	2,960	35	20	205	4,205	41	23	238	5,666	47
17	173	2,995	35	20	206	4,246	41	23	239	5,713	47
17	174	3,030	35	20	207	4,287	41	24	240	5,760	49
17	175	3,065	35	20	208	4,328	41	24	241	5,809	49
17	176	3,100	35	20	209	4,369	41	24	242	5,858	49
17	177	3,135	35	21	210	4,410	43	24	243	5,907	49
17	178	3,170	35	21	211	4,453	43	24	244	5,956	49
17	179	3,205	35	21	212	4,496	43	24	245	6,005	49
18	180	3,240	37	21	213	4,539	43	24	246	6,054	49
18	181	3,277	37	21	214	4,582	43	24	247	6,103	49
18	182	3,314	37	21	215	4,625	43	24	248	6,152	49
18	183	3,351	37	21	216	4,668	43	24	249	6,201	49
18	184	3,388	37	21	217	4,711	43	25	250	6,250	51
18	185	3,425	37	21	218	4,754	43	25	251	6,301	51
18	186	3,462	37	21	219	4,797	43	25	252	6,352	51
18	187	3,499	37	22	220	4,840	45	25	253	6,403	51
18	188	3,536	37	22	221	4,885	45	25	254	6,454	51
								25	255	6,505	MAX