

HEROIC BLOODSHED

TM



TALENT TREES

INTRODUCTION

In the Modern d20 OGL rules set Talent Trees go a long way towards defining your character. The existing base classes are generic in and of themselves but their associated talent trees allow you to give the class a unique spin or focus. With *Heroic Bloodshed: Talent Trees* we present eight cinematic talent trees that are designed to embody elements and tropes of the Heroic Bloodshed genre of Hong Kong new wave films.

We also suggest, with your GM's permission, combining talents from the trees in this product and those in our *Postmodern: Talent Trees* collection to form new trees of your own. Any new hybrid trees will allow you to further tailor the Heroic Bloodshed experience to your game and customize the amount of "cinematic license" you want to take with the rules.

Peerless Driving Talent Tree

The hero is very talented behind the wheel.

Ace Driver: The hero has a natural affinity for motor vehicles of all kinds. She gains a +2 bonus to all Drive checks.

Acrobatic Driver: The hero has total control over his vehicle and can coax it to do things that defy logic. She gains a +2 bonus to Drive checks when performing stunt maneuvers. This bonus stacks with the bonus from ace driver.

Prerequisites: Ace driver.

Evasive Driver: The hero takes defensive driving to a new level. Always treat the Defense Modifier of the vehicle as one speed category higher than what it actually is.

Prerequisites: Ace driver.

Octane Junkie: The hero lives and breathes cars. He gains a +2 bonus on any skill checks made to repair or identify a motor vehicle. He also knows where to get the best deals on cars and gains a +1 bonus on any Wealth check

Heroic Bloodshed

The term heroic bloodshed was originally coined to describe a film genre that was born out of Hong Kong's new wave during the eighties. The genesis of the genre is often attributed to John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow*. Naturally, it's never that cut and dried. Woo derives much of his directing style from Sam Peckinpah and draws inspiration for his characters from the films of Jean-Pierre Melville (particularly *Le Samourai*).

So what is heroic bloodshed? Let's break it down. The heroism in the title manifests itself as a sense of duty, a code of honor, and a feeling of brotherhood to those who also live by these outmoded concepts. The bloodshed in the title comes as the result of attempts at redemption when the world is against you, the relentless pursuit of vengeance, and highly stylized violence.

made to purchase a motor vehicle.

Prerequisites: Ace driver.

Car-Crawler: Any time the hero is required to make a skill check or saving throw to safely leap onto or off of a moving vehicle, or to hang onto one; he gains a +4 bonus to the roll.

Prerequisites: Ace driver plus either acrobatic driver or octane junkie.

Death Defying Talent Tree

The hero can cheat death thanks to the following talents.

Bulletproof: The hero ignores 1 point of ballistic damage.

"Only a Flesh Wound": The hero is better equipped to withstand a gunshot wound. She may add her base Fortitude save to her massive damage threshold against ballistic damage. Damage from other sources is compared to the massive damage threshold normally.

Prerequisites: Bulletproof.

Second Wind: The hero can spend 1 action point to gain a second wind. When he does this, he recovers a number of hit points equal to his Constitution modifier. This talent does not increase the hero's hit points beyond the character's full normal total.

Prerequisites: Bulletproof.

Relentless: Whenever the hero is reduced to below half his normal full hit points; he gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage. This effect lasts until he recovers enough hit points to bring his hit point total back up to half or more of his normal full total.

Prerequisites: Bulletproof, "only a flesh wound," second wind.

The Leap: The hero can spend 1 action point to ignore all damage from an explosion unless he is trapped with it (in a sealed bank vault for example), or he himself deliberately caused it. As long as there is a window, balcony, or anything else to leap over or through, the hero can leap into the air and cartwheel his arms and "ride" an explosion to safety (typically against a billowing background of orange and red pyrotechnics). He'll be thrown to the periphery of the explosion's burst radius and suffer 1d6 points of falling damage.

Gunpowder Voodoo Talent Tree

When in the hands of a hero, guns conform to all the action movie clichés.

Bottomless Clip: Once per game session, the hero can choose to have his gun not run out of ammo when it normally would. The gun "refills" to its full ammo capacity.

Inviolable Reload: When the hero runs out of ammo during a firefight, he cannot be targeted with an attack (though he can still be affected by the burst radius of explosives and other area effects) until he reloads his weapon. He must reload as quickly as possible. Any character that would have attempted to roll an attack roll



against the character during this time simply forgets to do so. This talent only works if the hero has ammo on his person. The hero cannot be an invalid target for any longer than the one round following the round in which he ran out of ammo.

Prerequisites: Bottomless clip.

Guns Everywhere: Anytime she runs out of ammo in a firefight, the hero can spend 1 action point to find another gun near at hand. This other gun is assumed to have been dropped or discarded by a fleeing or dying combatant. The GM's chooses the type of gun found. This gun is at least half full of ammunition, and can be reached with a move action. For purposes of

this talent, “out of ammo” means the hero has no ammunition on her person, not just that her gun is empty.

Prerequisites: Bottomless clip, inviolate reload.

Discriminating Bullets: The hero can spend 1 action point to ignore innocent bystanders when making a ranged attack. For this attack, bystanders do not provide cover for your target, and are not hit by a missed shot.

“Shot to the Gas Tank”: The hero can cause a vehicle to explode by dealing damage equal to half that vehicle’s full normal hit points or more with a single ranged firearm attack. The vehicle explodes the following round.

Panache Talent Tree

No matter what the hero endures, he meets it all with style.

Charm: The hero gets a bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks made to influence members of the gender appropriate for the character’s sexual orientation. The bonus is equal to the character’s hero level.

A hero can only charm Gamemaster characters with attitudes of indifferent or better. The charm bonus cannot be used against characters that are unfriendly or hostile.

Cool: The hero seldom backs down from a fight. The character gains a +4 bonus to Will saves to resist fear effects. The bonus also applies to level checks when resisting Intimidate attempts.

Unflappable: The hero can spend an action point to negate the effects of the conditions *covering*, *panicked*, or *shaken*. If the cause of the condition is still in effect, the condition may return.

Prerequisites: Cool.

Unshakable: The hero selects a number of skills equal to 3 + his Wisdom modifier. When making

a check with one of these skills, the hero can take 10 even when distracted or under duress.

Prerequisites: Cool, unflappable.

Peerless Shot Talent Tree

The hero’s trigger skills are unmatched.

Firearm Affinity: When the hero uses a firearm, the penalties suffered for using the Burst Fire or Double Tap feats are reduced by 1. Also, he gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls when using autofire.

Distance Shot: When using a firearm, the hero treats targets as if they were one range increment closer than they are. This does not allow the character to fire beyond the standard 10 range increments.

Prerequisites: Firearm affinity.

Staggering Shot: When the hero performs a successful attack with a firearm, he may spend 1 action point to deal +1 die of damage.

Prerequisites: Firearm affinity.

Penetrating Shot: When targeting an armored opponent with a firearm, the hero gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls.

Prerequisites: Firearm affinity, plus either distance shot or staggering shot.

Pistol Opera Talent Tree

With a gun in his hand, the hero mixes the balletic and the ballistic.

Ballistic Ballet: When a hero is wielding only handguns and makes a successful Jump or Tumble skill check, he receives a +2 dodge bonus to Defense for the remainder of the round, so long as the Jump or Tumble check actually moves the hero to a different square.

Hair-Trigger Reflexes: The hero can spend 1 action point and, if he is wielding only handguns, he may move 15 feet as a free action with a successful Tumble check (DC 20).

Prerequisites: Ballistic ballet.

Rapid-Fire Retreat: When the hero chooses the total defense action he gains an additional +2 dodge bonus for one round.

Prerequisites: Ballistic ballet.

Two-Gun Dive: When the hero is wielding only handguns he can perform a long jump with a distance of 15 feet as a free action with a successful Jump check (DC 20). Regardless of the check's result, the hero always ends the jump prone.

Prerequisites: Ballistic ballet and either hair-trigger reflexes or rapid-fire retreat.

Untouchable Talent Tree

The hero gains the ability to improve her innate defensive talents as she attains new levels.

Evasion: If the hero is exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the hero suffers no damage if he or she makes a successful saving throw. Evasion can only be used when wearing light armor or no armor.

Prescient Dodge: When using the Dodge feat, the hero can declare the dodge bonus granted by the feat applies to the next character that attacks her. The dodge bonus will apply to this character for the remainder of the round.

Prerequisites: Evasion.

Uncanny Dodge: The hero retains his Dexterity bonus to Defense regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by a hidden attacker. (The hero still loses his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense if the hero is immobilized.)

Prerequisite: Evasion.

Prescient Evasion: Once per game session the hero may reroll a failed Reflex save, and add his Wisdom modifier to the roll.

Prerequisites: Evasion, prescient dodge.

Incorporating These Talents

You'll notice some of the talents from the existing base classes are included in these new trees. These new trees were designed to be used with the Heroic Bloodshed base class, the Action hero, and, as a result, are intended to supplant the preexisting base class talents entirely. However, there's nothing to stop you from incorporating these talents into an existing Modern game. You can integrate these new talents into existing trees or replace those trees entirely — it's completely up to you.

Alternatively, you can assign these trees to the existing base classes. We've provided some suggestions below to assist with this.

- Peerless Driving Talent Tree (Fast hero, Dedicated hero)
- Death Defying Talent Tree (Tough hero)
- Gunpowder Voodoo Talent Tree (Dedicated hero)
- Panache Talent Tree (Charismatic hero)
- Peerless Shot Talent Tree (Fast hero, Smart hero)
- Pistol Opera Talent Tree (Fast hero)
- Untouchable Talent Tree (Fast hero)
- Accelerated Talent Tree (Strong hero, Fast hero)

Defensive Roll: The hero can roll with a potentially lethal attack to take less damage from it. When the hero would be reduced to 0 hit points or less by damage in combat (from a ranged or melee attack), he can attempt to roll with the damage.

A hero spends 1 action point to use this talent. Once the point is spent, the hero makes a Reflex saving throw (DC equals the damage dealt). If the save succeeds, he takes only half damage. The hero must be able to react to the attack to execute a defensive roll—if the hero is immobilized, he can't use this talent.

Since this effect would not normally allow a character to make a Reflex save for half damage, the hero's evasion talent doesn't apply to the defensive roll.

Prerequisites: Evasion, either uncanny dodge

The Cinematic Overlay

If you would like to use the Modern rules as is and instead add a layer of over-the-top cinematic action then you might want to consider using the following option: Treat all or some of the talents in this product as new uses for action points. Any hero can employ these talents for the duration of one round by expending an action point, in the case of talents that already require the expenditure of an action point simply charge the hero two action points to use the ability (this would be an exception to the rule limiting the expenditure of only one action point a round). This will give the players a wealth of on-the-fly stunts or abilities they can use at any time.

or prescient dodge.

Accelerated Talent Tree

The hero can increase his speed and quickness.

Increased Speed: The hero's base speed increases by 5 feet.

Improved Increased Speed: The hero's base speed increases by 5 feet. This talent stacks with increased speed (10 feet total).

Prerequisite: Increased speed.

Sudden Move: When the hero takes his free 5-foot step he may move 10 feet instead. This is still treated as a 5-foot step for purposes of attacks of opportunity.

Prerequisite: Increased speed.

Double Time: The hero can spend 1 action point at the beginning of any round to reroll his initiative check. This will change his place in the initiative order for the rest of the combat.

Prerequisite: Increased speed, sudden move.

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