

Edge And Flaw Development

Branson Hagerty (Blackjack's Shadowrun Page <http://shadowrun.html.com/users/blackjack/>) Posted March 03, 1997

I personally think Edges and Flaws are the best ideas FASA's come up with since they blew up Dulkelzahn (I was getting sick of him.). It'd be a shame to leave them behind once character creation is over. Generally, you pick up edges and flaws through role-playing and, once the game has begin, you shouldn't need any rules to govern what Edges and Flaws your PC acquires. But it seems like a lot of players tend to ignore all aspects of the game that don't have a numeric system developed for their use. So I decided to whip up a system for "purchasing" Edges and Flaws later on in the game. I haven't actually tried this system out yet, so it may not work. Anyway, here goes:

Buying Flaws

Ok, so you're not really "buying" them. It's actually more of a refund. In any case, I'm sure gamemasters have noticed that, during the game, certain situations arise which have the potential for generating Flaws in characters; such as the person is trapped, assaulted in some emotionally traumatic way, and so on. Normally the PC quickly forgets about these experiences and in a very unrealistic manner continues to go about their daily business as if nothing had happened. By allowing the PC to actually declare, on paper, that their character has developed a Flaw they can lock themselves into its guidelines and are thus forced to role-play it. Some people really need this type of an iron-clad "contract" with their disabilities in order to role-play effectively. It's sad, but that's the way things are.

When a PC has been involved in a situation that could cause a semi-permanent Flaw they have the option of "buying" it. When they make this purchase they RECEIVE a number of karma points equal to DOUBLE the value of the Flaw. The player must then role-play this Flaw or face whatever retribution the GM utilizes to punish offenders. Flaws acquired in this manner can be role-played away, though with much difficulty.

Here are some more examples of situations which may generate Flaws:

1. A PC is tossed into a vat of chemicals. As a result they may develop some kind of weird allergy.
2. A PC is smashed over the head with a baseball bat and takes Deadly stun damage. When they awake they may realize that they can no longer see colors, thus picking up the Color Blind Flaw.
3. In the situation above the hit may have instead knocked a few marbles lose, thus giving the PC the Oblivious Flaw. "Man, ever since that troll whacked Benjy he hasn't been able to tell his ass from his elbow."

It is also possible for a PC to pick up a flaw simply by role-playing it. I used to do it all the time. For instance, a PC who just lost a good friend in a fire fight may become depressed, spend a lot of time shut away in their apartment, and thus develop a minor Infirm flaw. Or the PC, slowly losing it because of the endless violence he or she faces, may decide that their character is going to "flip out", talk to their gun all the time, and have visions of killing people at random, thus providing grounds for the Combat Monster Flaw. The possibilities are endless.

Buying Edges

This is where the GM has to be really careful lest he or she wish to be faced with PCs who have every

Edge in the book. In order to buy an Edge the PC should have a really, really, really good reason; even better than they would have to have for getting a new skill. The acquisition of the new Edge should involve meeting a really good teacher, suddenly coming across special information, being magically zapped by mysterious forces, and so on. The GM may also decide that a player has been role-playing a particular aspect of their PC so well that they deserve to be offered the opportunity to pick up a new Edge. But, no matter what the reason, the PC still has to buy it.

The karma cost for acquiring a new Edge during the game is TWICE its value. And, again, the PC should have a good reason, a few of which may be:

1. The PC is constantly the point man for his group; listening, looking, and watching out for everything while the rest of the group is usually looking at their ammo counters. The GM may wish to offer the PC the Perceptive Edge. If the PC is smart, he'll take it.
2. A PC has been developing his Firearms skill with the same instructor for many, many game months. The player declares that he'd like to acquire an Aptitude in firearms. The GM decides that the PC's teacher, after a month of further training, is willing to give up his secrets of targeting, thus enlightening the PC to a new way of perceiving trajectories.

Being True To Your Edges And Flaws

On a final note I'd just like to emphasize how important it is for GMs to insist that their PCs stick to their Edges and Flaws. I personally plan on having each of my players' information written on a piece of paper and taped to the GM screen. This system was created for the purpose of creating fleshed out, complicated characters. It also eliminates a PC's right to bitch when a GM states that they're not role-playing properly, which should stop a bit of the whining. Again, make sure PCs don't abuse this role-playing tool.