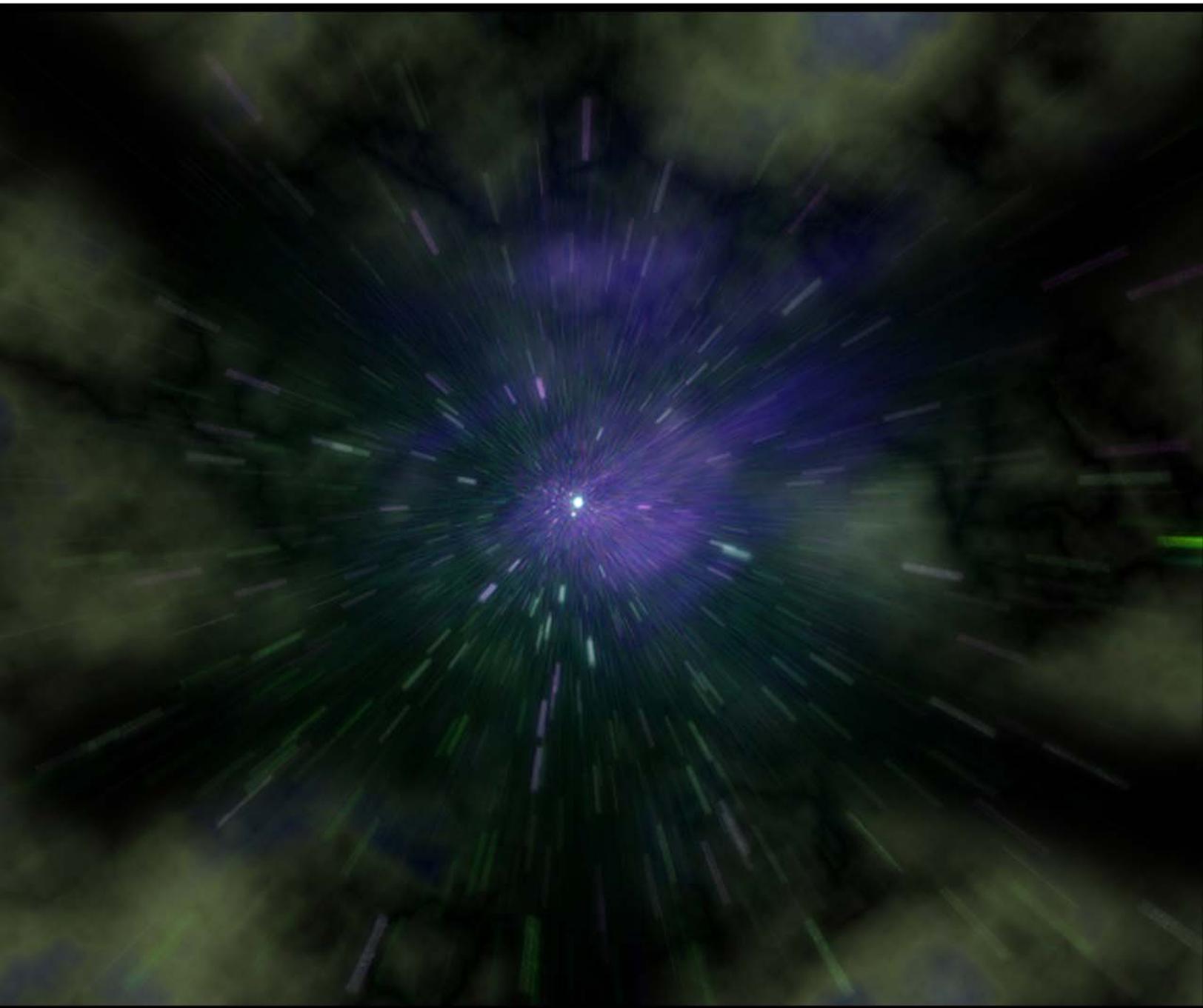


D.R.A.T.S.

DICELESS ROLE-PLAYING AND TACTICS SYSTEM



GO BEYOND DICE

COOPERATIVE ROLE-PLAYING

INTRODUCTION

DRAT is an ongoing creation of mine. I hope others will collaborate with me to enhance the system in many ways. If you are interested please contact me, Bill Corrie at bilbo@hinterwelt.com.

As a word of warning we should be working to create a slim (5-10 pages) that is easy to comprehend. A lot of subjective words there and I will do my best to be true to the widest selection of opinions of those statements. I look forward to your input.

WHAT IT IS ABOUT

One of the primary goals of the DRAT System is to create a role-playing system that facilitates systems and settings that do not translate well to traditional role-playing systems. That is to say, settings like Star Trek have elements which are inconsistent. Traditional RPGs often functions best in consistent set of setting presumptions. If a players fires his phaser at a ship and it is powerful enough to destroy it then he will reasonably expect it to happen every time he fires at a ship. However, in many stories there are exceptions that move the story forward.

To resolve this we need to look to cooperative role-playing systems. In this manner, a group of like minded people can use such a system to explore settings that do not follow a predictable set of rules. Plot exceptions can be agreed upon by the Group and not become a point of disruption in a game but rather an event to drive the story forward.

WHAT GOES AROUND...

The role of Moderator, a mediator for the group to help resolve differences, rotates around the table. It is important to remember that the Moderator should enable the story telling experience to be on of fun and excitement. It is not an adversarial role but one of an enabler of cooperative play. Cooperative play simply means a game and story where everyone has the same right to shape the experience of the Group.

When your turn comes to be the Moderator keep all of the above points in mind. Very important is to remember that you are all in it together, playing the game for the experience of being in the setting. It is no fun if the Moderator foists there vision of that setting onto the rest of the Group instead of integrating it with everyone's views.

Good gaming!

CONTRIBUTORS

Mike Crow *Peter Schaeffer* *Brian Guenther*
Rafael Velez *John Pratt*

DEFINITIONS

Moderator	A person who, as a part of the Group, mediates conflict as needed, moves the plot forward and introduces the Scene Premise.
Group	A group of like-minded friends who wish to explore a story or setting. The number may range from two on up. The Group are the participants in the story.
Scene Premise	A plot point introduced by the Moderator for that Round that advances the story. This should be general to the Plot. For instance, the Scene Premise may be "We beam down to the planet." where the Plot is "Exploring Ancient Ruins".
Plot	The basic plot summary of the story. This is introduced by the eldest player at the table and agreed upon by the Group. The Plot may be as detailed or general as the Group desires. An example of a Plot would be "Ships have gone missing in the Orion Sector and our ship has been sent to investigate."
Round	A Round is one turn around the table. Each player will take their Turn and when play returns to the Moderator one Round has occurred.
Plot Point	This is a single point of information that is relevant to the story. A Plot Point may be that the Space Monster is incorporeal.

DRAT SYSTEM

DRAT System stands for Dice-less Role-playing And Tactics System. The goal of this system is to provide the tools for a cooperative storytelling experience. If everyone in the group is not committed to telling a story, the game will not work. To that end, make sure that all members of the group are aware and willing to participate in telling the story as well as describing their character's action.

Telling the story is part of the player's responsibilities to each other. The eldest player at the table starts by offering a Plot then the person to their left proposes the first plot point.

Plots	
Space monster	Alien invasion

Plots	
Kooky disease	Mad computer
Stolen crew-member/body part	Morality play - Race
Morality play - Disease	Morality play - Environment
Time travel	Character Exploration
Espionage	Ancient technology
Duplicate Earth	Dyson Sphere
Holodeck adventure	Quest for Knowledge

The above plots assume a sci-fi setting. Other could be added as well as additional genre specific plots for pulp, fantasy or any other genre.

Plot points can be as simple as describing the arch enemy or what is happening in the next scene. Control will switch to the next person to the left of the current Moderator when that Moderator closes that Scene. A Scene is merely a segment of the story represented by location or dialogue. For instance, if the Moderator declare that the party is on the bridge of their ship as a giant space monster (set as the Plot by the first player) the Scene would last until the party left the bridge. In this manner, the Moderator may maintain control for the entire session or only have it for a brief time as they describe the space monster, the choice is the group's preference.

Possible Plot Points	
Describe a foe	Set the location
Introduce scientific point	Introduce Character point

CHARACTER ATTRIBUTES

Attributes for a character are assigned during creation of a character. A total of eight points are assigned over three attributes. The attribute is subtracted from the Action Point cost of performing a feat. If a character had a two for Physical and he was attempting to bean a guard in the head he would pay two less for the feat. A player must pay one AP regardless of modifiers.

Human average for any attribute is 2 with a max of 4.

Physical

Physical is a character's overall physical prowess. This is not limited to battle but also includes acrobatics, coordination and physical raw strength.

Intellect

Intellect represents not only book learning but also wits, reasoning and general cunning.

Charisma

Charisma is force of personality, will power and general attributes assigned to the personality of the character.

Traits

Traits are ideas or thoughts center to a character's being. They will vary from character to character and may be any level of detail. Here is a short list of Traits but by no means is meant to be exhaustive.

Traits	
Seduce members of the opposite sex	Seduce aliens
Love of Combat	No Emotions
Xenophobic	Hatred of a race
Went to the Academy with everyone's uncle	Diplomat
Man of Action	Obsessive Compulsive
Paranoid	Simple Country Boy/Girl
Unrequited Love	Use of Technobabble

Skills

Skills are special abilities that the character has in the setting. This may be something like Science for a Science Officer or Fire Spell for a fantasy setting. The range and type is up to the group. They may wish to have Science be more specific requiring Nuclear Physics or Xeno-Biology instead of a generic Science Skill.

Any Skill Rank applicable to the Feat is subtracted from the cost of a Feat being attempted. For instance, if Jim, the Science Officer, wishes to determine the nature of the Space Monster that has been killing the crew (Critical Knowledge Cost: 15) he would need to pay the Cost minus his Intellect (3) and his Science Skill (2). His final Cost would be 10.

Possible Skills	
Dancing	
Deception	Seduction
Disarm Trap	Blocking
Medicine	Magic Spell (Specify)
Pick Lock	Stealth
Science (Specify)	Engineering (Specify)
Weapon (Specify)	Unarmed Combat

Note: Specify in the above table means one should choose a specific type; i.e. Weapon would need to pick Phaser to fire that weapon. The list above must be

restricted to the setting the Group is playing in; i.e. Fireball would not be used in a sci-fi setting.

STORY TELLING

The story is told by the group as it unfolds. Anyone can introduce a story point but they must introduce only one per “Round”. A Round is one time around the table. The Moderator for the Round is considered the Star for that round. Their character is the center of the story and other players will have their character play off of the Moderator's character. The Moderator also introduces the scene by proposing the Premise for that scene. This should not violate the Adventure Premise. For instance, if the Group has agreed upon the Plot of “Cure for Cancer” the Scene Premise introduced by the Moderator cannot be “Space Monster” unless it is tied to the Cure. A Scene Premise can have as little or as much detail as the Moderator introducing it is comfortable doing.

At times, Scene Premises with just Space Monster as the description will spark the other players to introduce their own twists as the Round progresses around the table. Alternatively, it may be the intention of the Moderator to frame a very specific plot point with a great deal of description. Whichever works for the Groups and the Moderator should be embraced. Remember, everyone is at the table to have fun.

Example Group

Jenny - Playing: Ensign Koler, a Vulcan Science officer, PHY: 3, INT: 4, CHA: 1, Traits: Emotionless, Says “Intriguing”, Secretly fascinated with Human Emotion, Skills: Science 2, Vulcan-Fu 1, Biology: 1

Bob: Playing: Lt. Steve Ballstein, Human Security Officer, PHY: 4, INT: 1, CHA: 3, Traits: Bullheaded, Opinionated, Ladies Man, Skills: Phaser 2, Seduction: 1, Escape Techniques: 1

Linda: Playing: Captain Jean Pike, Human Captain of the Resolute, PHY: 2, INT: 2, CHA: 4, Traits: Solves problems with words, Quotes number of crew under her command, Dedicated to the Federation, Skills: Negotiation 2, Phaser 1, Unarmed Combat 1

Tom: Playing: Commander Tyler Johannsen, Human executive officer of the Resolute, PHY: 4, INT: 2, CHA: 2, Traits: Secretly a Drunkard, Fond of alien cultures (and drink), Uses strength to resolve problems, Skills: Engineering 1, Phaser 1, Unarmed Combat 1, Drinking Songs 1

John: Playing: Chief Ronnie Blake, Human Engineer, PHY: 2, INT: 4, CHA: 2, Traits: Distracted by science, Fearless to the point of stupidity, Curious to a like extent, Skills: Engineering 2, Science 1, Investigation 1

During this time, each player gets a chance to introduce an element of the story.

Example: Plot - Gather Cure for Cancer

Jenny: “We beam down to the planet and find that the native of the planet are already dealing with the Klingons. Next.

Bob: The Klingons show up as we are negotiating with Kes Bor, the chief of the Gellians. Their commander, Karg, is less than pleased. Next.

Linda (Moderator) Breaks in to make a speech by Karg.

Tom: “I promise your Federation meddling will do you know good!” Karg storms out impressing Kes Bor with his machismo. Next.

John: “You must face the Blood Challenge if you are to prove you are worthy of the Blaec Mold. In the hills to the south there lives an old women who will tell you the nature of your quest.” Kes Bor dismisses the away team and you are sent out. Next.

Linda (Moderator): We prepare to leave camp but not before the Klingons have a little surprise for us. Scene. Next.

This would describe one round but also a Scene as it would end. Linda would have set the Plot for the adventure and Jenny would be sitting to Linda's left. When the scene ends, Jenny would become the Moderator.

Obviously, this requires everyone to be interested in the story and the basis of cooperative role-playing. At any point, except when the player is talking, any of the players may interject with an action for their character. For instance, John could have said his character spits on the floor where the Klingon stood as Tom describe the Point. However, he could only take that action after Tom described the Point. Likewise, John, the Science Officer, could have asked about the planet paying for a Science check for the presence of the fungus but only after Jenny described the situation.

ACTION POINTS

Action Points are tokens that a player earns through acting out their Traits. They are the heart of the DRAT system. Action Points are spent to perform actions that would normally have an indeterminate outcome. Walking across a room would not require the expenditure of Action Points, but jumping a crevasse while firing a weapon and killing an enemy would cost Action Points.

Action Points are recovered by performing the Traits of the character. For example, if the Captain has the Trait “Seduces member of the opposite sex” then successfully does so within the Scene Premise, he will receive an AP with the approval of the Group and

Moderator. However, if he wraps it within the Scene Premise, his character's persona and acts it out in the most entertaining method, the Group may choose to award him more. The amount recovered is normally one but more may be awarded by the Group or Moderator for extraordinary depiction of the Trait.

Task Resolution

Task resolution is about paying the cost of performing the action. In most cases the cost will be outlined in the Costs table. If it is not covered or if the Moderator of the scene (or the Group in general) believe there is an additional difficulty for the Feat, then additional costs may be paid by the person attempting the Feat.

All Costs are paid back into the pool in the center of the table.

Costs

The costs for actions vary depending on what is being attempted. In all cases, the Attribute relevant is subtracted from cost of the feat being attempted.

Feat	Cost	Attr.
Blocking an Attack	Cost of Attack + Attacker's PHY	PHY
Bribing an official	Twice their CHA	CHA
Critical Knowledge	15	INT
Dancing to Impress	5	PHY
Eluding an enemy	10	INT
Hit an Opponent	Twice their PHY	PHY
Interrogating a Prisoner	Twice their CHA	CHA
Jumping a Ravine	10	PHY
Operating Sensors	8	INT
Picking a lock/pocket/bypassing security	10	INT
Piloting a ship	10	INT
Seducing a neutral party	Their INT	CHA
Seducing an enemy	Twice their INT	CHA
Using Stealth	10	PHY
Walking a tightrope	8	PHY

INITIAL SETUP

A number of Action Point beads are placed in the center of the table. An average adventure takes 10 tokens per player, Advanced uses 15 and Cinematic takes 20 per player. When all the Action Points are spent the pool is depleted until someone spends some AP and they are returned to the pool.

Each player receives five AP to start with. This will be added to and depleted as the player enacts the character's Traits and spends AP to perform feats.

CHARACTER CREATION

When creating a character, it is critical for a player to match to the setting that has been laid out by the group, to match the character to the group (you can't all be the captain) and finally to match the character to what the player wishes to play.

Step 1: Concept

Drawing a concept should come from the setting, group that is forming and what a player wishes to play. For instance, in a group of four players, one may wish to play the Brash Warrior, one the Naive Ensign, one the Compassionate Doctor and one the Genius Engineer. A concept should be, at least, an adjective and a noun encapsulating the core idea of the character. The concept may be longer but should be kept brief in order to pass the idea to others in the group as easily as possible.

Step 2: Attributes

Take eight points and divide them between the three Attributes as you see fit. Remember that the Attributes may be as low as zero and may not exceed a max of 4.

Step 3: Traits

Traits are those simple points that will define core actions of your character. See "Traits" on page 2 for ideas on traits. The character may have as many Traits as the player desires but it is **suggested that the player limit the number of Traits to 1-4.**

Step 4: Skills

Skills are meant to represent those abilities that characters are exceptional at but not a representation of all that the character may do. This means if a character has a skill in Blaster they are exceptionally skilled compared to the average user. They may also be able to drive a car if it is within the characters background. The player assigns **4 skill points but may not go above 2 ranks in a skill.** For instance, a character may have 2 ranks in Blaster, 1 rank in Seduction and 1 rank in Science. Note that skills may be precise as the group desires. Some groups may wish to have Mechanical Engineering instead of a more loosely defined Engineering skill. The Group should decide before character creation.

MODERATORS

Moderator is the title of the person who currently controls the plot and any resolution of contentious points that the party cannot resolve. For instance, if the science officer uses Action Points to discover a weakness in the Space Monster and three players answer with their own ideas then the Moderator can decide that one, two or all three weaknesses exist. In addition, in any tied vote the moderator will be the tie breaking vote voicing their vote last.

The Moderator is also arbiter of awarding Action Points to players who have performed their Traits in an extraordinary manner. The number of AP normally awarded is one but the Moderator may decide to award more if the player has done a better job of portraying their Trait, advancing the story by acting out their Trait or portraying their trait in the Scene Premise.

OPTIONAL FULL-TIME MODERATOR

An individual in the Group may have an idea for an adventure. If the party is in agreement, then that person may remain Moderator for the entire adventure, guiding the plot and acting out the roles of the Foes in the story.

This may also be an option for a Group that is used to a traditional GM-Player structure for their RPG group. In the end, the Group must be comfortable with a full time Moderator.

ADVANCEMENT

Advancement is optional in DRATS. If the Group decides to advance characters over multiple Episodes (a Series) then after each episode, each character receives one Advancement Point. These may be used to raise a Skill or an Attribute one rank.

In addition, the Group votes on who will be awarded an additional Advancement Point based on the best play. The criteria may be changed according to the goals the Group wish to use or be as simple as the most enjoyable performance. The vote is simple majority with the last Moderator's vote being the tie breaker.

