

For a description of the world, log in to www.darkmyst.org, and join channel #outlands (type /join #outlands). In a nutshell, Outlands can be described as a multiverse platform with science fiction/horror elements, a western-themed dark fantasy, and a post apocalyptic nightmare without the emphasis on garish, urban landscapes. Loosely based on earth, the time period is unclear, and everyone has a very hazy grip on history (not just the world's, but even their own).

It draws inspiration from all of the following, and borrows heavily from them (as they say, "All wisdom is plagiarism, only stupidity is original"):

1. Stephen King's The Dark Tower Series (all but Wolves of Calla)
2. The writings of August Derleth, HP Lovecraft, and Ramsey Campbell.
3. Ray Bradbury's THE OCTOBER COUNTRY
4. Vampire Hunter D
5. John Boorman's classic Zardoz
6. Anything directed by Sergio Leone
7. Firefly
8. Aria: The Hunter (anime)
9. The writings of Terry Brooks (Shannara and its prequels)

And a HOST of others. It truly is a multiverse.

The rules are simple, based on a D20 system that is both easy to understand and use, and integrates well with IRC platform.

This game is something of a hybrid between freeform RPG and diced rpg's. It is definately sheeted. (meaning you have a character sheet, created with certain specified parameters).

Characters are awarded as much for creativity and adding to the world, as much as moving the plot and completing goals. Don't think of Outlands as a "mission oriented" levels and loot RPG, although there are certainly elements that it shares with these types.

Wildthorne's goal in creating Outlands is three-fold:

1. Develop a world that makes the characters want to live there--I.E. rather than just logging on to see what the next mission is or what risks you take, you might just log in because you like talking to others (in character, of course) in a Tavern.

2. Create a team design approach to world building and game design. Players are encouraged to submit rules to the OP, and build regions (textually).

3. Collaborative writing and creativity in a format that saves all we do, so it will be there for others to enjoy, add to, and get lost in.

Most importantly, HAVE FUN.

To make a character, you assemble a series of Knowledges, Actions, and Traits.

Knowledges are things that character is skilled in and knows, and typically does not involve a roll. A character starts with 5 of these (there are 20 to pick from).

Actions are the most likely to aspects that involve rolls. Think of them as abilities where chance plays more of a vital part. There are 10 of these, eight of which start at 1. Mysticism and Brute Strength start at 0. A player then has 15 points to distribute to Actions. No Action may start at higher than 4, although theoretically there is no upper limit to how high they can go.

Traits is the last item, of which your character picks two (out of a list of 10). Think of traits as in-born talents, and background for the character. Indeed, many of the traits have a lot of roleplaying significance. Traits confer benefits to the character, but are not rolled themselves.

LIST OF KNOWLEDGES IN OUTLANDS (Select 5)

1. Brewing and distilling
2. Bowyerling and fletcher

3. Smithing
4. Mechanics
5. Locks and clockwork mechanisms
6. Welding
7. Outdoor Survival and Hunting
8. Agriculture
9. Animal Ken, Husbandry, and Hawking
10. Cooking, and food Preservation
11. Ammo loading and Pressing
12. Tailoring and Leatherworking
13. Artistry (painting, sculpting, drawing)
14. Musical instruments
15. Medicine and Herbalism
16. Butchering, Skinning, and Tanning
17. Carpentry and Stonemasonry
18. Antiques and Appraisals
19. Electronics
20. Old World Romanticism

ACTIONS: (15 Points to distribute)

Personal Firearms--Use of pistols and small arms

Melee and Archery--Use of swords, handheld weapons, and bows

Rifles--Use of "Long Guns" be they muskets, assault, or laser

Mysticism--Use of magic, learning of magic, and Occult lore

Trade and Negotiating--This action governs commerce and trade

Mental Alacrity--mental resistance, intuition, quick thinking

Brawl--fist to cuffs

Brute Strength--governs abnormal strength feats, extra damage

Agility--Quickness of foot, stealth, aptitude for rapid saves

Interraction--Persuading and influencing others, leadership

IMPORTANT: All ACTIONS start as 1 except for Brute Strength and Mysticism. Those two actions start at 0. There is no assumed minimal proficiency with those as there are the other Actions.

TRAITS: (choose 2)

Sturdy

Exotic Good Looks

Nimble

Scholarly

Shrewd

Battle-hardened
Composed
Intimidating
Lucky
Mystical Origins

Explanations of Traits:

Currently, there are 10 traits. There probably will be more in future drafts. Experienced players are encouraged to write their own. They are as much for role playing as they are to confer benefits. Benefits of traits will be lost if you do not play accordingly, as this is merely selecting traits for benefits rather than an effort to round out the character. Work with your op if there is a certain trait you would like your character to have, but overall this first set covers a lot of ground.

Sturdy makes you tougher to kill, giving you 10 wounds instead of 8.

Exotic good looks turns the heads of everyone. While any character can be good looking, this trait is over and above what most even moderately attractive people are. This could be a blessing and a curse. You will seldom go anywhere and blend in. All interaction rolls are favorable, and you seldom sleep alone (if, that is, you don't want to). When dealing with the opposite sex, interaction rolls are usually entirely unnecessary.

Nimble makes you harder to hit in melee and brawl combat. Typically it takes a 14 rather than 12 (or two higher than where you are at). Also, Agility actions are favorable.

Scholar trait means you are well educated in math, science, physics, literature, arguments, etc. Seldom is there a subject you know nothing about, and often you get rushes of inspiration through ideas. A scholar is extremely studious, a plethora of knowledge and insight. A scholar can also read and write up to five languages, and gains an extra Knowledge (starts with 6).

Business minded trait automatically makes any deal you are involved in 10% more productive than anyone else. Likewise, all trade and negotiation rolls are treated as favorable.

Combat Veterans have seen lots of battle. Weapons (and fists) are simply more dangerous in their hands. All attacks deal one extra point of damage.

Composed characters keep their head better in a crunch, are more observant, stronger of mind, and as a result of this clear head, often have more focused, if not clearer, goals. All mental alacrity rolls are favorable. Also, a character who is composed gains an extra point of will power.

Intimidating characters, through a combination for their looks, demeanor, the way they carry themselves, can typically get others to see their way without too much persuasion. Often, this trait allows you to avoid the necessity of an interaction roll. In addition, intimidating characters usually get wounded less, because most people will not fight you.

Lucky characters start with 6 fate points, instead of 5. Also, when spending willpower, a lucky character gets +3 to the roll instead of +2. Lastly, once per day a lucky player can elect to make a roll more favorable (like spending willpower or a fate point, this must be declared at the outset).

Mystic Origins is perhaps the most amorphous of the traits. Perhaps you are the son of a demon, or studied magical vespers among monks. Whatever the cause, your background is more shrouded in the mystical and occult. Hence you know a little more about it. To choose this trait, a character must elect to put at least 1 action point in mysticism (recall it is one of only 2 that do not start at 1). All mysticism rolls are favorable to you.

Each character also has certain resources:
FATE, HEALTH, WILLPOWER, and WEALTH

Fate: All players start with 5 fate points. There is technically no limit to how Fate Points can be accumulated, but once spent they are gone. They only replenish when your character accomplishes things that are personally (and legitimately) important to them (all while playing true to character, background and traits). Fate Points are very powerful, they can be used to buy success (no roll necessary), turn a deadly hit against you into a miss (and avoid death) or may be used by the character in wild ways to take the story in new, wild directions, and essentially gain some control over the story world and momentum in a way that (usually) benefits the character. The latter is not to be attempted by the

inexperienced IRC or RPG gamer--but is preferable only after gaining some experience in collaborative fiction and knowing the Operator. Currently, the only OP for Outlands is Wildthorne, but he may, at some point give channel control to others who wish to run. ONLY PLAYERS HAVE FATE. No one else.

Health: Players start at 8. "Ordinaries" usually start at 4. A player with the Sturdy trait start with 10. 0 is dead. No resurrections, no raise dead. One wound heals per week of rest. Double the rate in the care of a healer (knowledable in medicine and herbs).

Willpower: Is the sum of mental alacrity and mysticism. This stat can be very low or very high among players, Ordinaries usually have only 1 or 2. A Willpower can be spent to add +2 to a roll (in advance), and is also spent to use mystic abilities (spells, lintels, disciplines, powers, etc.). Willpower replenishes per evening at your Mental Alacrity Score.

Basic Mechanic:

Used in actions, roll a d20, add the relevant statistic (in IRC you would type `roll 1d20+X where X is the relevant action being tested. If a roll is favorable, you can do this twice and take the best result. Unfavorable, do it twice and take the worst.

Your OP will tell you whether or not what you rolled is successful. In many cases, Actions may be contested (like against an NPC or another player's roll) and higher wins out. In some situations, like when shooting at someone, you may be pitted against a static number (typically 12, but can be higher).

FIREARMS:

Guns are deadly. Gun battles should also be comparatively rarer in Outlands, but this largely depends upon the availability of ammo, and the style of play. Even a .22 can kill a man. Hence the mechanic, KILLSHOT (and one of the reasons FATE is important). A natural 20 rolled, against a non-supernatural creature (AKA HUMAN) is always a kill from any type of firearm. Note: A person performing the killshot may choose if he desires it not to be a killshot after all.

Damage Ratings on guns are tied to the caliber of bullet. They generally fall as follows, but some guns could be more or less powerfully as per story. Generally,

.22 3 pts damage

9mm 4 pts damage

.45 5 pts damage

.357 6 Pts. damage

.44 7 pts damage

.223 8 pts damage

.50 Cal 10 pts. damage

Full Auto Burst, as high as 15 pts damage

Melee weapons and bows, cosmetically they all differ quite a bit, and story wise they all will too. Suffice to say, generally, mid sized weapons and average bows do in the 4 range (quite enough to kill most ordinaries)

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

These rules are intentionally left short for this version. A more detailed rule set may appear in future publications should the need arise.

A character may be taught any Knowledge known by another character, so long as sufficient time and training is expended. This, almost, invariable would take the course of multiple sessions and may require additional roleplaying.

To some extent, the better the writing and imagination of the character studying, the more rewarded he will be in that regard. Rational: if you add to the immersion of Outlands, you will be rewarded.

With respect to ACTIONS, as a general rule, after each story arc a character will be rewarded between 1-4 points, determined by how successful the player was in reaching his goals, and how much he enriched the environment, risks undertaken, and other special circumstances. No more than one point may be spent on any given ACTION, points may be saved to be spent later, and you must have at least used the skill in the story arch you are

seeking to enrich.

Traits can never be gained.

Of course, it goes without saying that equipment, wealth, and in game rewards will also serve to advance the character, from a pure numbers point of view.

Rules will, in the future be available on upgrading weapons and armor, but for now these are mainly story generated.

ARMOR:

Armor works a bit different in Outlands, then it does in most other games. For one, it degrades, but this is mainly story driven and often can be patched or fixed with sufficient role playing and knowledge base. It is up to the individual OP whether or not to tell a player when armor has been compromised.

Armor doesn't always work the same in this game. One key feature of a suit of armor would be how much coverage, or how likely it will be to absorb its rating. This is done in 5% increments, for ease of use with a 20 sided die. Say you have a leather vest rated (50/3 75/2). That character gets shot by a .22 bullet for 3 damage, and it is not a killshot. The defender rolls a d20. One a 10 (50% chance) or below, his armor absorbs 3 points (soaks it all up). On a 15 or below, it is less effective, only providing 2 protection (effectively a small window from 15, down to 11. Below that, the armor functions at its full spectrum--providing 3 pts protection instead of 2). So there is overall a better chance of providing some protection, but just as likely as not, the armor will provide its full protection.

There are untold variations and types of armor. Some may effectively "Guaranty" a minimum protection, but provide better in limited circumstances.

There are a few basic archetypes of armor, but anything goes.

For ease of simplicity, certain burdensome armors may make it

easier for you to be hit, but absorb much more damage. These types would be handled in special situations.