Curse of Samhain RPG – Core Rules

Welcome to the core rules of the Curse of Samhain RPG. This RPG is designed to be a simple pick-up game. All rules needed are contained in this document. The intention of this ruleset is to provide simple yet fun mechanics and incentives for real role playing.

Design Principles

The game is based on the following design principles.

- **Speed:** Games are fast and focus is on the story, not the rules.

- **Information at your Fingertips:** Everything is need to know is on the character sheet. There are no tables, no complex rules or other things that slow down the game. The same goes for monster statblocks.

- **Clarity:** There is only one way to do a certain thing. For example, there are no advantages that emulate skill advancement (i.e. which grant a +1 to skill). If you want to raise a skill by +1, you pay for it.

- **Minimal Book-keeping:** There are no "once a day" abilities and similar book-keeping nonsense – fate is a single source of power.

- **Story-Centric:** Roleplaying is encouraged mechanically

- **Strong Random Element:** Random tables are common during character generation, skill rolls have a great element of luck and adventures are not cast in stone.

Characters

Characters in this game, have the following properties. For character generation, see chapter XXX.

Attributes

Characters have seven attributes which define their general capabilities. These attributes represent the natural qualities of the character. His training is represented through skills. All attributes range from -3 to +3 for humans and other player races but can be higher for other creatures. **Attribute checks** require rolling a d20 and adding the attribute value. The player must either meet or beat a target number to succeed or must beat an opponent in an opposed roll. In opposed rolls, the defender wins if there is a tie.

Strength (Str): The physical strength of the character. This attribute is needed to bash in doors, wrestle down people or bend bars. Strength is also added to melee damage.

Dexterity (Dex): The agility and mobility of a character. It includes manual dexterity as well. It might modify your speed and is used for many skills.

Constitution (Con): The health and brawn of your character. Constitution is often used defensively and might modify hit points.

Willpower (Will): Your mental fortitude. Some skills use willpower and it might modify your hit points. Also, it is your attribute to use against mental attacks.

Intelligence (Int): Your intellectual capacities. Many knowledge-based skills use this attribute.

Charisma (Cha): This attribute either represents good looks or aura. Many social skills use this attribute.

Skills

Characters also have skills, which represent training. Each skill belongs to one attribute. To test a skill, roll a d20 and add the attribute value as well as the skill rank. The player must either meet or beat a target number to succeed or must beat an opponent in an opposed roll. In opposed rolls, the defender wins if there is a tie. The following skills are available to player characters. Primary skills are marked with a star. These skills are very likely to use used during a typical adventure.

Skill	Attribute	Description
Athletics	Str	Running, jumping, climbing, swimming and other types of movement which require a skill check.
Bluff	Cha	The ability to lie to others, without being seen through. Typically opposed by Empathy. This will not damage relationships unless the lie is seen through.
Common Knowledge	Int	Knowledge which a common person might reasonable have such as history, lore of the land and knowledge about common monsters.
Diplomacy	Cha	The art of influencing people without lying to them. Opposed by Diplomacy, this skill leaves relationships intact but it is difficult to push through outrageous demands.
Dodge (*)	Dex	This skill is used to resist physical attacks, both ranged and in close combat.
Empathy (*)	Cha	Your ability to see through others.
Forbidden Knowledge	Int	Knowledge about magic, demons and similar things
Heal (*)	Will	The ability to heal people. After combat, a roll vs. 10 can heal 1d6 hit points plus 1d6 per 5 points above the threshold.
Intimidation	Cha	The ability to scare people into a certain path of action. Afterwards, the relationship is definitely broken.
Melee Attack (*)	Str	This skill is used to make attacks against others using melee weapons or while unarmed.
Mental Resistance (*)	Will	The ability to resists mental attacks such as magical spells that affect the mind.
Notice (*)	Will	Your ability to notice things which happen around you or to analyze details.
Ranged Attack (*)	Dex	This skill is used to make attacks against others using ranged weapons. It includes throwing weapons.
Religious Knowledge	Int	Knowledge about devils, angels, religious rites and such things.
Rogue	Dex	The skill with lock-picks, pick-pocketing and trap-disabling.

Scholastic Knowledge	Int	The sciences, e.g. alchemy, heraldry and similar specialized items of information.
Spellcraft	Var.	The skill used to cast spells. In the core rules, there are only rituals, which are based on Int.
Stealth (*)	Dex	The ability to hide and to sneak.

Derived Properties

The following values are derived from the attributes.

Hit Points: This is the amount of damage a character can take. Hit points are reduced through damage, e.g. in combat. Once you reach a value below zero, you die, unless you burn a Fate Point. Hit points are 2d8 plus the highest of Con and Will at the time of character generation. Minimum starting hit points are 6.

Fate Points: Characters start with 5 fate points. Basically, a fate point only allows you heal 1d6 wounds immediately, at any time, even if it is not your turn. Various Advantages (see below) allow you to use these points for more interesting things. After each adventure, your Fate Points are reset to their maximum value. When you character dies, you can permanently reduce your maximum number of points in order to miraculously survive and return with 1 hit point after the scene. This reduction is called **burning fate**.

Speed: Your speed is the value of "squares" you can move per simple action. This value is 2 plus the higher value of Con and Dex. Minimum speed for a player character is 2.

Experience Points: These points are given as rewards after each session or adventure and can be used to increase attributes or skills and to buy new advantages.

Advantages and Disadvantages

There is a list of special rules that can apply to a character based on his advantages and disadvantages. Starting characters in the core rules have one advantage, however specific rule sets might add additional ones for origin, race etc. Similarly, they have one disadvantage to start with.

Advantages: Advantages come in several different types, which act as rough balancing guidelines.

- Spend fate for a re-roll: The advantage is tied to a single skill which can be re-rolled by spending fate.

- Spend fate to re-roll under common circumstances: The advantage is tied to two skills, which may be re-rolled if certain commonly occurring circumstances are met, i.e. at most 50% of the time in the typical life of an adventurer.

- Spend fate to re-roll all skills under very narrow circumstances: The advantage applies to all skills but can probably be used in a situation that occurs only every other adventure.

- Spend fate to use a special power that is described in the description of the advantage.

- Failed re-rolls are free: For a single skill, a re-rolls made (due to other advantages) are free if

they do not improve the roll. Obviously this advantage requires some other advantage to be useful, as it, in itself does not provide a re-roll.

- Double Roll: For the skill, two dice are rolled and the better one is chosen. Re-rolls granted by other advantages are still possible but only the better of the tow dice can be re-rolled.

Disadvantages: Disadvantages are negative effects which can be invoked by the GM, by the player or by other players. Depending on how it is invoked, there are different effects:

- **Self-Invoked:** If a player suggests that his disadvantage might occur in a scene and the GM agrees, the player refreshes to full fate points. If he is already full, he gains on point over the maximum.

- **Parasitical Invocation:** If a player (A) suggests that the disadvantage of another player (B) might might sense in a scene and the GM agrees, player A gains a fate refresh as described above but can transfer any of the points gained to B at the time of gaining them. Thus if A refreshes from 3 to 5, he can give B up to two points out of his 5.

- **GM-Invoked:** If the DM feels that a disadvantage would apply to a scene, the player affected gains 1 fate point. The GM should be lenient if players are a bit slow to announce their intention to invoke a drawback.

- **Negating Invocation:** If an invocation is suggested by the GM or another player, the player can spend a fate point to avoid the invocation. The other player is still rewarded but cannot share his newly gained points.

Character Generation

To start playing the game, you need to generate a character. First, randomly determine your attribute values using the table below. The values can be assigned to attributes of your choice.

2d6	Attributes
2 or 3	**Challenged:** One attribute at +2, three at +1, one at -3, one at +0.
4 to 9	**Hero:** Two attributes at +2, two at +1 the rest at +0
10	**Prodigy:** One attribute at +3, three at +1, the rest at +0
10 to 12	**Specialist:** One attribute at +3, one at -2 and the rest at +1.

At the beginning, the player can pick two skills at a level of +3 and three skills at +1.

Hit points are 2d8 plus the highest of Con and Will at the time of character generation (min 6). Speed is 2 plus the highest of Con and Dex (min. 2).

Finally, pick a general advantage and a disadvantage.

Advantages

At character generation, pick a single advantage that modifies the character in some way. Some are narrative (do X once in a session), others are more mechanical. Overlaps do allow multiple re-rolls but at the normal cost. Indentation shows pre-requisites. A star indicates exclusive advantages that cannot be taken together, i.e. any character will only have one star advantage.

Some advantages require a special campaign stage to be achieved. The GM decides at which point of the campaign the stage changes. The ranks are – Opening, Middle and Finale

Opening Stage Advantages

- **Fighter:** Re-roll Melee Attack with fate.

- **Artful Dodger:** Re-roll Dodge with fate.

- **Archer:** Re-roll Ranged Attack with fate.

- **Cleave:** Spend a fate point to immediately attack a second foe after killing an opponent. This can only be used with melee attacks and you may only move one "square" to attack the second foe.

- **Mighty Blow:** After rolling damage for one of your attacks, you can spend fate to deal maximum damage.

- **Riposte:** Spend a fate point to make a counter-attack after an enemy misses you.

- **Dual-Weapon Fighter:** If you wield two weapons, you can spend a fate point to make two attacks instead of one.

- **Ranger:** Re-roll Stealth and Common Knowledge with fate when targeting a non-urban environment.

  - **Master Ranger:** Re-roll Athletics and Notice with fate when targeting a non-urban environment.

  - **Woodsman:** By spending a fate point, you automatically succeed with all Stealths rolls in a scene which are below target number 15 when in a forest, jungle, or similar landscape that offers a lot of natural cover.

- **Gutter Rat:** Re-roll Stealth and Common Knowledge with fate when targeting an urban environment

  - **Master of the Streets:** Re-roll Athletics and Notice when targeting an urban environment.

- **Thief:** Re-Roll Rogue by spending fate.

- **Backstabber:** Re-roll Melee Attack and Dodge with fate when fighting an opponent that you and one of your allies flank.

- **Trap Specialist:** Re-roll Notice and Rogue with fate when dealing with traps.

- **Thick skull:** Spend a fate point to cancel a Daze result.

  - **Toughness:** When you spend fate to heal yourself, you roll 1d8 instead of 1d6.

  - **Frenzy:** You can still attack after making two move actions.

- **Undead Slayer:** Re-roll any skill with fate when dealing with undead creatures.

- **Daemon Hunter:** Re-roll any skill with fate when dealing with daemons.

- **Good Reputation:** Spend a fate point so that a stranger will help you based on the good reputation of you or an organization you belong to.

- **The Faith is Strong:** You can spend a fate point to re-roll Mental Resistance

- **Hide in Shadows:** Re-roll Stealth and Dodge with fate in a poorly lit environment

- **Well-Connected:** By spending fate, you can declare you have an informant or similar ally in a city or region.

- **Unfazeable:** You can spend fate to ignore the fear attack of a single creature for a scene.

- **Infamous:** Re-roll Intimidation with fate

- **Well-travelled:** Re-roll Common Knowlegde by spending fate

- **Scholar:** Re-roll Scholastic Knowledge by spending fate

- **Heretic:** Re-roll Forbidden Knowledge by spending fate

- **Healer:** You can use the heal skill to immediately restore hit points after a battle. If your skill check result is higher than the current hit points of your target, you heal him to the level of your roll.

- **It's in the book:** You can spend a fate point to declare a minor obscure fact of history, nature, heraldry to be true. E.g. you might declare that the local knight's ancestors have participated in a crusade with your forefathers. The fact needs to be approved by the GM.

Middle Stage Advantages

- Master of Arms: Failed Melee Attack re-rolls are free

- Master of Evasion: Failed Dodge re-rolls are free

- Master of the Bow: Failed Ranged Attack re-rolls are free

- …..

Finale Stage Advantages

- Grand Master of Arms: Double roll Melee Attacks

- Grand Master of Evasion: Double roll Dodge

- Grand Master of the Bow: Double roll Ranged Attacks

- …...

Disadvantages

These are some common, non-setting specific disadvantages. Players can suggest their own variants or new disadvantages. Disadvantages have a trigger condition that must be met and an effect. They are not intended to completely spoil the players fun but instead to get him involved in the story. Disadvantages can be narrow or wide but the effect should always lead to interesting role-playing.

- **Honorable:** You value honor in yourself and others. Injustice is abhorrent to you.

- **Enemy:** There is some enemy who is looking for you. His henchmen might pop up in the most inopportune situation. How this came to be and how far the enemy wants to go is an interesting background story.

- **Greedy:** If there is money involved, you act unreasonable.

- **Loves the ladies:** If there is women involved, you act unreasonable. And women have a tendency to pop up in your life in the most inopportune situations.

- **Dependent:** One of your family/friends is a common victim of villains.

- **Gets Lost/Distracted:** You tned to get separated from the group with negative consequences

for you or the others.

- **Infamous:** Somebody might recognize you and know about your bad reputation. They will act against you or discredit you with others.

- **Slow:** You have a tendency to lose enemies during chases or be caught by those chasing you.

- **Dark Secret:** You have a dark secret and those who know about it might come to use it against you.

- **Hatred:** You hate some group, ethnicity or religion and you will react strongly if they show up. And they *do* tend to show up in your life quite often.

Character Advancement

After each session, a player get to roll three times on the table below. He may pick two results of his choice to advance his character.

1d8	Advancement
1	Raise any one skill by +2
2	Raise two non-primary skills by +2
3	Raise an attribute by +1
4	Gain an additional fate point
5	Gain an advantage
6	Gain 1d8 hit points (min. 4)
7	Free choice of advancement from this table
8	Free choice of advancement from this table

Game Play

Here are some additional notes on gameplay.

Skill Checks

s. above for now.

Combat

Combat is a special situation of conflict, where the heroes match their skill with that of their opponents. Combat has the following order:

1. Roll Dex or Int to determine initiative. This order remains in place for the rest of the combat.

2. Each character takes his or her turn. During your turn, you can take up to two simple actions. After the character is done, check whether any of the effects put on him/her end.

3. After all characters are done, start again from the top of the list.

Simple Actions

The following actions are considered simple. A character can perform two of these per turn, however, it is not possible to take the same action twice, except for movement. The simple actions are:

- **Movement:** Move your speed

- **Attack:** An attack leads to an opposed roll with melee/ranged attack vs. the dodge skill of the defender. The attack roll can be modified based on cover, higher ground etc. To determine the bonus/penalty count the number of positive and negative factors. If there are more positive ones, the bonus is +3, if the negatives are in the lead, there is a -3. Damage is based on the weapon you use and reduces hp. This damage is modified by str in the case of melee weapons.

- **Use Item:** various effects

- **Ready Action:** This is essentially a delayed action triggered by a certain action of an opponent. You can use this action to make an attack when the enemy moves away, enters through a door etc. Your action interrupts the opponents action. If your action was not triggered until it is your turn the next time, it is lost.

Damage is not the only effect of combat. There are several states that can result from attacks or spells. The states are:

- **Dazed(X):** only one simple action per turn, end with Con vs. X. Counts as a negative factor.

- **Stunned(X):** no actions, end with Con vs. X. Counts as a negative factor.

- **Prone/Grappled:** counts as negative factor, end with a simple action opposed roll Dex vs. Str or Str. vs, Str. against one adjacent enemy. End with a simple action otherwise. This state can grant an attacker the +3 bonus for an attack, if there are no positive factors.

Social Interaction and Other Challenges

Non-combat challenges are handled as small games. The GM decides which skills can be used for an outcome and what the difficulties are. He also defines the number of successful rolls required to win and the number of failures which will end the challenge.

Equipment

The equipment list is rather simple, in fact, one should assume that the heroes take the appropriate simple equipment they need for a quest and which they can afford.

Weapons

There are only a few weapons in this game, which represent bigger groups of armament.

Weapon	Attack Modifier	Range	Damage	Notes
Small Weapon	+2	Melee	1d6	
Hand Weapon	+1	Melee	1d8	
Great Weapon	-1	Melee	1d12	
Pole Arm	0	Melee	1d10	+2 to trip attacks,

				reach 2
Bow	+1	40	1d8	
Crossbow	+0	20	1d10	

Armor

Armor reduces the damage dealt by physical attacks, including spells that do not explicitly target the mind. Armor reduces the damage of each attack by the value specified. The greatest additional impact of armor is its speed reduction. Speed is never reduced below 2 due to armor.

Armor	Damage Reduction	Speed Reduction
Light Armor	1	0
Medium Armor	2	1
Heavy Armor	3	2

Enemies

Enemies have the same stat-block as heroes but typically less complex re-roll conditions. Their fate comes from a pool that has the size of the total fate of the player character group. Enemies are not built according to the rules – you can assign them any values you like and you feel your players will be able to handle.

Minions cannot use fate points and only have a single hp. However, they are never killed through „environmental" damage automatically – roll 1d6 instead – they die on a 1 or 2. Enemies do not have spells, they have special powers.

Goblin Warrior

Attributes: Str+1 Dex+1 Con+0 Will-1 Int-1 Cha-1

Properties: HP: 6; Speed: 4; Fate: N/A

Skills: Melee Attack+3/+5*, Dodge+4, Ranged Weapons +3/+4*, Notice +2, Stealth +3

Re-Rolls: Dodge, Stealth (underground only)

Armor: Light (DR: 1)

Weapons: Small Weapon (1d6), Bow (1d8, R: 40)

* with weapon bonus.

Giant Spider

Attributes: Str+3 Dex+1 Con+2 Will+1 Int-3 Cha-3

Properties: HP: 12; Speed: 6; Fate: N/A

Skills: Melee Attack+6/+7*, Dodge+4, Notice +4, Stealth +6

Re-Rolls: Melee Attack, Dodge, Stealth

Armor: Natural (DR: 2)

Weapons: Bite (1d8 + poison)

Poison Attack: If a bite attack hits, the spider rolls Con vs. Con of target. If successful, the target is Stunned(10).

* with weapon bonus.

Character Sheet

Shows attributes, skills, has a box for notes on re-rolls.