

# URESIOUS

## Grave of Anything

A *Uresia* Fantasy RPG by S. John Ross

A LONG TIME AGO, the gods destroyed one another. This broke everything and killed everyone. Mostly. Either way, it reshaped the world, and now Uresia is known as the *Grave of Heaven* – a realm of fantasy adventure. ***Uresius: Grave of Anything*** is a complete rules-set for adventures in heaven's grave. By "complete," I mean you'll also need pencils, a handful of six-sided dice, and some scratch paper. This is a custom-tailored version of ***Risus: The Anything RPG***, so the Game Master might find things like ***The Risus Companion*** useful or inspiring (but not necessary).

## Character Creation

***Uresius*** characters are defined by *Clichés* (often several of them). *Clichés* are a shorthand describing what a character knows how to do (and more). The "character classes" of the Neolithic Age of RPGS – things like *Fighter*, *Thief*, and *Magic-User* – were the original gaming *Clichés*, and you can choose *Clichés* like those, or pick from the list on page 2, or create new *Clichés* unique to your character (the idea that a *Cliché* might be *unique* is slightly broken, but just nod and smile, nod and smile). The GM decides which *Clichés* are acceptable for his campaign.

*Clichés* are rated in *Dice* (the ordinary six-sided kind). For example, a Coldhearted Assassin isn't just a Coldhearted Assassin; he might be a Coldhearted Assassin (2) or Coldhearted Assassin (4), for example (any rating from 1 to 6). The rating indicates the *number of dice* you roll when your abilities as Coldhearted Assassin are challenged. Three dice is professional. Six dice is *mastery*. One die is a putz.

To create characters, just *name* them, *describe* them, and assign their *Clichés*. You begin with 10 dice to spread around your chosen *Clichés* (a Normal Schmoie would have less; maybe 3-5 dice). A complete, straightforward adventurer might look like this:

### Ivan "Filthy Pierre" Nelovkevich, a Dwarf of Laöch

**Description:** Ivan's father and nine brothers are all *very* serious miners in the mountains near Becker's Forge, but Ivan wanted something *swashbucklier* from life, so off he went, to plunder dungeons, slide down banisters, woo pretty girls, and enter fencing competitions (with his fencing hammer, Helga). His friends all love him too much to tell him he can't sing.

**Clichés:** Bawdy Swashbuckling Dwarf (4), Romantic Charmer (3), Only Somewhat Serious Miner (2), Raucous Balladeer (1)



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## Some Sample Clichés (And What They're Good For)

**Alchemist** (Making potions, seeking enlightenment-metaphors, causing explosions)

**Ambassador/Diplomat** (Currying favors, tolerating curry, finding common ground, selling it)

**Archer** (Routing cavalry, keeping a safe distance, downing distant eagles)

**Assassin** (Stealthy slaughter, skulking in taverns, hissing, waxing cynical)

**Boru Sorcerer** (Hypnotizing, tantalizing, distracting, inspiring feelings, dancin' & lovin')

**Burglar** (Prowling around in houses, climbing buildings, assessing and fencing goods)

**Burly Lass** (Carrying and/or combating livestock and/or drunken men)

**Caravel Captain** (Mastering ship and crew, cutting a romantic figure, laughing heartily)

**Celari Balloon Pilot** (Watching the world below, mad flights, not necessarily of fancy)

**Charcoal King** (Lusty fighting, sooty penmanship, smoke magic, grunting)

**Child of the Sea Dragon** (Serving the interests of really deadly weather, head-to-head wireless gaming)

**City Watchman** (Looking bored, looking grim, looking angry, fighting, sleeping)

**Demonologist** (Summoning demons to mow lawns, kill people, lick walls clean, etc.)

**Diploma Warlord** (Awkward attempts at combat, machismo, and leadership)

**Duandralin** (Deadly beast-style hand-fighting, primal sorcery, grim regrets)

**Earthy Peasant** (Knowing the countryside well, common-sense insights, mulching)

**Emerald Knight** (Looking snazzier and more important than a Knight, armor piloting)

**Engine Driver** (Shouting, driving trains, terrifying passengers, lifting huge things)

**Exotic Dancer** (Spinning naked around poles with grease on, making merchants feel better about life)

**Expatriate Philosopher** (Putting life in Boru in the past, confusing foes with exposition)

**Explorer** (Surviving wild environments, wrangling native guides, finding a way home)

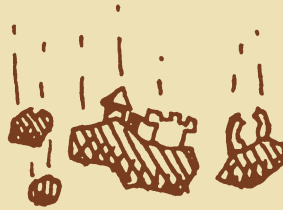
**Food Fighter** (Like Martial Artist, but messier, saucier, and much tastier)

**Harebrained Gadgeteer** (Building unlikely things with clockwork and elementals)

**Hunter of the Nameless** (Tracking, peering through disguises involving beards, setting sympathy aside)

**Jongleur** (Juggling, singing, jesting, distracting, flirting, drinking, complaining, dreaming)

**Knight** (Looking snazzy and important, battlefield antics, horsemanship, romance)



**Lecherous Hedonist** (Leering, lusting, gorging, ogling, nose-bleeding, peeping)

**Madwoman** (Cackling, plotting, scheming, indulging in paranoid delusions, melodrama)

**Magical Girl** (Whapping monsters, teamwork, cheerful moralizing, giggly girl-stuff)

**Magic Maid** (Tidying, household intrigue, inspiring crushes, kicking outrageous amounts of ass)

**Martial Artist** (Acrobatic butt-whomping, posing dramatically, meditating)

**Mercenary** (Fighting, looting, inadvertent heroism, the pursuit of unlikely romances)

**Monster** (Grr. Argh.)

**Necromancer** (Manipulating the energies of the dead, emanating a pallor of death)

**Noble** (Mixing in high society, running things, patronizing the arts, patronizing, generally)

**Otherworlder** (Concocting oddball plans, missing home, owning unusual small items)

**Poet** (Self-indulgence, annoying others)

**Priest** (Blessing, forgiving, abetting the abdication of reason, consuming sherry, acting as a combat medic)

**Questing Scholar** (Seeking knowledge, minor magics, adapting to unusual customs)

**Roaring Drunkard** (Macho posing, energetic partying, drinking)

**Saint-Sage** (Comprehending Boru philosophy, rationalizing sensual excess, dancing)

**Shaman** (Healing, knowing, comforting, cursing, blessing, chanting, spirit-appeasing)

**Slave** (Leading or joining uprisings, surviving poor treatment, metabolizing spelt)

**Sporting Chef** (Using food to impress, entertain, manipulate, compete or just have lunch)

**Swashbuckler** (Sailing, pirating, fencing, partying, flashy acrobatic things in the rigging)

**Talarian Alchemist** (Bumming around between hostels, whipping up potions, setting fires)

**Thug** (Grr. Argh.)

**Treasure-Hunter** (Poking into ruins, finding secrets, beta-testing deathtraps)

**Trickster** (Lie-crafting, tale-weaving, selling, under-selling, getting away with stuff)

**Villain** (World domination, flunky abuse, failing to see vital flaws in plans)

**Willowy Lass** (Being admired, being kidnapped, being rescued, being waited-on)

**Wily Merchant** (Finding goods, appraising goods, finding buyers, appraising buyers)

**Witch** (Being cryptic, boiling things, working spells, delivering dire warnings)





A character may have any number or combination of Clichés, but more than 10 would be odd, considering the number of dice you get. Characters shouldn't begin their career with more than 4 dice in anything, but just because you're creating a character today doesn't mean that he's *beginning* his career! The GM will tell you if he's requiring "beginners" for the game.

The Clichés shown here are just examples to get you started – a shopping list of ideas to demonstrate how some of the characters suggested in **Grave of Heaven** play out in game terms. Rewrite, alter, qualify and contradict to your own merry amusement. Players should feel free to create their own Clichés (subject to GM approval).

Since **Grave of Heaven** is high-action swords-and-sorcery, there are plenty of Clichés that serve as personalized variants of "warrior" or "wizard," described to taste. A few are in the list above, but there are dozens of common variants left to common sense (or your group's preferred substitute). Entirely omitted from the list is the broad category of mundane professions (locksmiths, carpenters, potters and so on). While they aren't really worth *listing*, these can be excellent Player Character Clichés in **Grave of Heaven** style fantasy, since just about any ordinary ability – not just cooking! – can be perverted to adventuring applications, either with whimsically broad assumptions about available equipment ("Where'd he get that potter's wheel in the middle of the Ash Desert of Ruronar?") or just liberal applications of the Inappropriate Cliché rules (page 5).

## Race & Culture

Character races – even easily pigeonholed ones like Satyrs – aren't Clichés in their own right. They make good modifying descriptors for *existing* Clichés, though: a Troll Magical Girl (4) is a different sort of heroine than a Creesh Magical Girl (4). The same goes for Snowman Assassins, Dwarf Exotic Dancers, Elvish Poets, and so forth. Tagging just one of your Clichés (typically your "primary" Cliché) with a racial descriptor is all you need to play a nonhuman character!

Cultures, too, make good descriptors. "Lawyer" isn't much of a heroic-fantasy Cliché, but "Boru Lawyer" adds some color to the idea, given the convoluted nature of Boru society and law. Even very pedestrian Clichés

might benefit; a Winnowite Mercenary is bound to have a few tricks and shticks that a Laöchrian Mercenary doesn't, and vice-versa.

## Lucky Shots

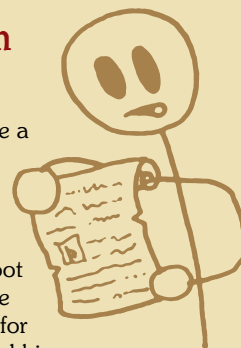
Characters may choose to spend some of their starting dice on something *other* than Clichés. A single starting die can, instead, buy three *Lucky Shots*. A character with Lucky Shots might look like this:

### Master Virinon the Wanderer

**Description:** He was once a revered philosopher in Boru, until his defeat in the Great Contest of 1369. Shamed and determined never to set foot in his native land again, he set sail with his Troll valet for Sindra, where he expanded his knowledge of sorcery and accepted a position with the Loreseekers. His Troll companion was slain last winter in the dungeons of Trang, and now Virinon seeks an adventuring party to travel with for companionship on the road to wisdom.

**Clichés:** Boru Sorcerer (3), Expatriate Philosopher (2), Loreseeker (2), Demonologist (1)

**Lucky Shots:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



Using a Lucky Shot boosts one of your Clichés by one die for just a moment – long enough to make *one* important roll of the dice. Lucky Shots "recharge" every game session, but can't be hoarded between them. So, if you spend two of your ten starting dice on Lucky Shots (as Virinon did, above), you can make up to six of your die rolls "lucky" per game. Lucky Shots can represent random good luck, the favor of a surviving deity (for a Child of the Sea Dragon, for example), wizardly potential the character never noticed or trained (so it acts on his behalf subconsciously), or just a resourceful nature.

## Double-Pump Clichés

To give a Cliché some extra flexibility and *oomph*, you can declare it a *double-pump Cliché*. This is expensive (you have to "spend" *two* of your ten starting dice for *each* die assigned to the Cliché), but it can be worth it in emergencies (see the rules for *pumping* on page 7). To indicate a double-pump Cliché on your character sheet, note the Cliché dice in [brackets] instead of (parentheses). The Game Master may *require* that some Clichés (particularly those representing the power of wizards) be purchased as double-pumps.

## Primary Clichés

It's sometimes helpful in the rules, at the table, and in adventures, to refer to a character's "primary" Cliché. The primary is, in simplest terms, the *one* Cliché which most represents a character's *self-image*. The primary Cliché is, among other things, the "when in doubt" Cliché ... the Cliché the Game Master will set Target Numbers for when there's no clear "best" Cliché in a character's list. For most characters, it's the Cliché with the most dice. For *every* character, it's the Cliché listed *first* in the character writeup.

## The Game System

Whenever anybody wants to do something, and nobody is actively trying to stop him, *and* the GM doesn't think that success would be automatic, the player rolls dice. If the total rolled beats (equals or exceeds) the Target Number the GM sets, success! If not, failure!

### Target Numbers Follow This Scale:

- 5:** A cinch. A snap. A challenge for a Schmuck. Routine for a pro.
- 10:** A challenge for a Professional.
- 15:** An Heroic challenge. For really inventive or tricky stunts.
- 20:** A challenge for a Master. Nearly superhuman difficulty.
- 30:** You've GOT to be Kidding. Actual superhuman difficulty.

This can be subjective, and anybody can *try* anything: crossing a chasm by swinging on a vine would be child's play (automatic success!) for a Swashbuckler or a Lord of the Jungle, easy (Difficulty 5) for an Intrepid Explorer, and challenging but definitely doable (Difficulty 10) for a Barbarian, Martial Artist or Burglar. Even a Senile Wheelchair-Bound Necromancer could try it (Difficulty 15, but the wheelchair is lost unless the roll beats a 30)!

## Proper Tools

Every character is assumed to be equipped with the Tools of His Trade (at least the portable ones). Soldiers are fully-equipped with mail, shield and sword. Emerald Knights have a suit of Emerald armor with all the trimmings. Wizards have robes, a wand or two, and probably a nice bit of emerald jewelry. Talarian alchemists have a *Keryx Royal* and an embarrassment of well-stocked bandoliers and pouches. If, through the course of an adventure, a character *loses* any of these vital totems, his Cliché operates on half the normal number of dice (or not at all, if the GM rules that the equipment was *essential*) until they are replaced.

A Talarian Alchemist (5) could still produce on-the-fly potions as a Talarian Alchemist (3) if stripped of the *Keryx Royal*, but can't make anything but whimpering sounds if stripped of those ingredient-bearing pouches and bottles. Given access to a stock of someone *else's* ingredients (or a decent herb-garden) he could still manage something at half-dice.

Some special tools may give *bonus dice* to your Clichés when used. Characters never begin the game with bonus-dice gear; they must be acquired in adventures. Note that, in heaven's grave, the bar for bonus-die gear should be kept fairly high ... a *run-of-the-mill* super-powerful magic sword probably *isn't* bonus-die gear, but a really *special* super-powerful magic sword might be! Similarly, an ordinary "caster's" emerald isn't, but a *giant* emerald could be. A very fine spatula isn't, but the *Screaming Spatula of Sportulus* certainly is – if you're chef enough to tame it.

## Mad Money

Most characters begin with some *Mad Money*, which they can spend during the course of their adventures, or blow on non-essential extras (invisibility potions, lawn flamingos, etc) during character creation. They needn't spend Mad Money on Tools of the Trade; those come free. They can use Mad Money to buy *extra* Tools of the Trade, if they're worried (a Sindran Kite-Warrior who knows the campaign will feature many Kite-Eating Trees, for example, might want to stock up).

Most adventurers begin with (3d6 × \$100) in Mad Money, unless the Game Master decides their Clichés strongly imply poverty (Struggling Troubadour, Successful Beggar) or conspicuous fluid wealth (War-Mongering Duke, Greedy Wine-Merchant). Note that simply beginning with a valuable Tool of the Trade does *not* imply conspicuous fluid wealth ... a Dashing Sea-Captain certainly has a caravel (a *very* expensive Tool of His Trade), but is just as likely to be cash-poor as any other adventurer (if not moreso). Money tied up in enterprises *isn't* Mad Money, and may be cheerfully ignored as it sits in the background, paying the rent or feeding the ship's crew, etc. Mad Money is pocket-cash not earmarked for any necessary function.

## The Combat System

"Combat," in *Uresius*, is defined as any contest in which opponents jockey for position, utilize attacks, bring defenses to bear, and try to wear down their foes to achieve victory. Either literally or metaphorically! Some examples of combat include:

**Arguments:** People using whatever verbal weapons they have at hand to make their points. Truth is the first casualty.

**Sporting Cookoffs:** Chefs using whatever ingredients they've been handed to win the affection of jaded judges.

**Astral/Psychic Duels:** Mystics/psionics looking bored or asleep, but trying to rip one another's egos apart in the Otherworld.

**Wizard's Duels:** Sorcerers using strange magics and trying to outdo the other.

**Dueling Banjos:** Banjo players using strange melodies and trying to outdo the other.

**Seduction:** One (or more) characters trying to score with one (or more) other character(s) who is(are) trying to resist.

**Actual Physical Combat:** People trying to injure or kill each other.

The GM decides when a combat has begun. At that point, go around the table in rounds, and let each combatant make an attack in turn. What constitutes an "attack" depends on the sort of combat, but it should always be roleplayed (if dialogue is involved) or described in entertaining detail (if it's physical and/or dangerous and/or normally requires contraceptives).

Attacks require rolls against character Clichés. The GM must, at the outset of combat, determine what *type* of Clichés are appropriate for the fight. In a *physical* fight, Clichés like Viking, Barbarian, Soldier, Swashbuckler, and Novelist are appropriate. Clichés like Pastry Chef and Winnowite Massage Therapist are not (but may still be used; see next section).

An attack must be directed at a foe. Both parties in the attack (attacker and defender) roll against their chosen Cliché. Whomever rolls the *single highest die* is the winner.

**Example:** If Gladiator Rex rolls 4 dice for a 2, 1, 3, and 6, he'll win the round against Gladiator Joe who rolled a 3, a 4, and a pair of 5's. While Joe got a higher *total*, victory goes to Rex's **6** over Joe's **5's**.

The loser loses *one of his Cliché dice* for the remainder of the fight – he's been weakened, worn down, or otherwise pushed one step towards defeat. In future rounds, he'll be rolling lower numbers. In the event of a tie (both combatants roll the *same* high die), there's no loser, so there's no loss; both sides talk smack, hop around, exchange catty slaps and so on, with no lasting impact.

Eventually, one side will be left standing, and another will be left without dice. At this point, the winners usually decide the fate of the losers. In a physical fight or magical duel, the losers might be killed (or mercifully spared). In Courtroom Antics, the loser gets sentenced by the judge, or fails to prosecute. In a Seduction, the loser gets either a cold shower or a warm evening, depending on who wins.

You needn't use the same Cliché every round. If a Viking/Swashbuckler wants to lop heads one round, and swing on chandeliers the next, that's groovy, too. However, anytime a character has a Cliché worn down to zero dice in combat, he has lost, even if he has other appropriate Clichés left to play with.

Dice lost in combat are regained when the combat ends, at a "healing" rate determined by the GM. If the combat was in vehicles (chariots, emerald armor, caravels) then the vehicles themselves are likely damaged, too, and must be repaired.

## Inappropriate Clichés

As stated above, the GM determines what sort of Clichés are appropriate for any given combat. An *inappropriate* Cliché is anything that's left . . . In a physical fight, Pastry Chef is inappropriate. In a Wizard's duel, Barbarian is inappropriate.

Inappropriate Clichés may be used to make attacks, **PROVIDED THE PLAYER ROLEPLAYS OR DESCRIBES IT IN A REALLY, REALLY, REALLY ENTERTAINING MANNER.** Furthermore, the "attack" must be plausible within the context of the combat, and the *tone* that the GM has set for the game.

All combat rules apply normally, with one exception: If an inappropriate Cliché wins a combat round versus an appropriate one, the "appropriate" player loses **THREE** dice, rather than one, from his Cliché! The "inappropri-

## Schrödinger's Equipment List?

Beyond the Tools of the Trade and any *certain* equipment purchased with Mad Money, every character also has an *uncertain quantity of equally-uncertain items*. It's a pain to keep track of every belt-pouch and tinderbox, so, just don't . . . unless you *need* those items to be certain (in which case, buy them and jot them down). But it's also perfectly okay to say "Hey there, Game Master! I figure I have some rope. Do I have some rope?" and maybe the GM will just say "Yeah, okay," and maybe he'll say "No" and maybe he'll say "Maybe" and have you *roll* for it. Some character-types produce unexpected equipment in a way that borders on the magical. Some live way past the border.



## Magic and Battle in Uresius

It falls on the Game Master to set boundaries for fighting styles and magical styles in **Uresius**. As always, any character can *try* anything; only the Target Number changes. Use **Uresia** as a handy guide to the many forms of Uresian magic, in particular – each style of sorcery is distinct, and while none of them are really limited in what they can achieve, each is limited in *how* they achieve it. A Yemite Necromancer, cornered by a group of unruly thugs, could easily engage in combat by summoning up waves of fragile-but-numerous skeletal minions, or by sucking the life-force of his attackers into his pinky ring or something. In that same situation, a Boru Sorcerer might drop a potion-bomb filled with hallucinogenic smoke and dart between his foes, convincing them to attack or make out with one another. In game terms, both just roll the dice, so the fun, as always, lies in the descriptions – and what happens if the PCs lose!

In Uresia, a few non-magical Clichés imply dabbling in magic or something like it. A Chef, for example, can attempt to manipulate moods and feelings in a way that *almost* hearkens to Boru Sorcery – it's just not as potent or direct. A Loreseeker or Questing Scholar has probably pored through enough moldy books to try for-real spellcasting. With "dabbling" Clichés, let them act just like magical Clichés for Target Number based tricks only – just remember that the Target Numbers will be 10 or more points *higher* than for a real wizard.



ate” player takes no such risk, and loses only the normal one die if he loses the round.

Thus, a skilled Pastry Chef is dangerous when cornered and attacked unfairly. Beware.

When in doubt, assume that the aggressor determines the type of combat. If a wizard attacks a barbarian with magic, then it’s a Wizard’s duel! If the barbarian attacks the mage with his sword, then it’s Physical Combat! If the defender can come up with an entertaining use of his skills, then he’ll have the edge. It pays, on many days, to be the defender!

**Note:** If the wizard and barbarian both *obviously want to fight*, then *both* are aggressors, and it’s “Fantasy Combat,” where both swords and sorcery have equal footing.

## Teaming Up

Two or more characters may decide to form a *team* in combat. For the duration of the team (usually the entire combat), they fight as a single unit (rolling their Cliché dice together as a single massive clattering pile), and are attacked as a single foe. Every team has a “Team Leader” determined by the highest participating Cliché (by choice of the participants in the case of a tie).

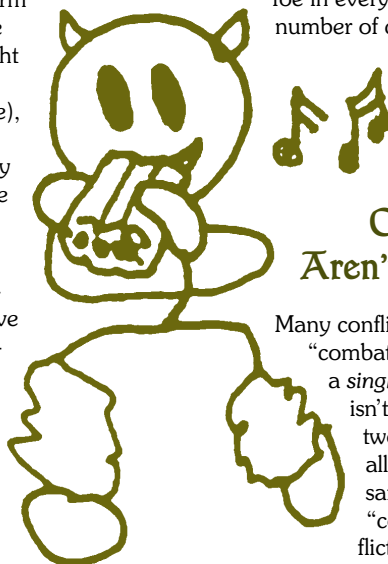
Clichés joined in a team need not be identical, but they all must be equally appropriate or inappropriate. This means five Duandralin could band together in physical fight with no problem. It also means that a Pastry Chef, a Rug Merchant, and an Astrologer could team up in a physical fight if they have a REALLY good description of how they’ll use their skills in concert to take out the Duandralin!

Whenever a team loses a round of combat, a *single team-member’s dice* is reduced by one (or three!) as per the normal combat rules. Any team member may “step forward” and voluntarily take this personal “damage” to his dice. If this happens, the noble volunteer is reduced by twice the normal amount (either two dice or six!), and the team leader gets to roll twice as many dice on the team’s next attack, a temporary boost as the team avenges their heroic comrade. If no volunteer steps forward, then each member must roll against the Cliché they’re using as part of the team: Low (total) roll takes the (undoubled) hit, and there is no “vengeance” bonus. Roll off any ties.

**Disbanding:** A team may voluntarily disband at any time between die-rolls. This reduces the Cliché each team-member was using in the team by one, instantly (treat it just like “damage” from losing a round). Disbanded team-members may freely form new teams, provided the disbanding “damage” doesn’t take them out of the fight. Individuals may also “drop out” of a team, but this reduces them to zero dice immediately as they scamper for the rear. Their fates rest on the mercy of whoever wins the fight!

**Lost Leader:** If the team leader ever leaves the team for any reason (either by dropping out or by having his personal dice reduced to zero), every member of the team immediately takes one die of “damage” as if the team had disbanded (since, without a leader, they’ve done exactly that). They may immediately opt to reform as a new team (with a new leader) however, and if the old leader was removed by *volunteering* for personal damage, the *new* team’s leader gets the double-roll vengeance bonus to avenge his predecessor!

**Grunt-Squads:** This is the game-term for simple NPC teams without specific leaders or any possibility of disbanding ... they’re just a mass of grunts, not a team of *characters*. This means, if you’re facing a horde of 700 rat-skeletons in the lair of a Necromancer Duke (5), you might face – for example – Skeletal Rat-Horde (7) as a single foe, so the GM needn’t keep track of 700 tiny sets of skeletal dice. Mechanically, the Rat-Horde is a *single* foe in every possible sense, but it can have any number of dice the GM feels is appropriate, instead of the normal six-dice cap. When a grunt-squad is defeated, it often means a few survivors have scattered, but at least *one* will always remain to suffer whatever fate the victor decides.



## Conflicts That Aren’t Combat

Many conflicts that arise in the game aren’t really “combat;” they’re over too quickly, defined by a *single* decisive moment. A classic pistol-duel isn’t usually “combat” in game terms – the two duelists simply turn and fire, then it’s all over. Two characters diving to grab the same dagger from the floor isn’t usually “combat” either (though, really, any conflict situation *can be* combat ... it’s mostly a question of whether you, the Game Master, wants to break a conflict into rounds, or just *be done with it* to give it a sense of speed and/or unimportance).

Such “single-action conflicts” are settled with a single roll against appropriate Clichés (or inappropriate Clichés, with good roleplaying). High roll wins.

## When Somebody Can’t Participate

It will often occur that characters will find themselves involved in a Combat or quicker conflict where they simply have no applicable Clichés, even by stretching the imagination. Or maybe ONE character will have an appropriate Cliché, while the others feel left out. An example might be a pie-eating contest. One character was wise (or foolish) enough to take “Disgusting Glutton (2)” as a Cliché. The other characters are alchemists or duandralin, neither of whom traditionally engorge themselves on pie.

In situations like this, give everybody two free dice to play with, for the duration of the conflict. This *INCLUDES* characters who already HAVE appropriate Clichés. In the example above, the alchemists and duandralin would

get Pie-Eating (2), while the Disgusting Glutton would be temporarily increased to Disgusting Glutton (4). The Glutton, naturally, still has the winning edge, but anyone can TRY to eat lots of pie. This “temporary promotion” applies only in opposed conflicts, not in challenges based on Target Numbers.

## Pumping Clichés

In dire circumstances, characters may choose to *pump* their Clichés. Pumping is *voluntarily suffering damage* in exchange for a temporary *boost* to the roll. The player chooses how many dice of “boost” he requires (any number up to the current value of the Cliché) and rolls that many extra dice, for the duration of a single round of combat (or, outside of combat, a single significant die-roll). After that round or roll is resolved, the character *loses* a number of dice equal to the number he gave himself in the pump. This exertion is treated exactly like “injury” to the Clichés sustained in combat, and must “heal” in the same fashion. This means if you’re a Warrior (3) and you choose to add three dice to a “pumped” roll, you *automatically knock yourself out* in the process! So, take care. Pumping is legal in any situation *except* single-action conflicts.

For most characters, pumping amounts to a high-risk, desperate activity which pays off only in special circumstances (for example, pumping an inappropriate Cliché just prior to switching to a healthier one). For characters with *double-pump Clichés*, however (see page 3), pumping “damage” is halved (round up) ... so, you can give yourself a four-die boost and take only *two* dice of damage. Double-pumps make more sense for some Clichés than others, but “making sense” isn’t, strictly speaking, a requirement in *Uresius*.



## A Word or Two About Scale

No standard time or distance scale is provided for *Uresius*; it really depends on what kind of action is happening. However, the GM should try to stay consistent within a single conflict. In a physical fight, each round represents a few seconds. In a long-term fight between a married couple, each round might represent an entire Day (Day one: Husband “accidentally” burns wife’s favorite dress in the oven, Wife “accidentally” feeds vital alchemical acids to Husband’s prize goldfish, and so on until there is a victor).

## Character Advancement

At the end of each adventure in an ongoing campaign, each player should roll against every Cliché that was used significantly during the game (using the current undamaged value of the Cliché). If the dice land showing *only even numbers*, this indicates a permanent increase by one die for that Cliché. Thus, advancement slows as you go. No Cliché may climb higher than Cliché (6).

Anytime you do something *really, really, really spectacularly entertaining* that wows the whole table, the GM may rule that you may roll *instantly* (in the middle of the game!) for possible improvement, in *addition* to the roll at the end of the adventure.

## Advancement Ticks

When you check for Cliché improvement and the check *fails* to score an all-evens result, mark an *advancement tick* next to the Cliché.

- ◆ You can spend *five* ticks to boost your chances when rolling for the associated Cliché’s improvement. Roll an *extra* die, but then *discard* one (your choice) before determining the roll’s result.
- ◆ You can spend *ten* ticks for an automatic one-die improvement for the Cliché (treat it in all ways as if you’d rolled for improvement and succeeded).

Spent ticks are erased. Unspent ticks for a given Cliché are *also* erased, whenever that Cliché improves.

## Adding New Clichés

There may come a time when a character has grown and matured enough to justify adding an entirely new Cliché to his character sheet. If the player and GM *agree* this is the case, *and agree* on what the new Cliché is, the player rolls for advancement as usual, but any of the new dice earned may be put toward the new Cliché *instead* of the ones that earned them. This can also be applied to “in-game” improvements, and (provided the conditions above are met) Clichés maxed at (6) may be “checked for improvement” to see if they spawn *new* Clichés.

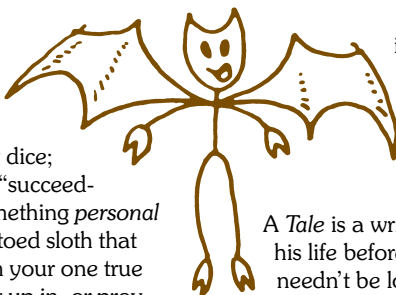
## Advanced Options

That’s it for the basic rules of *Uresius: Grave of Anything*. The sections that follow describe some *advanced* rules the Game Master may allow at his option. For more optional rules to consider, see *Risus: The Anything RPG* and *The Risus Companion*, or some of the many awesome fan-documents produced by the *Risus* and/or *Uresius* fan-communities online.

## Advanced Option: Questing Dice

Questing dice are Lucky Shots (page 3) with a *focus*. They’re less flexible, though, because questing dice are tied to a character’s personal *quest*, a mission that

consumes his life, a love that defines him, a hatred that consumes him. Characters who aren't on some kind of clearly-definable crusade shouldn't be allowed to buy questing dice; they're not for something broad like "succeeding in the adventure;" they're for something *personal and specific* like slaughtering the six-toed sloth that murdered your father, re-uniting with your one true love, saving the orphanage you grew up in, or proving, once and for all, that a Snowman can succeed in the challenging Boru sport of Hot Springs Synchronized Swimming. This kind of personal quest is seldom the thrust of the evening's adventure; it's a personal subplot that may only occasionally dominate the storyline. Questing dice may be used to boost any die-roll to overcome any obstacles standing directly between the character and the character's "quest." They can't be applied to unrelated rolls. Instead of getting three Lucky Shots per die spent during character creation, you get *five* Questing Dice.



injury – that the GM agrees is so *juicy* that he can use it to make the character's life more interesting (which usually means less pleasant, but more entertainingly challenging). A character with a Hook gets an extra die to play with.

A *Tale* is a written "biography" of the character describing his life before the events of the game begin. The Tale needn't be long (a page or two is usually *plenty*); it just needs to tell the reader where the character is coming from, what he likes and dislikes, how he became who he is, what his motives are. Some Tales are best written from the player's omniscient perspective; others are more fun if written as excerpts from the character's own diary. A character with a Tale provided before gameplay begins gets an extra die to play with.

## Advanced Option: Sidekicks and Shield-Mates

Characters already have whatever NPC "support staff" their Clichés imply (if any). Normally, they're just Tools of the Trade, a background detail. This Advanced Option allows characters to pluck a friendly NPC out of the background and into the fore, to have a potent, loyal (even subservient) follower, ally, bodyguard or boon companion that travels along on adventures, risking life or limb to help him stay healthy and look good doing it.

Create a sidekick by peeling dice away during character creation, as for Lucky Shots. Each die spent on a sidekick creates a three-dice NPC ... So, a 10-dice hero could, instead, be an 8-dice hero with a 6-dice ally. It's usually inappropriate for a sidekick to have any Clichés *higher* than the Player Character's own best Cliché. A few quick examples of what you can get for a single die:

- ◆ An Overprotective Mini-Dragon (3) as a companion to a Plucky Princess.
- ◆ A Playful Monkey (1) who's also a Kleptomaniac (2) as a companion for a World-Wearied Mariner.
- ◆ A Band of Merry Shield-Brethren (3) fighting alongside a Mongite Barbarian.

A sidekick doesn't need to be a human being (anymore than a PC does) and it doesn't need to be a single entity. The last example above is an allied *Grunt-Squad*, a noisy group of nameless guys with beards and braids and a lusty hankering for quaffing things and splitting things asunder. The GM (and other players) might choose to name them on a whim, but some can be killed, and others might be recruited, as the game goes on. In game terms, they maintain a static group identity.

Sidekicks are loyal to the end, and obedient provided they're not betrayed. Beyond that, they're NPCs to be used and abused by the GM as frequently as by the player who paid for them. Sidekicks grow in power much more slowly than Player Characters: only when a Sidekick's "owner" *succeeds* at increasing his *primary* Cliché, a Sidekick may *check* for Cliché improvement for that session. They otherwise follow all normal improvement rules.

**Example:** A lusty rogue defines his quest as "the sweaty affections of a beautiful redhead." When brawling with a surly Sand Troll for the affections of a fire-haired beauty, the rogue can apply his questing dice to any of his combat rolls ... but when brawling with a nine-stride Ebon Serpent in the Gladiator Pits of Drova Nor, the questing dice don't apply. It's true that his chances with cute redheads would be *threatened* by having his soul drained to the Ebon Dimensions, but unless the Serpent has such a redhead *captive*, it isn't *directly* in the path of his quest.

If a questing character *completes* his quest, he may choose to take up another one (re-defining the purpose of his questing dice) or he can lay questing aside and relax, exchanging his questing dice for an equivalent (smaller) number of Lucky Shots, or for an all-new Cliché associated with his post-quest lifestyle.

The Game Master may opt to allow Questing Dice to be tied to a *cause* without a definable end, rather than a specific and completable quest. For example, one of the Rego Corunda might have Questing Dice tied to the service of High King Bellhammer (presumably, the Questing Dice would represent the magic of the Fire Cluster in some way) ... but take care to only allow causes that are as *specific and limiting* as any quest would be (the Rego Corunda example assumes a single Charcoal King in a mixed party of adventuring PCs ... if the entire *campaign* is about the service of the High King, Questing Dice wouldn't fit). Questing Dice which can be used for any (or nearly any) challenge aren't Questing Dice at all; they're Lucky Shots.

## Advanced Option: Hooks & Tales

Normally, a character is created using 10 dice. With this Advanced Option, players can bargain for extra beginning dice by giving their character a Hook and/or a Tale.

A *Hook* is some significant character flaw – an obsession, a weakness, a sworn vow, a permanently crippling