

Example of Play

Jon, Tess and Rick have been playing in Mike's *Desolation* campaign for several weeks, and think they may have finally found the remnants of a library for which they've been searching. Jon is playing Terril, a dwarven warrior. Tess is playing a human Primalist named Chambrai who has an eagle for her totem, and Rick is playing a rover named Hin Mah.

Mike/GM: It appears the old man wasn't lying when he gave you directions to the Library of Galbraith. As you crest a hill and look eastward, you see the remains of what used to be a large building made of white marble. A broken stone wall circles it. Two statues stood guard at the front gate. One is broken but still standing. All that remains of the other is a set of knees.

Tess/Chambrai: Does it match the descriptions I've heard? Would the statues have stood about 30 ft. tall, each holding a brass torch in one hand and a book in the other?

Mike/GM: From this distance you can tell that the statues probably stood about that tall. The statue that still stands is holding a book, but you don't see any brass torches.

Rick/Hin Mah: I have farsight. Can I try to scan the rubble for those torches?

Mike has determined that the brass torches aren't easily seen among the large pieces of stone, especially now that time has taken its toll and the brass has blackened and tarnished. He assigns the Perception check a Tough difficulty (three successes needed), but keeps that to himself.

Mike/GM: Sure, go ahead and make a Perception check.

Jon/Terril: Can I try, too?

Mike/GM: Yes. But you are at a two dice penalty because of the distance. The same goes for Chambrai.

Hin Mah has a Perception of 5. Rick spends a Style point to raise it to 6 and Take the Average, giving him three successes. Chambrai has a Perception of 5 as well, but because of the distance penalty, Tess only rolls three dice. She gets one success. Terril has a Perception of 4. After the penalty, Jon rolls two dice and gets two successes.

Mike/GM: The three of you squint at rubble, trying to pick out anything of interest in its midst. Hin Mah manages to catch a glimpse of something half buried off to the side of the gates — it looks like it is an oversized metal torch that's seen better days.

Rick/Hin Mah: I see the torch. This is the place!

Jon/Terril: Finally. Let's get down there before it's too dark for you guys to see. There's probably something down there that'll need killing and I'm tired of doing it all by myself.

Tess/Chambrai: Sounds like a plan.

Rick/Hin Mah: I am going to move away from these two and shadow them.

Mike/GM: OK ... give me a Stealth roll.

Hin Mah has a Stealth rating of 8. Rather than Take the Average, he decides to roll, but only gets one success.

Rick/Hin Mah: Why don't I ever just Take the Average?

Mike/GM: Hin Mah darts off and tries to vanish among the tall grass. However, the pack he's wearing is still clearly visible. *(To Rick)* The grass shields your every move.

Mike/GM: You approach the ruins as the sun begins to set at your back. You find yourself about 50 ft. from the front gate.

Jon/Terril: Is the gate open or closed?

Mike/GM: The gate has collapsed. It looks like it once stood about 15 ft. high and probably held two wooden doors.

Rick/Hin Mah: I creep closer, keeping an eye out for people hiding in the rubble.

Mike/GM: How close to the wall do you want to go?

Rick/Hin Mah: All the way ... I'm sure I can handle whatever might be lurking.

Mike tosses Rick a Style point because Hin Mah has the Reckless flaw.

Mike/GM: Rick, make a Perception check.

Rick decides to take the average of his Perception of 5. Because it's an odd number, he rolls one die and gets a success to add to his average of 2+. He has three successes — not enough for him to spot the scab rat coming at him.

Mike/GM: We're in combat, folks. Everyone roll Initiative.

Mike rolls Initiative for the scab rats as a group and gets two successes. Terril has an Initiative of 5, which means Jon rolls five dice. He gets three successes. Hin Mah has an Initiative of 7. Rick takes the average and only gets three successes after rolling one die. Chambrai has an Initiative of 6. Tess rolls very poorly and gets only one success.

Mike/GM: Something has surprised Hin Mah, so he loses his attack this round. Normally he would go first, then Terril, then the creatures, then Chambrai.

Rick/Hin Mah: Oh, come on! I'm never Taking the Average again — I could've rolled more successes!

Mike/GM: Terril, what do you do?

Jon/Terril: I want to get over there as quick as I can.

Mike/GM: A giant rat leaps out of some rocks and lunges at Hin Mah, its mangy body covered with open sores and seeping pustules. Its frothing mouth is filled with yellowed teeth, its eyes encrusted with dried blood and mucus. Closely behind it

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

are three more that circle Terril cautiously. One of them makes a probing attack, but the other two simply watch.

Mike/GM: Hin Mah is surprised, but can still defend. Defend against three successes. It tries to bite your neck.

Rick/Hin Mah: My Defense is 7, so I can just take the average and avoid the damage, right? I'll just do that.

Mike/GM: You managed to pull back just as its jaws snap shut, its thick saliva spattering against your skin. *(To Jon)* One is trying to bite your leg — defend against four successes.

Jon/Terril: I'll Take the Average of my Defense, which is 9.

Mike/GM: You manage to leap over the snout of the scab rat at the last instant. *(To Tess)* What does Chambrai do?

Tess/Chambrai: I want to cast a spell at one of the rats attacking Terril.

Mike/GM: What kind of spell?

Tess/Chambrai: I want to hurt them ... can I create some magical talons to tear into one of those rats from here?

Mike/GM: That seems reasonable enough, since talons are a pretty important part of your eagle totem.

Causing damage to a single target is typically a spell with an average difficulty. However, Chambrai is about 50 ft. away, so Mike is going to add an additional level of difficulty.

Mike/GM: I am going to add a level of difficulty to the spell since you are attacking something 50 ft. away. This is a Tough spell and will require three successes.

Though she only needs three successes, Tess decides to roll all her dice.

Tess/Chambrai: I will roll all of them. All nine!

Jon/Terril: What are you do ... ?!

Without waiting for the others to change her mind, she rolls her dice and manages to get five successes.

Rick/Hin Mah: Woo hoo!

Mike/GM: You have four failures, which translates to three points of Burn after your Burn Reduction Talent. But you have two extra successes. What do you want to do with those?

Tess/Chambrai: I am going to pour those into the spell, increasing the damage.

Mike/GM: So your spell does two points for the Base Difficulty, plus two points for the increased damage, plus your Intelligence of ...?

Tess/Chambrai: 4.

Mike/GM: ... which is a total of eight points of damage. *Mike quickly checks the Health of a scab rat and sees that it is 4. He also knows that the average Defense of the rat is 4+. He rolls a single die, hoping to add a success to the average Defense, but fails. The rat suffers four points of damage — enough to disable it.*

Mike/GM: Summoning the power of the eagle, you form your hand into a claw and rake the air in front of you. A twin set of wounds are inflicted on the flank of a scab rat by a large ethereal talon. The magical talon sinks deep into the

flesh of the vermin. It's badly wounded, but still a threat.

Tess/Chambrai: Take that!

Mike/GM: Chambrai also takes three points of Burn.

Tess/Chambrai: I'm down to 2 Health! I might need to tone down the next spell.

Mike/GM: Back to the top of Initiative. Rick, what does Hin Mah do?

Rick/Hin Mah: I draw my dagger and stab the rat that's in my face! Can I do both of those in one round?

Mike/GM: Not unless you have the Quick Draw Talent.

Rick/Hin Mah: Um ... I probably would already have it drawn. I was sneaking into a very suspicious place.

Mike thinks about it for a second. Rick didn't say he was drawing his dagger earlier and just said that he thought it was still sheathed. Mike decides to let it slide and comes up with a compromise ...

Mike/GM: For a Style point we'll say you had it handy. *Reluctantly, Rick tosses in a Style point.*

Rick/Hin Mah: Like I was saying, I stab the scab rat with the dagger I had palmed so no one else could see it. I'll just Take the Average of my attack and get four successes.

Mike knows the rat's average Defense is 4+, so Hin Mah's attack will be ineffectual.

Mike/GM: Your dagger rakes along the side of the rat, slicing open a boil, but it doesn't cause the rat any real harm.

Rick/Hin Mah: Come on!

Mike/GM: Jon, what does Terril do?

Jon/Terril: I am going to ignore the other rats and try to kill that one Hin Mah just attacked.

Rick/Hin Mah: That's my kill!

Jon/Terril: Watch and learn! *(To Mike)* I want to make a Total Attack against the rat on Hin Mah.

Mike/GM: OK. Swing away. Remember that you are going to lose your Active Defense.

Jon/Terril: No sweat. TASTE THE FURY OF GREULK!
Terril has an attack rating of 12 with an axe and gains two additional dice to roll because of the Total Attack. He rolls and gets eight successes. Because Terril is the second person to attack the rat this round, its Defense drops by two points. This means that its average Defense drops by one point, from a 4+ to a 3+. The attack will inflict at least four points of damage to the rat, killing it.

Mike/GM: With a mighty swing of your axe, the rat is cleft in twain. A sickening smell fills the air as its entrails spill out.

Rick/Hin Mah: I want to make sure it doesn't get on my boots. I had to loot a lot of corpses before I found these.

Mike/GM: Make a Dexterity check vs. a difficulty of 2.

Rick/Hin Mah: Finally, something I can succeed at! I Take the Average of my Dexterity and get three successes.

Mike/GM: Well done. You dance out of the spreading blood as two rats attack Terril's back ...