

CATACLYSM

The Game

Cataclysm is an attempt at a departure from the monster / player style event approach to something new. We have crafted what we hope is a simple yet expandable set of rules using concepts familiar to most LRP'ers. This is not to say it is for experienced players only. The Basics you need to know to begin play are contained in these few pages.

Cataclysm is a lethal system. Death is but a sword blow or Arcane word away. Even a starting character has the potential to deal a killing blow to a more experienced enemy. Survival in this world is a major achievement and is rewarded with comprehensive character development.

There are currently over 300 abilities for you to choose from when developing your character. In addition to this, you may come across new abilities not in the basic set through play. Such events as encountering a wise teacher, drinking from strange fountains, or finding an old book ...

The Roleplay Ethos

Cataclysm is first and foremost a roleplaying system. You are expected to fight as if they are wielding several pounds of metal, rather than a rubber sword, and to react to wounds as if they would in real life. You are expected to enhance their magic with loud verbals and gestures. You are expected to spend a reasonable amount of time roleplaying relevant actions when crafting new items or learning new skills.

Follow this guide and you will enhance the game for yourself and everyone around you.

The Setting

The game is set in The Great Forest which is vast. It encompasses seas, mountains and much more. No person in living memory has ventured out of the Forest. Few have tried but were never heard from again. They may just be lost, or worse. There are strange creatures in the depths of the woods.

In this time, civilisation is limited to small hamlets or villages. Those few who have the resources have built keeps and small Castles here and there and styled themselves as Kings. Others band together in less ostentatious ways and strike from the shadows. Still others keep to themselves, going about their lives trying to avoid the numerous perils round every corner.

Survival is the name of the game, and you must hone your skills or perish.

History

It is believed to be some 400 years since the last Cataclysm when the World was ravaged by Demons and the mountains breathed fire, the land split asunder and civilisations fell. All of the cities and centres of learning of the old world were destroyed and our records lost. All that once was has now gone, perhaps forever. But life forges anew, rediscovering it's potential.

Theology

Life struggles against Entropy.

Life encompasses all the Universes, and all the Worlds, and all the Totems, and all the Ancestors, and all the Entities, known and unknown, down to the Entities that are you and I.

Life diversifies into World Spirits. These great spirits form about themselves habitable planets in the void of their Universe. The climate and life of a world varies according to the nature of the World Spirit.

World spirits diversify their nature into Totem Spirits to create patterns for Life. Totems can be Greater or Lesser. IE Coyote is a Totem, and a tricky one at that. But Dog is a Greater Totem, encompassing all that Coyote is along with all other Dog Totems.

Though every living creature is connected to their primary Totem, there are those, especially amongst thinking creatures, who are touched or favoured by other Totems. Such Beings will obviously be of their primary Totem's ilk, but may exhibit physical, mental, or spiritual traits from the other patron Totems. So, it may be that that man over there has a wolfish look about him, or that elf has distinctly eagle like features.

Diversifying from the Totem Spirits are you and I, the creatures of this world, the flora, and the fauna. Just by living we partake in the great struggle. Whether we till a farm or strive for power. When we pass, we go on to be ancestors. To be remembered and worshipped so that we remain and grow ever stronger and wiser, or to be forgotten so that eventually our spirit dissipates to be reabsorbed by Life.

Magic

MANNA is the energy force that saturates existence. It sustains Life and is produced by life.

Life absorbs manna in order to grow the spirit. In this refined form it is known as ESSENCE.

There are those with the talent to manipulate the surrounding manna to their desire.

There are those with the ability to manipulate their essence and the essence of others.

Then there are those who are blessed by the ancestors, or are favoured by a totem and still more countless magical creatures, which we have yet to fathom.

Game Mechanics

Your Character

Attributes

There are ten attributes:

Attribute	Description
BODY	Physical toughness. Resistance to wounds, disease and poison
STRENGTH	Physical Strength. Brute force.
AGILITY	Speed and Balance.
DEXTERITY	Hand-Eye Co-ordination.
MIND	Mental Toughness.
WILL	Mental Strength
KNOWLEDGE	Capacity for Learning.
PERCEPTION	Ability to process information from the senses.
SPIRIT	Spiritual Toughness.
PRESENCE	Spiritual Strength.

Attributes are used to determine some in game factors such as the time it takes you to recover energy or the time it takes you to bleed to death from a critical wound. Other than this they are not normally used in open play.

More importantly, attributes indicate your potential. They determine how easily your character can develop abilities. A higher attribute will allow faster development of the abilities within its sphere.

Attribute values range from 1 upwards, with 3 being about human average.

The actual scores for your character attributes will be determined by the Archetype you choose to play.

Archetypes are like a template for a particular race, such as Human, Dwarf, or Lizardman. The different archetypes are all unique, some having special abilities. But none have a clear advantage over any other.

Abilities

These are the skills, knowledge's, and talents your character can learn and develop to perform special actions. Such as spell casting, inflicting grievous damage with a weapon, or crafting the finest armour.

When you create a new character you receive a number of Experience Points, or XP, with which to buy your starting abilities.

You will also earn XP during play, enabling you to develop your existing abilities or learn / discover new ones.

There are three types of ability: Energy Abilities, Active abilities and Passive abilities.

Energy Abilities

There are three different types of energy:

- ◆ STAMINA Physical Energy
- ◆ FOCUS Mental Energy
- ◆ ESSENCE Spiritual Energy

All characters begin with 1 point of Stamina, 1 point of Focus, and 1 point of Essence.
Developing your Stamina, Focus, or Essence will increase the number of points you have.

Losing Energy Points

Your energy points are spent when you use your active abilities.

Energy points can also be lost due to the special attacks of other characters, creatures or items.

Most characters will develop only one type of energy. However, there is no restriction on which or how many of the energy abilities you choose to develop. You could become a very powerful character.

Becoming Tired

When one of your energy scores is less than full but greater than zero, you are tired.

Being tired has no real debilitating effect on your character, but as you become more tired you should role-play as such.

- ◆ If your STAMINA points are less than maximum but greater than zero, you are PHYSICALLY TIRED.
- ◆ If your FOCUS points are less than maximum but greater than zero, you are MENTALLY TIRED.
- ◆ If your ESSENCE points are less than maximum but greater than zero, you are SPIRITUALLY TIRED.

Becoming Exhausted

When an energy score is reduced to zero, you have become exhausted.

- ◆ If your STAMINA is reduced to zero, you are PHYSICALLY EXHAUSTED.
- ◆ You should role-play some difficulty moving about and can only run for short bursts.
- ◆ Fighting should be mostly desperate parries with the odd attack.
- ◆ You may not use abilities that require Stamina points.
- ◆ If your FOCUS is reduced to zero, you are MENTALLY EXHAUSTED.
- ◆ You should role-play some disorientation, headaches, daydreaming.
- ◆ You may not use abilities that require Focus points.
- ◆ If your ESSENCE is reduced to zero, you are SPIRITUALLY EXHAUSTED.
- ◆ You should role-play being withdrawn, unemotional and non-communicative.
- ◆ You may not use abilities that require Essence points.

Recovering from tiredness and exhaustion

If you are TIRED or EXHAUSTED in any way then you can recover by resting.

In order to rest, you must refrain from using the energies you are trying to recover. You must not enter any combat and you must move no faster than a normal walk.

Recovering from tiredness

- ◆ If you are PHYSICALLY tired, you will regain 1 point after (60 divided by your BODY attribute) minutes of rest.
- ◆ If you are MENTALLY tired, you will regain 1 point after (60 divided by your MIND attribute) minutes of rest.
- ◆ If you are SPIRITUALLY tired, you will regain 1 point after (60 divided by your SPIRIT attribute) minutes of rest.

Recovering from Exhaustion

- ◆ You will recover from PHYSICAL exhaustion after (24 divided by your BODY attribute) hours of rest.
- ◆ You will recover from MENTAL exhaustion after (24 divided by your MIND attribute) hours of rest.
- ◆ You will recover from SPIRITUAL exhaustion after (24 divided by your SPIRIT attribute) hours of rest.

After recovering from exhaustion, your energy points will have returned to maximum.

Sleep

If you sleep then add 1 to your attribute score when calculating the time required to recover energy points or recover from exhaustion as above.

You can only role-play sleep if your character is physically exhausted.

To role-play sleep you must sit or lie in a comfortable spot with eyes shut and remain unresponsive to normal sounds and smells. As soon as these conditions are broken you are assumed to have awoken.

Active Abilities

Active abilities use energy. The individual ability rules will indicate which type of energy is required.

You cannot use an active ability if you do not have the energy required.

The One Shot Rule.

Regardless of how much energy you have, you may only use each of your active abilities once between rests.

- ◆ A rest must regain at least one point of energy to re-enable use of abilities.
- ◆ Resting and regaining 1 Stamina point will re-enable use of abilities requiring Stamina.
- ◆ Resting and regaining 1 Focus point will re-enable use of abilities requiring Focus.
- ◆ Resting and regaining 1 Essence point will re-enable use of abilities requiring Essence.

Example

You use your Crush with Heavy Sword ability. You cannot use this ability again until you have rested and regained at least 1 Stamina point. You may however use any other abilities that require stamina provided you have stamina points remaining.

Abilities with a Verbal Component

Many active abilities require a set of spoken words to activate the effect known as verbals. All verbals should be spoken loudly and clearly and at a steady pace, not mumbled as fast as you can.

Passive Abilities

Passive abilities do not drain energy when used. Therefore they are NOT subject to the One Shot Rule.

The rules for each of the passive abilities will determine when and how they can be used.

Combat

Unskilled Weapon Use

Any character may pick up and use any medium or light weapon, but if you haven't the required weapon use ability then you must hold the weapon in both hands at all times. You may parry as normal but may strike an opponent only if they are unable to move, i.e. unconscious, paralysed, or tied hand and foot. Locations of the Body

Effect of Attacks

All weapons deliver a Normal blow as standard.

If an arrow or bolt strikes and successfully causes a wound, then it remains stuck in the wound until removed, preventing healing. (Please return the phys rep arrow at the archer's request)

Removing an arrow or bolt from a location causes a further normal wound.

Damage Calls and Effects

Blow Type	Effect
NORMAL (no call)	You suffer a Normal Wound to the location.
STRIKEDOWN	You suffer a Normal Wound to the location. You are sent sprawling to the floor. Either your shoulder blades or breast must touch the floor before you can regain your feet.
CRUSH	You suffer a Serious Wound to the location. You are sent sprawling to the floor. Either your shoulder blades or breast must touch the floor before you can regain your feet.
CLEAVE	You suffer a Critical Wound to the location. You are sent sprawling to the floor. Either your shoulder blades or breast must touch the floor before you can regain your feet.
THROUGH	You suffer a Normal Wound to the location. This blow will ignore any armour you have in the location struck.
IMPALE	You suffer a Serious Wound to the location. This blow will ignore any armour you have in the location struck.
KNOCKOUT	You are rendered unconscious. Provided all your locations are stable (ie wounds have been tended so that they are not bleeding), you will regain consciousness after a number of minutes equal to 60 divided by your BODY attribute.

Taking Wounds

Your body is divided into 6 locations:

- ◆ Head
- ◆ Torso
- ◆ Left arm
- ◆ Right arm
- ◆ Left leg
- ◆ Right Leg

Your adversaries will attempt to strike you in these locations with a variety of melee, missile, and thrown weapons. Some special abilities are also capable of inflicting physical damage.

Wounded Locations

Wounded locations cause some discomfort, which you should react to, but they can still be used.

A location will become wounded if:

- ◆ You suffer a Normal Wound to a healthy location.

If you are wounded in any location:

- ◆ You must react to the wound, clearly indicating to your opponent that they have penetrated any armour and caused actual bodily harm.
- ◆ You must take a slow count of two to overcome the shock of pain from the wound.

Seriously Wounded Locations

Seriously wounded locations are very painful and will cause you to scream and curse.

A location will become seriously wounded if:

- ◆ You suffer a Serious Wound to a healthy or wounded location.
- ◆ You suffer a Normal Wound to a wounded location.
- ◆ A wounded location is left untreated for too long. The length of time before an untreated wound becomes a serious wound is a number of days equal to your BODY attribute score.

If you are seriously wounded in the head:

- ◆ You are disorientated and are incapable of anything other than staggering about in a daze.
- ◆ You may not use any active abilities.

If you are seriously wounded upon an arm:

- ◆ The arm no longer functions. You must immediately drop anything you are holding with that hand, and your arm will hang limply at your side.

If you are seriously wounded upon a leg:

- ◆ The leg no longer functions and you must fall to the floor.
- ◆ Providing you have one functioning leg, you may move about with assistance (A comrade, or a crutch).
- ◆ If both legs are seriously wounded, or you have no crutch, you may drag yourself with your arms (assuming they are not incapacitated).

If you are seriously wounded in the torso:

- ◆ You may move about under your own steam but you should express great pain and difficulty in doing so.
- ◆ Use of any active abilities requiring stamina will immediately cause the wound to become critical

Critically Wounded Locations

Critically wounded locations are overwhelmingly painful, causing you to scream and curse, call for your mother, make grimacing death speeches etc.

A location will become critically wounded if:

- ◆ You suffer a Critical Wound to a healthy location.
- ◆ You suffer any other grade of wound to a Seriously Wounded location.

- ◆ A serious wound is left untreated for too long. The length of time before an untreated serious wound becomes a critical wound is a number of hours equal to your BODY attribute score.

If you are critically wounded in the head:

- ◆ You immediately fall unconscious.

If you are critically wounded upon an arm:

- ◆ You must immediately drop anything you are holding with that hand, and the arm will hang limply at your side.

If you are critically wounded upon a leg:

- ◆ The leg no longer functions and you must drop to the floor.

If you are critically wounded in the torso:

- ◆ You immediately collapse but are not unconscious.
- ◆ Whilst you continue to scream and make noises of dying pain you can remain conscious.

Falling Unconscious and Recovering

You may fall unconscious due to your injuries, or be knocked unconscious by another player.

In order to recover from unconsciousness, all locations must be stable.

If all your locations are stable, then you will recover consciousness after a number of minutes equal to 60 divided by your BODY attribute.

Losing Limbs

Your character will lose a limb if:

- ◆ You suffer any grade of wound to a critically wounded arm or leg.
- ◆ A critically wounded arm or leg is left untreated for too long. The length of time before an untreated critically wounded arm or leg results in loss of the limb is a number of minutes equal to your BODY attribute. This automatically causes your torso to be critically wounded as you are now bleeding from the 'stump'

Death and Dying

Your character will die if:

- ◆ You suffer any grade of wound to a critically wounded head or torso.
- ◆ The total number of critically wounded locations you have exceeds your BODY attribute.
- ◆ A critically wounded Head or Torso is left untreated for too long. The length of time before an untreated critically wounded Head or Torso results in death is a number of minutes equal to your BODY attribute.

Being Dead

Once physically dead, you must remain as a body where you fell for 15 minutes. You may relax and chat with other dead bodies to pass this time if there are no active players about, but please be silent and unmoving if there are active players in the vicinity.

After this period of 15 minutes the silver cord that binds the spirit to the body dissolves, the Spirit and Mind roam free and all that is left is a husk. At this point you can return to the game control tent to generate a new character.

Armour

Any character may wear any armour, but wearing too much armour will reduce your maximum stamina points.

Armour Classifications

For simplicity, all armours are classified into four types.

Class	Description	Encumbrance
LEATHER	Substantial animal skin or fur.	1
TREATED LEATHER	Substantial animal skin or fur with at least half the surface area reinforced with metal rings or plates. Proper Cuir-bouilli encumbers as treated leather but protects as chain mail.	2
CHAIN MAIL	There are many different methods of joining small metal rings or plates to make up a suit of armour. All of them are classified as chain mail.	3
PLATE MAIL	Solid, shaped plates of metal.	4

Armour Encumbrance

Your total encumbrance due to armour is the highest encumbrance of any one location.

If you wear too much armour, then your maximum Stamina points will be reduced.

Your maximum stamina points are reduced by 1 for each point of encumbrance above your Strength attribute.

- ◆ You cannot wear armour that would reduce your Stamina Point Maximum to less than zero.

The Wear Armour ability reduces encumbrance by 1 point for each level of Wear Armour you have.

If your encumbrance changes for the worse, you immediately lower your stamina point maximum and lose any excess stamina points.

If your encumbrance changes for the better, only your stamina point maximum is increased. You will still have to regain the actual stamina points through rest.

Damaged Armour

If a layer of your armour is damaged it is not effective until repaired.

Damaged armour can be repaired in the field. A field repair requires no special skill.

A field repair will take 5 minutes, during which time you should roleplay the adjustment of the armour.

The number of times a layer of armour can be 'field repaired' depends on the armour quality.

- ◆ POOR 2 field repairs
- ◆ STANDARD 5 field repairs
- ◆ SUPERIOR 10 field repairs

When the maximum number of field repairs has been reached, the next time that layer of armour is damaged it will fall apart and be destroyed.

Destroyed Armour

Destroyed armour cannot be repaired in the field. It is not effective until repaired by a trained craftsman.

Effect of different attacks when wearing Armour

Blow Type	Armour required to prevent damage from the blow	If you have sufficient armour on the location struck
NORMAL (no call)	Any	Damages the top most layer of undamaged armour on the location.
STRIKEDOWN	Treated Leather	Damages the top most layer of undamaged armour on the location. You take no wound but still suffer the Strikedown effect.
CRUSH	Chain mail over Leather Plate mail over Leather	Damages the topmost layer of undamaged chain or plate mail armour and all layers of undamaged leather or treated leather armour on the location. You take no wound but still suffer the Strikedown effect.
CLEAVE	Plate mail over Chain Mail over Leather	Damages all remaining layers of undamaged armour on the location. You take no wound but still suffer the Strikedown effect.
THROUGH	Through blows ignore all normal armour.	N/A
IMPALE	Impale blows ignore all normal armour	N/A
KNOCKOUT	Any undamaged head armour	Damages the top most layer of undamaged head armour.

Shields

Any character may use a shield. However, if you do not have the required shield use ability, you must hold the shield with both hands at all times.

A shield may be used to stop any attack from a melee, missile or thrown weapon.

You will suffer no ill effects unless the blow is a STRIKEDOWN, CRUSH, or CLEAVE blow.

If you block a STRIKEDOWN blow

- ◆ You do not suffer a wound or the strikedown effect. You are instead sent staggering 2 paces away from the blow.
- ◆ Your shield is not destroyed by a STRIKEDOWN blow

If you block a CRUSH or CLEAVE blow

- ◆ You do not suffer a wound or the strikedown effect. You are instead sent staggering 2 paces away from the blow.
- ◆ Your shield is destroyed and is unusable until repaired by a trained craftsman.

Advanced Rules

The Basic Rules herein are purposely as brief as possible to reduce the amount of information you need to absorb before you begin play. The more complex rules will stem from the advanced abilities your character can learn.

For each advanced ability you learn you will receive a card containing the rules for that ability. This gives you a handy reference for only the abilities that your character has learned.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the user of an advanced ability to ensure that their target understands the game effect being applied to them.

If you are the target of an advanced ability that you do not understand, try and roleplay an effect based on the situation or the verbals your attacker speaks. You may gain extra experience points for a particularly good reaction.

If you really have no idea how to react, indicate this to your attacker. It is their responsibility to explain the game effect to you more fully.

Questions and Comments

If you have ANY confusion about the concepts detailed in this document then please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Failing that, I will make myself available as much as possible at events to answer any questions.