

Battle Royale – Fugue

A fast-paced, competitive RPG based on the Battle Royale film. Written by Ben Wright, chthonic.games@gmail.com.

The Setting

"At the dawn of the Millennium, the nation collapsed. At 15% unemployment, 10 million were out of work, 800,000 students boycotted school. The adults lost confidence, and fearing the youth, eventually passed the 'Millennium Educational Reform Act' ... AKA: The BR Act."

The Japanese government, running scared from the violent and disaffected youths of its country, institutes a brutal policy aimed at restoring order and respect towards authority. Every year, one random 9th grade class is kidnapped en masse and sent to a deserted island. They have explosive collars fitted and are given the rules of the game- after three days only a single survivor will be permitted to leave the island alive. If more than one student is alive at the end of that time, all remaining pupils will have their collars remotely detonated. Every six hours, certain sections of the island are declared out of bounds and anyone who enters them will have their collars detonated. Before the children are sent out to fight each other to the death, each is given a backpack containing food and water and one random weapon. The effectiveness of these weapons is highly variable.

Setting Up to Play

The class is a deck of character cards, and the available weapons are also on cards. Whenever you get a character, you will be dealt one of each.

Your Character(s)

You will be dealt a character. This is your active character, and you will play them until they are killed. Under certain circumstances you may be allowed to have another character in play cooperating with the first.

The system is loosely based on Feng Shui. A basic character has the following skills:

Shooting: 7 – used to fire ranged weapons at a distance.

Mêlée: 4 – used for any weapon up close and personal, and avoiding the same.

Throw: 5 – used for throwing anything at an opponent.

Dodge: 4 – used for avoiding gunfire and thrown objects.

Dice rolling is a closed roll as in Feng Shui- although boxcars still generate a reroll. Each weapon has two damage codes, one for a good hit and one for a lesser hit. If your Outcome is twice the target's defensive skill or more, you do the higher damage. Otherwise, you do the lesser. Misses do no damage. If your weapon is hidden, you get a +1 bonus the first time you use it against a character who doesn't know about it. You may spend a fortune point to add a positive dice to your roll or to add a negative dice to an opponent's roll when they are attacking you.

Other skills are used as appropriate- some other skills are:

Computing – For hacking and operating computers- may be useful in trying to break the game.

Medicine – A successful check against difficulty 5 removes the penalty from a Wound, but you may only attempt once per Wound. This skill has no effect on Serious Wounds.

Your Injuries

There are 5 types of injury your character can suffer. Weapons will deal a particular type of damage. Unarmed attacks deal S/S. Improvised mêlée weapons deal K/S. Thrown objects cause K/S or W/K depending on the size and weight.

Lethal- Death. Move on to the next character.

Serious Wound- Lose one entire skill and have a permanent -1 Impairment. This reflects a serious injury such as a broken arm or leg.

Wound- Gain permanent -1 Impairment. This reflects a wound such as a deep gash or broken finger.

Knockback- Gain -1 Impairment for the rest of this scene and get thrown backwards.

Stun- Gain -1 Impairment for the rest of the scene.

If you ever score a boxcars success, you instantly kill your enemy, over and above any other considerations. If your enemy is helpless (0 in the skill they defend with, after Impairment) you may kill them without a roll in whatever fashion you deem appropriate. A fumble scored with a roll less than 0 will not generally hurt the fumbler, but a fumble due to a boxcars fail roll may cause death. All penalties are cumulative. Suggested explanations for serious wounds are given below:

Lost shooting: Unusable arm or badly mangled fingers, or blind. Can still throw with remaining arm.

Lost mêlée: Badly hurt arm, deep wound, or gammy leg.

Lost throw: Damaged upper arm or shoulder, so you can still cradle a firearm and fire.

Lost dodge: Badly mangled legs. Can still fight or fire from prone position.

Schticks

Characters can have schticks. You may only have each schtick once unless the schtick specifies otherwise.

Admirer- One named character admires (or loves) you and will not try to kill you unless you do something to antagonise them. They will trust you by default and work with you easily. You may have multiple admirers.

Backstabber- You have no compunction in betraying people. If you attack someone you are currently nominally cooperating with, you get a +1 bonus for the rest of the scene.

Class Icon- You are much liked by members of the opposite sex in your class, and you know it. Characters of the opposite sex may never attack you, unless you give them good reason to, and they will generally do what you ask unless it is clearly suicidal. Characters of the same sex that attack you get a +1 bonus due to spite.

Discordian- You have a knack for creating discord amongst people. You may make two people who were cooperating distrust and possibly attack one another by your very presence.

Family Ties- You have a family or personal history with the BR act and may choose to return the weapon dealt you to the deck and take the next one.

Go! You Can Make It!- You have reserves of fortitude that allow you to recover 2 wounds once during the game. If you use this to recover one wound, you may not then use it later to recover another. This may remove Impairment from serious wounds, but not the loss of an entire skill.

Guerilla- You have some knowledge of guerilla warfare and home explosives. If you find equipment you can make tripwires and explosives.

It Was An Accident!- If an attempt to kill you fumbles, your attacker kills himself (or an innocent bystander) instead.

Lucky- You have two Fortune points for each Lucky schtick you have.

Martial Artist- All mêlée weapons gain the damage code L/SW in your hands. Unarmed, you attack with W/K.

Popular- You are generally admired by your class mates. They may not trust you, but they will give you the benefit of the doubt. Once per game you may persuade a hostile enemy not to try to kill you.

Psycho- You may never cooperate with anyone. However, other characters' schticks have no affect against you whatsoever (except Skilled and Teacher's Pet). If you kill someone or leave them for dead in a particularly cruel fashion you gain a Fortune point. You may only have one such Fortune point stored.

Skilled- You may increase one of your skills by 2 points. You may take this multiple times for different skills, or take a maximum of two schticks in one skill for total increase of 3 points. You may also take non-standard skills. The first Skilled schtick buys them at rating 4, and you can spend other Skilled schticks to increase them as normal. Skilled may not be countered by Psycho.

Teacher's Pet- Once per game, you may call on the teacher's love for you to help you out of a sticky situation. The teacher may attack an aggressor (or more usually scare them away), heal you of a wound or serious wound, or help in some other manner. Teacher's Pet may not be countered by Psycho.

Twitchy- You are a bundle of nerves. Whenever someone sneaks up on you, you may make a free attack against them (before you know who they are).

Encounters

On your turn, you may move about the island. You may encounter another player, or an NPC, as determined by the GM. Each turn you will generally have time to do something interesting, such as get killed. You may attempt to work with NPCs, although they may not trust you enough.

Some circumstances may affect the basic rules for combat. Hard cover, such as a stone wall, increases the Dodge of the character cowering behind it. Soft cover, like tree branches, may reduce the damage code of firearms. Darkness makes most ranged weapons difficult to use without being in mêlée combat.

The GM determines how gets to drop on whom based on schticks, circumstances and possibly Dodge rolls.

If your character is in a danger zone, you will have to vacate it at the earliest opportunity. This may be complicated by other characters or the injuries you are carrying.

Character Replacement

When your character dies, the GM will issue you with another (unless there aren't enough left). It may be a fresh character from the deck, an established NPC, an NPC ally of another player's character, or the character who killed your last one. Where a character has had screen time before you get hold of it, you should try and maintain that character's established attitude and persona.

Character Generation and Experience

A character begins with the basic template above, and has three schticks to spend. Every time a PC kills another character, they gain one point of XP. Two XP points can be spent to buy the schtick Skilled during play.

The Environment

Apart from the equipment you are issued, you may find all manner of things on the island. Go explore.

Winning

There can be only one winner- unless you break the game.

Of course, you may decide that the true winner is the player who died the least, killed the most, or gave the most heart-breaking performances.

Notes to the Prospective GM

Several times you will need to make choices that have a direct and immediate impact on the game. Always try to make the game dramatically satisfying and fun.

When picking which skill to destroy when a serious wound is delivered, consider what makes the most dramatic sense. If the fight is clearly uneven, go for a quick kill by destroying the skill the character needs to defend with- this works if the wounded character is the one with the advantage or not. If the fight is more even, let it play out in more depth by removing skills that aren't critical to the fight at hand.

If a player has a crippled character, give them a means to change to the next. Let them run into someone they cannot hope to defeat or give them an opportunity to commit suicide.

Selecting which character to give a player can be difficult. If their previous character hadn't had much chance to develop, giving them their killer works well. Try not to maintain too big a stack of NPCs at once, and try to make the current PCs the ones with the most dramatic potential at the time. It's still good to develop NPCs into threats, particularly if a PC runs away from a dangerous NPC, as long as you relinquish control to a player at an appropriate time. You can reward players who are roleplaying well by giving them more useful characters.

Also consider setting up a map of the island if you wish. It will help to keep track of where characters are, and give some element of tactics if there are landmarks the characters can head towards initially.