

**DEAD MEN  
PULL  
NO PUNCHES!!**



A TRO Challenge Game Submission by

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## TRO Challenge 8 Submission

### **Dead Men Pull No Punches!!**

By Jeremy Buxman

#### **INGREDIENTS**

- A mechanism whereby there is a gamble to go higher to get a better result with a potential to bust and fail.
- Physical and emotional healing occurs only through alignment/code of conduct based deeds.
- *Monstrous PC saga* (Cool inhuman powers, "I am not a monster!" Angst, Living in secret from the mundane world) + *Pulp Adventure* (Heroes & villains are larger than life, Characters are danger magnets, Good vs. Evil with no gray areas) + **Steam Fantasy**
- *MacGuffin*: Stop the Nazis from getting \*the ancient relic\* and ruling the world!

#### IMAGES

Got the Lightning Strike from here:

<http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=685&picture=lightning-strike&large=1>

Gravestone: <http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=122&picture=gravestone>

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Everything else from Fromoldbooks.com. This is a GREAT site...

"Morning, Sunshine! Stop struggling—I'll get these straps off ya, and then we can get you some real pants. I know, I know—it hurts. Feels like you got struck by lightning, doesn't it? Well, that's because you pretty much got struck by lightning. Nah, you're fine—don't get all panicky on me, buddy. You're fine now, we got your heart back up and running, no problem..

All right, all right! Calm down, I'll give you the run down, don't get all crazy on me. It's 1936—you probably think it's earlier than that. You got killed by Nazis—spies for them and the Thule Society, a buncha no-goodnik sorcerers. They were gonna use some black magic to bring you back to life and make you some crazy slave undead guy for them. They call them Totentroopers, we call them Reanimate. Yes, we—the Nazi's ain't the only ones who figured out how to cheat death, not by a long shot. Us, the good guys, are called the Quiet Congress, and we're all basically of the opinion that necromancy and black magic might be best if we kept it outta the limelight, ya know? So we try to stop the Thule boys from calling up something terrible and ruining more people's lives like yours...sorry. Hey, I used to be a cabbie before I ended up becoming a Reanimate...yeah, that's what they call us.

So, yeah—you're a living, undead, stiched up guy fueled by weird powers from unknowable realms. Sorry. But hey! We gotta job for ya, and you might just get to slug the S.O.B. that did this to you. But we gotta go—the radio boys got wind that we got a Nazi war zeppelin showing up, and you and I don't have enough sand to fight off Herr Doktor by our lonesome, you know?

## Welcome to the Dead War, Pal!

It's 1936, and Adolph Hitler has decided he wants the whole world to be his playground. Even worse, he's decided to get backing from the Thule Society, the worst of the underworld's sorcerers and mad scientists. They've got SS spies and undead monsters roaming the globe, looking for ancient artifacts and secrets from long-forgotten empires, to do it. If they win, the world gets plunged into a thousand years of gibbering mad sorcerer kings that make Hitler look like George Washington, and mankind as we know it can kiss its collective keesters goodbye.

Who's going to stop them? The Quiet Congress, a coalition of secret societies and sorcerers that have been trying to keep the existence of these terrors quiet. Their main weapon? The Reanimate, creatures made from dead flesh and recharged with new life. Not simple zombies, these are living, breathing, creatures, similar to and yet apart from humanity at large. You will be playing one of these Reanimates, blessed with supernormal powers and armed with the best in spells and guns and ammo that a collection of secret societies can afford, your job is simple—save the world from the Nazi Occult Menace.

## The Quiet Congress & The Dead War

Since before the dawn of time, there have been men and women that have plumbed the forbidden depths of knowledge and gained mastery over life and death. Since that time there has been a secret war over this knowledge, as necromancers vie for secret tomes and to keep those secrets out of the hands of their enemies. Since the 1600's, the secret bands of necromancers have joined together to make sure this knowledge doesn't become public. Their name is the Quiet Congress. Since the early 1900's, they have had a second function—to stop the madmen who lead their enemy, the Society of Thule.

There are four major factions of necromantic secret society in the Quiet Congress. **The Bavarian Illuminati** took the work of a young genius named Victor Frankenstein and created a fusion of science and magic. Their Reanimates, "**Franks**", are known for both an overwhelming durability and sharp minds. They normally choose scientists, doctors, and other brilliant minds that are not hedged in by dogma and lack of imagination. Franks look like people, save for a

few scars and signs of surgery, and their tendency to be a bit on the tall side.

**The Returned Prophets** are an ancient group, originally from the courts of King Solomon but brought under the robes of Christianity in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D. This band of religious intellectuals calls their Reanimates **Lazari**, and are known for their faith, their raw strength, and their indomitable will. The chosen are given special rites, covered in a magically charged death shroud, and left for three days in a cave. Lazari look pretty normal, if a bit rough around the edges, until you catch their eyes—then you see the manic insanity that comes from crossing the line between life and death, and the power it gives them.

**The Guede** are a branch of necromancers who hail from the Caribbean, as well as French and Spanish roots. **The Samedi** are their Reanimate—armed with mystical powers and a thirst for life that cannot be quenched. Samedi tend to be a bit wild, and their face always seems a bit too skeletal. Their rites include burying the soon-to-be Reanimate, and calling on powers from the other side to charge them with a new life.

Finally, **The Order of Toth-Anubis** is the most ancient of the groups, a collection of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman magical schools. Their rituals used to make a reanimate include animal sacrifice, a sarcophagus, and astrological alignments. The end result, **The Plutarchs**, are known for fast reflexes and a statuesque beauty, as well as a strange, almost polished look to their skin.

#### **The Society of Thule**

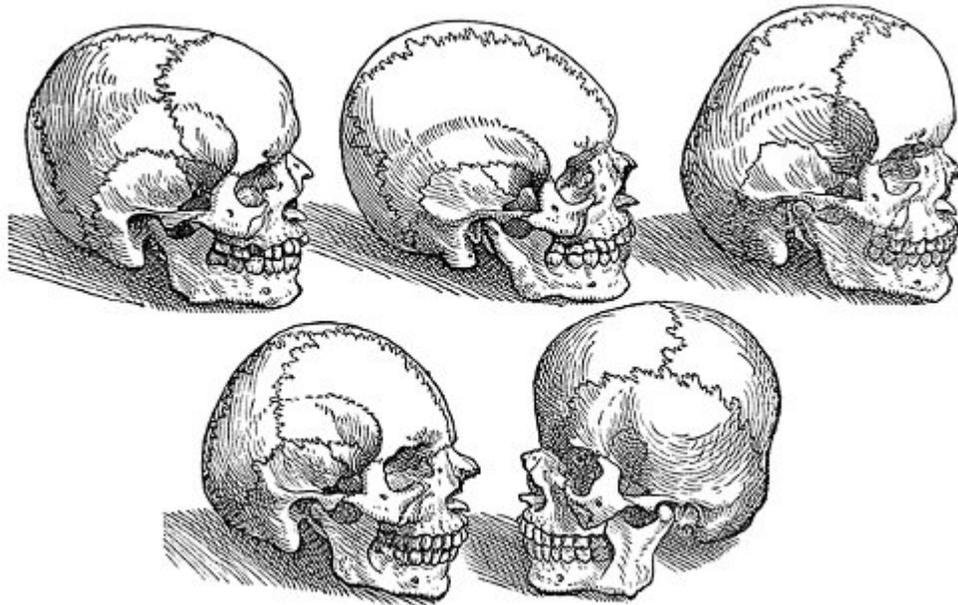
The enemy of all life on the planet, the Society of Thule was a European group of occult scholars focused in Germany in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Working to establish an understanding of entropy and decay, they aligned themselves with the National Socialist party in Germany for power and influence.



Their goal is simple—obliterate all life, and replace it with their own creations...the fairly normal response of most Necromancers, truth be told, but most grow out of it. The Thule

society quickly looked into certain works that should not be used, and soon enough went from "bumbling group of occultists" to "mad worshippers of deadly gods". By the 1920's, they had decided they wanted one thing—a big dead world to rule over. This tied mostly into Hitler's "world to rule over" ideas, and a union was born.

The Thule society's revenants are known as **Totentroopers**, and are bad news. Most are mindless automatons—nothing more than improved zombies. However, the few rogue elements the Congress can find and free before the mind control is complete (known as **Loki**) are terrifying. Their faces become living skulls of muscle and bone, with a gaping hole for a nose and eyes burning with madness and dark energies.



# CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

## Step 1: Concept

First, who were you in life? Why would a Necromancer take you—what skill or trait did you possess that made you seem so valuable to reanimate? What have you lost—family? Friends? A job? While this is a bit of a “pick-up” game, having some solid idea of who you’re playing makes it more fun as well as easier to make the character.

## Step 2: Attributes

There are Eight Attributes, and each character starts with ‘0’ in each, representing a normal civilian level of skill. You get 13 points to put in attributes, and attributes may go up to 5.

Mechanically speaking, attributes increase the chance you have to do something risky and actually succeeding at it, which we’ll get into in a bit.

**Might:** Physical power, strength, and ability.

**Agility:** Speed, Finesse, and grace

**Reaction:** hand-eye coordination, response time, and fine motor skill.

**Stamina:** Hale vigor and health

**Intellect:** Rational thinking and “book learning”

**Wit:** speed of thought, creativity, and “street smarts”

**Charm:** Social grace, poise, and attitude.

**Determination:** Willpower and mental resistance

## What the Numbers Mean

X: Unfortunate: Add +1 to the Risk of all actions, and -1 to thresholds.

0: Civilian: Pretty normal.

1: Common: You work out with this attribute

2: Healthy: Well-trained and exceptional.

3: Olympian: A perfect specimen

4: Genius: Even other masters acknowledge your talent

5: Legendary: A once in a lifetime talent

## Skill Ranks & Target Numbers

Skill ranks affect the Target Number on a roll. Remember, Trades can’t be performed unless you have at least a “1” in the trade.

Skill Rank	TN
0 (Untrained)	7+
1 (Experienced)	6+
2 (Master)	5+
3 (Genius)	4+

## Step 3: Skills, Talents, and Trades

Next we determine your character’s skills and ability in fields of study. Skills are divided into two categories; Talents are things that anyone can do, but obviously being trained in that field will mean

greater results. Trades are areas of understanding that take years of training and research to do properly—without the training, trying to do them will cause more harm than good.

Mechanically speaking, Talents and Trades make it easier for you to succeed at tasks. The only real difference between the two is that talents can be attempted if you don't have any points in the talent, whereas with trades you can ONLY attempt a task if you have at least one point in the Skill rank.

Starting characters have 30 points to spend on Skills. Talents cost one point per rank, and Trades cost two. Skills can be increased to Rank 3.

### **Talents**

Labor: physical work, lifting, pushing, climbing, swimming

Fitness: agility based tasks of running, jumping, sliding, etc.

Melee: Fighting with hand weapons.

Drive: Operating cars, trucks, tanks...

Brawl: Fisticuffs, boxing, or just slugging a guy with a left hook.

Marksmanship: Use of ranged weapons

Bully: Making people do things you want by making them scared

Convince: Make people understand and believe what you're saying. Note you can shorten this to "Con" if you'd like...

Carouse: Hang out, win drinking contests, and learn things from your drinking buddies.

Command: Boss people around and get them to like it.

Sneak: Stealth, hiding, and trailing people.

Legerdemain: slight-of-hand for magic tricks, pick pocketing, and other fun party games.

Animal Handling: Dealing with dogs, camels, or other domesticated animals.

Stamina: The ability to work through pain or discomfort and keep doing what you're doing.

Courage: Mental training to not curl up in a ball and scream when things get hairy.

### **Trades**

Warfare: Tactics and operation of military gear (artillery, heavy machine guns, etc).

Survival: Being able to live longer than a day in terrible terrain.

Education: Higher education—mainly knowledge of liberal arts, history, and literature.

Science: Physics, chemistry, biology, etc.

Occult: The secret lore of magic, rituals, demonology, and of course necromancy.

**“Hey! Where’s Underwater Basket-weaving?!”**

Look, you’re experienced gamers—you can make up some skills if you need to, but you don’t need to go all crazy with specializations.

Medicine: Anything more serious than first aid, including surgery or biochemistry.

Pilot: Operation of airplanes, including navigation

Mechanics; How to build or repair any machine.

#### **Step 4: Reanimate ("It's Alive!! ALIVE!!")**

Finally, pick who reanimated you. See the Next section, "Reanimates" for all the details. Write down your attribute bonuses, weaknesses, and powers.

#### **Final touches**

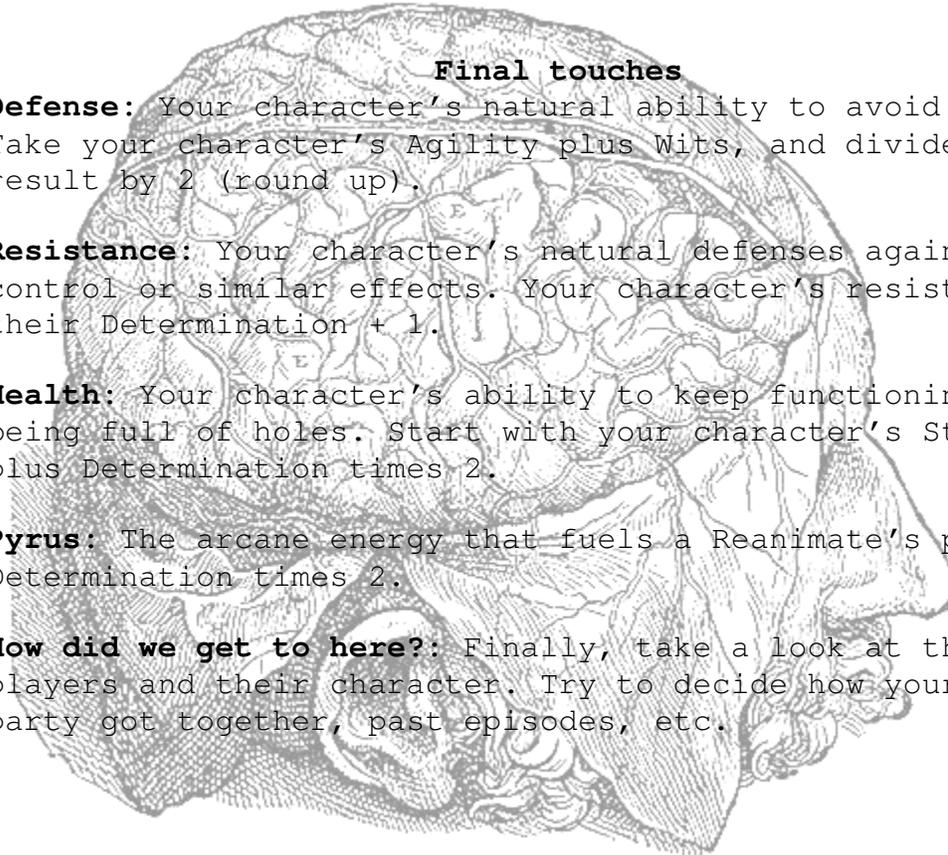
**Defense:** Your character's natural ability to avoid attacks. Take your character's Agility plus Wits, and divide that result by 2 (round up).

**Resistance:** Your character's natural defenses against mind control or similar effects. Your character's resistance is their Determination + 1.

**Health:** Your character's ability to keep functioning after being full of holes. Start with your character's Stamina plus Determination times 2.

**Pyrus:** The arcane energy that fuels a Reanimate's powers. Determination times 2.

**How did we get to here?:** Finally, take a look at the other players and their character. Try to decide how your little party got together, past episodes, etc.



## REANIMATES

Reanimates are beings that are made from the flesh of dead humans, charged with mystical energies via the art of necromancy, and reborn as new individuals. They have some or most of the memories from the...previous owners of the parts they are made up of, but are also in many ways a brand new being, with a very different outlook on life, as well as strange powers and abilities.



Being made of dead flesh and restored life, reanimates are obviously not like human beings. First and foremost, they gain bonuses over the living, depending on which ritual restored them. These include expanding powers of both body and mind, as well as Gifts—powers fueled by the arcane energy known as Pyrus.

There are, however, problems. Being not-quite alive, Reanimates do not heal naturally. Instead, they must take time and perform Regenerations—rites or specific actions that must be accomplished to knit flesh and bone back together without the help of a master necromancer.

As well, many people react in fear or terror at the presence of a reanimate. Children and animals try to flee them, and some humans will feel a sense of anger at their very existence. Strange dreams, nightmares, and even madness can occasionally come back with the reanimate, as part of their being has seen things that no

human mind should ever see while on their earth.

When you create your Reanimate, you must choose which College reanimated them. This will give them specific boons

and weaknesses, as well as certain paths of Regeneration—the only way your character will be able to heal.

### **Bavarian Illuminati/Franks:**

Made through surgery and sorcery alike, Franks look like humans, save for their slightly larger than average bulk and the scars running along their bodies.

Boon: Gain +1 to Stamina, and +1 to Intellect.

Flaw: Franks cannot stop fire from hurting them, and take an additional point of damage from fire.

### **Powers:**

- **Arcane Blast:** a bolt of green lightning flashes from the Reanimate's hands. Use Pistol range, and causes the Reanimate's Determination in damage.
- **Supreme Fortitude:** By spending one point of Pyrus, the Frank can ignore all environmental factors (save fire) for an hour. This also grants them an Armor rating of 3.
- **Terrible Monstrosity:** The inhumanity of the Frank is brought to the forefront. All but the bravest of humans flee in terror, and the Frank gains a +1 to their Defense rating.

### **Regenerations**

- **1 Point: Byronesque Sulking:** By soaking in their damned state for at least an hour, the Frank can regenerate one Pyrus or health level.
- **2 Points: Education:** If a Frank reads a great work they haven't read before, they regenerate 2 points.
- **3 Points: Electrocution:** Taking a few thousand volts will always wake a guy up.

### **Lazari**

With the fires of faith and divine knowledge burning in their eyes, Lazari also tend to look a bit disheveled—seeing the truths of the universe makes things like ironing your shirts seem a bit meaningless.

Boon: Lazari gain +1 to Strength, and +1 to Will.

Flaw: Lazari cannot regenerate through cannibalism (see below)

### **Powers:**

- **Strength of the Blessed:** By spending a point of Pyrus, a Lazari can DOUBLE their result of a Strength roll for a single action.

- **Healing Touch:** A Lazari can spend a point of Pyrus to heal another of one point of Damage.
- **Transubstantiation:** A Lazari may burn two health levels to generate a point of Pyrus.

### **Regenerations**

- **1 Point: Mass:** If the Lazari goes to a religious mass they believe in, regenerate one Pyrus or Health.
- **2 Points: Penitence:** The Lazari, through hours of prayer, fasting, and even flagellation, can recharge 2 points.
- **3 Points: Preach:** If a Lazari can preach their truths to others, they recharge 3 points. Note that Lazari beliefs tend to be unconventional at best, blasphemous at worst, and rarely accepted by authorities either secular or material.

### **Samedi**

The Samedi's skin always looks a bit tight, highlighting the skull and bones underneath the skin. They also tend to have a hungry, passionate look to them that seems to never be quenched.



**Boon:** Gain +1 to Wits, and +1 to Reaction  
**Flaw:** Lust for Life: Samdi MUST drink, smoke, gamble, or otherwise enjoy life when given an opportunity.

### **Powers**

- **Possess:** Spend one Pyrus while making eye contact with a normal human (i.e., not necromancer, other reanimated, etc). The character possess that target, while their body falls down "dead". They may spend up to thirty minutes for every Pyrus spent. At the end of that time, they

return to their bodies.

- **Make Shambler:** spend one Pyrus over a dead body to make a Shambler (see "Monsters and Enemies" below)
- **Familiar:** Character may turn into a raven or snake for an hour.

### **Regenerations**

- **1 Point:** Smoke a cigar and drink a bottle of rum
- **2 Points:** Revel: Enjoy a night of dancing and partying

- 3 Points: Bring them Over: Take a fresh unburied body, give it proper rites, and prepare it for the Baron's works

### **Plutarchs**

The Plutarchs gain a beauty to their movements, looking almost carved from marble by a master's hands. Pale and beautiful with almost a metallic sheen to their skin, and always a bit quieter than natural people ever can be.

Boon: Gain +1 to Agility, and +1 to Charm

Flaw: Venom and poison is strangely deadly to these dead beings, and causes its full damage.

#### **Powers**

- Armor of Achilles: Ignore DMG bonus from all mortal weapons
- Night's Child: DOUBLE all stealth rolls or detecting stealth rolls
- Bless Weapon: Double damage from one melee weapon for an hour.

#### **Regenerations**

- 1 Point: Debate: Enter into a lively argument and hold your own.
- 2 Point: Silence: Spend at least an hour in a dark, completely silent location.
- 3 Points: Devouring a precious or semi-precious jewel from the earth.

### **Loki, the Renegade Totentroopers**

Boon: + 1 to Strength, +1 to Will.

Flaw: -1 to Charm, and hideous to look at

#### **Powers:**

- Valkyrie's Charge: Ignore all ranged attacks on you
- Terrible Visage:
- Freezing Hand of Death: Double hand to hand damage

#### **Regeneration**

- 1 Point: Spend at least an hour listening to Opera
- 2 Points: Freeze: Spend at least an hour in subzero temperatures doing nothing
- 3 Points: Perform Black Rituals

# RULES

## ACTION TESTS

Any time you need to do something dramatic, the GM will call for an action test. In general, this determines how well you succeed at something, and should be rapidly understood by most gamers. However, the basics of the game mechanics are a bit different than traditional game systems. The GM doesn't determine the difficulty, only the *minimal* difficulty needed to succeed at a declared action. The player themselves decide how much Risk they're willing to take, which determines how they win or lose, and of course—the bigger the risk, the bigger the potential reward...

Here's an Action Test step by step:

- 1. Declare Action and Determine Attribute/Skill Combo:** The player states what they intend to do. The GM then declares which attribute and which skill is most relevant. The player and other folks around the table may make some suggestions about this, but the GM's decision is final.
- 2. Determine Minimum Difficulty, Target Number, and Risk:** The GM then decides the minimum amount of difficulty that would be needed to succeed at the task. The player then uses their skill rank to determine what the Target Number of the roll will be, and declares how much Risk (1-10) they're willing to take on the task: that is to say, how many dice they're willing to roll.
- 3. Roll:** The player rolls the stated Risk in D10's, and compares the numbers. Any die equal or greater than the target number is a good die, and any under is a bad die.
- 4. Subtract Attribute rank of Bad Dice, and Determine Results:** A character may remove up to the called attribute rank in bad dice from a roll. If the dice pool has all successes in it, the character succeeded! If not, then they failed at the action. If any action points need to be spend for failure, now's the time to do it. The GM then declares the results, narrates the effects of the roll on the action, and keeps things moving.

### Difficulty Ranks

- 2: Simple: Anyone can do it.
- 3: Dynamic: the normal minimum difficulty—standard action movie fare
- 4: Tricky
- 5: Difficult: A normal human could do it, but maybe not.
- 6: Olympian, or at least nearly impossible to humans. The most dice a normal mortal can roll.
- 7: Superhuman
- 8: Amazing
- 9: Incredible
- 10: Near Divine

## Thresholds

In some instances, you need to know exactly how well you did—it's not enough to succeed. In this case you need to determine the characters Threshold for the action test. Take the total number of successful die, then add your character's skill rank and any modifiers (positive or negative). That final number is the Threshold. The higher the number is, the better. This is the number used to beat Target Numbers such as opponent's Defense, etc.

## **Action Points**

Action points are the fuel of drama. They represent your characters ability to do heroic things. While you can simply use a series of pencil marks, I would recommend using poker chips, coins, or some other more fun dramatic marker. A character starts every scene with their action point humor rank, but can increase this number up to 20.

Some kinds of action cost action points to start, whereas failed action points may cause more spending. If a character doesn't have any action points, they'll need to spend a round resting (see "Regenerating Action Points" below)

## **Regenerating Action Points**

Action Points are easy to get back. First and foremost, a character may spend a round resting, in which point they get three action points automatically. However, a character also gets action points back every time they make a roll that has a Threshold above the difficulty of a roll. For every point above the difficulty, they gain an additional action point.

## **The Three Tests**

There are three different types of Action test, dependant on how many characters are involved in an action. **Tests** are simple affairs of a character trying to do something without any competition or attempts to stop them by other parties. In this instance, no action point needs to be spent on a test, and if the roll is failed the player may choose to spend an action point to make the test succeed.

**Contests** are actions where multiple people are trying to win at the same action. In this case, every character in the contest must "bid in" one action point. The character with the highest Threshold wins not only the action, but also an additional 2 action points of satisfaction.

Finally there are **Conflicts**, when a character is trying to hurt another character, be it physically or spiritually. This normally requires some more detail..



## CONFLICT

Fight scenes are a staple of role playing and pulp alike. The conflict rules are aimed at making it simple, exciting, and fun. Let's take a look at the steps of a Conflict

1. **Bid In:** Every character that wants to do something in a conflict other than scream or hide has to bid in 1 action point.
2. **Determine Initiative:** All characters start with their Initiative rank, highest rank going first and counting down until all characters have acted. A player may choose to spend up to three action points on initiative, increasing their initiative rank by +2 per point spent.
3. **Declare Actions:** Each character performs their actions. If trying to hit another character, they are aiming for their action's Threshold to equal or beat their target's Defense trait.
4. **Resolution:** If the character succeeded the roll (even if they didn't hit their target!), they get an action point back at the end of the round. Determine any

results, complete the damage effects, and continue until all characters have acted.

### **DODGE!**

Perhaps your character doesn't want to get hit by that machine gun fire. In this case, player characters may choose to spend action points to increase their defense trait on a single attack.

### **DAMAGE & HEALTH**

The end result of any attack is, of course, to hurt your target. If an attack beats the Defense rate of the target, the attack hits. Take the total threshold, plus weapon damage, and then subtract the target's Stamina (plus armor). The end result of this subtracts from the target's Health.

### **WEAPONS & ARMOR**

The advantage of a weapon is fairly obvious—it hurts more than your fists. Weapons increase the threshold of a successful attack by their Weapon rating, so add it onto a successful attack. Below are some rough examples, but feel free to play around with damage codes in case you're using magically charged weapons or trying to kill Hitler (all weapons do a +1 damage to Hitler).

Knives, baseball bats, broken bottles: +3

Swords, axes, big lead pipes: +4

Giant two-handed swords, maces, two by fours: +5

Reanimate scale weapons—anvils, twenty pound swords, a car bumper: +6

Of course, maybe you don't want to be impaled. While Armor is rare in the thirties (it doesn't really go with fedoras), you might have a chance to wear some protective gear. Armor subtracts from a successful attack's threshold. Note that if you're wearing armor, you're going to draw attention to yourself—especially if you're looking like Sir Gallahad in the middle of Grand Central Station.

Light Armor: Biker leathers, thick wool coats: -1

Medium Armor: GI gear, chainmail, flack jacket (you never know!): -2

Heavy Armor: Full plate, a suit of necromantically charged bones: -3

## **FIREARMS AND RANGE**

Firearms and other ranged weapons have the advantages of hitting from far away. Also, Firearms ignore most armor. Every firearm and ranged weapon has a range trait, which determines how far it can shoot:

**Close:** The target is within a few feet of the shooter, and can easily attack.

**Short:** The target is within fifty yards of the shooter.

**Far:** The target is well over fifty yards, up to two hundred yards from the shooter.

**Extreme:** The target is visible to the shooter.

Pistols can shoot at Close and Short, Rifles at Short and far, Sniper rifles at Far and Extreme.

**Light Pistol:** DMG: 3, Range: Close, Short

**Heavy Pistol:** DMG: 4, Range: Close, Short

**Tommy Gun:** DMG:4 Range: Short Special: Automatic--Tommy guns may make two attacks a round (same roll, just hit two targets or the same target twice)

**Shotgun:** DMG: 4, Range: Close, Short. Special: Scatter: Shotguns firing shot ignore ALL armor when shot at short.

**Battle Rifle:** DMG: 5, Range: Short, Far.

**Hunting Rifle:** DMG: 6, Range: Far, Extreme

Since we're looking at pulp here, don't worry too much about reloading, jamming, or other complications.

## **Social/Mental Combat**

Politically insults or mind control are also viable tactics. In these cases, characters will use Charm or intellect, and aim to beat the target's resistance. If being used in combat (for example, making fun of the target's mother), a successful mental attack may cause the loss of action points, but not health. This is not the focus of the game, and I'm running out of time, so just wing it.

## **REGENERATION**

Reanimates do not heal as normal. Prick a reanimate, and they will bleed, and while the blood may stop the hurting remains. Even worse, the arcane powers they have must be recharged as well. To do so, a character must perform one of their college types Regenerations. Performing a regeneration will grant them the points of said regeneration (i.e., if they perform a 2 point regeneration,

they may take 2 points of healing). This healing can be done for either Pyrus or Health.

There are other ways to heal, of course. The first is to have a human necromancer of the same college attend you. This is all mainly off-screen stuff, but also the reason why characters start the story with full health and Pyrus.

Then there are...other ways. Reanimates may be like men, but they are also monsters. The terrible truth of the matter is that by eating human flesh, they may regain their health and their Pyrus. A normal human body has about 5 points of Regeneration in it. Of course there are some very bad psychological effects that happen if you do this, and a sure path to becoming a villain.

## GM SECTION AND PLAYING GUIDE

This game is made up to two very different genres. On one hand, you have the Monstrous Protagonist genre—worlds of dark, tortured souls and inhuman heroes, trying to find themselves and their place in a world that has no place for them. Quite Obviously *Frankenstein* is the best example here, and one you should read even if you never play this game. This is a game with terrible monsters doing horrible acts, dealing with taboo subjects like madness and necromancy.

On the other hand, you have Pulp, worlds of black and white morality, where the good guys are good and the bad guys are bad, and those bad guys are probably breaking some rules of physics because *it's just cooler that way*. It's a world of style over substance and plot over physics, and the good guys always win because that's what good guys do.

It's the juxtaposition that is the interesting part here. Sure, the characters are horrific monsters—but they're GOOD heroic monsters, fighting even worse monsters (and some of them are humans!). While there can be some inner dialoguing and angst here, there should also be plenty of punching Hitler in the face.

Even better, you've got the glitz and glamour of the 1930's. Fedoras and trench coats, Tommy guns and zeppelins, fighter planes and hard right hooks...all of these are yours to play with. The Indiana Jones trilogy (the first three) are great examples of how to use pulp tropes and the time period, and how to put Nazis *everywhere*.

For sources, *Hellboy* is a great example, and was a prime motivator of the work. The movies are great examples of dealing with the inhuman nature of the protagonists, having to hide and fit into a society that will actively try to kill them for their horrific nature should they be spotted. The Comics are great examples of combining myth and science, having the good guys blaze in on a jetpack to fight an ancient Greek evil. This is the core of the game—monsters fighting other monsters in a pulp universe, hopefully on top of a zeppelin that's crashing into the Eifel tower. The point of this is to have fun, and fun trumps all other concerns. Since your enemies are both Nazi AND undead, you don't need to worry about the humanity element—you're only killing zombies wearing swastikas, not real people!

In the end, the good guys should always win—but it should always look like they're going to fail. Only through their courage, their bravery, their manly strength, and their undead powers from beyond the grave will Hitler be stopped! At the end of every major story, the characters and players should feel proud of a job well done and a world saved...until next time!

### **The MacGuffin: Doc Undead and the Temple with the Thing Everybody Wants!**

I'd recommend most games follow a simple MacGuffin plot—there is a thing, and the Nazis want the thing, and you have to either stop the Nazis or get the thing first. So what's the MacGuffin?

First and foremost, use mythology. There are stories of all manner of ancient treasures and forgotten cities, and these should be more than enough inspiration. Secondly, use weird stories—Lovecraft and Howard are the two most popular examples, but Verne, Wells, and Doyle are also great examples. There's nothing wrong with your Frankenstein's monster characters fighting Nazis for the key to Hollow Earth! Pulp is all about excess, so pick great big ancient treasures that will shake the world if the Nazis get it first!

Second, use pulp. Have a running villain—some evil Nazi necromancer who always escapes at the last minute, with his zombie bodyguard, or something else memorable. The characters (and players!) should end up hating this guy, knowing they're going to stop him but still never stopping him. Every session should end with "The End...?"

Speaking of Endings, remember—this is a game about necromancy, so feel free to kill off characters—even the PC's if you feel like it! Odds are somebody will be able to reanimate them if you need them to be. Death is not an ending in this game—merely an inconvenience.

## **THINGS THAT WANT YOU DEAD**

**Shamblers:** Every beginning Necromancer will make one of these things, and trading stories about their first shambler is the Necromancer equivalent of talking about the weather. A barely functional corpse that can move, attack,

and scare the locals, they're also handy for cheap labor and slowing down the opposition.

**Might: 1 Agility: X Reaction: X Stamina: 1 Intellect: X  
Wits: X Determination: 5 Charm: XX**

**Skills:** Brawl: 1

**Health: 5, Defense: 4**

**Abominaitons:** Halfway between a shamber and a reanimate, Abominations are giant, hulking dead-things that are about as smart as a grizzly bear hopped up on whiskey and looking for a fight. They're good at breaking things and people, but you wouldn't want one to do your taxes or do anything more difficult than opening a door.

**Might: 4, Agility: 3, Reaction: 4, Stamina: 5 Intellect: X  
Wits: X Determination: 3 Charm: XX**

**Skills:** Brawl: 2, Fitness: 2

**Health: 12, Defense: 7**

**Necromancer:** The generals of the Dead War, these are your bosses, your medics, your targets and your hated enemies. There are countless kinds of Necromancers, and while their personalities run the gauntlet of humanity, they are all a bit...off. Working with dead people does that to you.

**Might: 0 Agility: 0 Reaction: 1 Stamina: 2 Intellect: 2-4,  
Wits: 3-4, Determination: 4 Charm: 0**

**Talents: 10-20 points**

**Trades:** 20 points, with Occult of at least 2.

**Powers:** Choose between 2-5 powers from the Reanimate list.

**Vampyr:** Sometimes a Necromancer tries to get immortality, but blows it, becoming a walking dead that needs to suck life from the living. They're basically just Necromancers that are a bit tougher, a bit colder, and never drink wine.

**Might: 2, Agility: 0, Reaction: 0, Stamina: 5, intellect:  
2-4, Wits: 2-4, Determination: 4 Charm: 1**

**Talents: 10-20 points**

**Trades:** 20 points, with Occult of at least 2

**Health: 14 Defense: 4-6**

**Powers:** Choose between 2-5 powers from the Reanimate powers.

- Vampyrs can bite with their fangs, adding +1 to damage. Anyone they bite they can then drain of blood, stealing 4 health a round from the target until they remove themselves or the target is dead.

**Nazis:** Normal stormtroopers, Nazis should be everywhere. This is also a good representation for other soliders, cops, crooks trying to kill you, or henchmen of any kind. Nazis normally carry Tommy guns and light pistols.

**Might: 0 Agility: 1 Reaction: 1 Stamina: 0 Intellect: X**  
**Wits: 0 Determination: 1**