

# THE BASICS

## CONTESTS

When one of the PCs acts to change the situation around him, it's time for a contest. You're going to roll dice to see if you succeed and how well you succeed.

Select three of your character's elements and roll a die for each one:

- † roll a d6 if the element **helps** him.
- † roll a d8 if he is using a **tool** that complements the element.
- † roll a d4 if the element **hinders** him

You will always pick three elements to roll dice for and describe how they help or hinder you.

Starting characters only have three elements available to them, so they use all three in every contest. If you can't decide if an element helps or hinders you, treat it as a hindrance and move on.

Additionally, for every d4 you roll, you generate Heat. Take one Heat token and set it beside your character sheet.

There are always at least two sides to a contest. If no other PC is rolling, the GM rolls using the elements of NPCs acting against you or elements of the location.

Roll all dice and present your highest die.

High die wins. In case of a tie, reroll the die you presented and present it again.

## WINNING

A win means you are on top in this situation. Depending on what happened, you may:

- † **Convince:** offer your opposition one Heat from supply as a bribe to play along. He can stubbornly refuse by paying you a Heat from his pile and describe how one of his elements lets him do this.
- † **Prepare:** claim one Heat for your next Contest. What you did now will help you later.
- † **Deny:** make one of your opposition's Tools unavailable until they succeed in getting it back.

If there are more than two sides to the contest, the victor can apply one of these to each loser.

## HARD PLACES

Some location elements that the GM rolls begin play always rolling d8s. This usually represents places where things are especially difficult for the PCs because of the planning of NPCs or sheer circumstance.

The PCs can use a contest to soften up the element: they might loot the secret cache in the woods or beguile away the guards manning the gates. When they succeed, the element reverts to a d4 for the remainder of the game.

## INVOKING RULESHEETS

Before you roll, you may invoke a rulesheet that extends the contest, such as Combat or Influence. These rules often either use all the dice you roll or involve multiple rounds of smaller interactions.

PLAYING YOUR  
ARC

USING SPARKS

# THE BASICS

## PLAYING YOUR ARC

Your character has an Arc that defines the shape of his current story. Each Arc has three actions.

The first action is the Flux. When your character performs this action in the story, you earn Heat and Flux. Flux is recorded in the boxes in the center of the sheet.

The next action is the Alloy. When your character performs this action in the story, you may spend five Flux to unlock one of the Arc's Elements. Color in its circle your sheet; you can use it for the rest of the story.

The last action is the Reify. When your character performs this action in the story, they end their Arc and gain a new one. Each Arc has a different cost, usually in terms of Elements that you must sacrifice. Pick one, pay the cost, and start the next chapter of your story.

Each Vicious Crucible comes with a number of Arcs ready for you to Reify into. Ask the GM to see them if you think you're done with this chapter of your character's story.

## USING SPARKS

Sparks are tricks that come with elements and some tools. They're printed in grey on your character sheet. They let you:

### REROLL A DIE

You may reroll any of the dice you just rolled. This costs one Heat, and you may only reroll a given die once.

### DOUBLE YOUR HEAT

When you roll a d4 for this element, you gain two Heat instead of one.

### SHIFT A POINT

When you shift points, you turn one die down a step and turn another die up a step. You might turn your 3 to a 2 to turn your 5 to a 6. You can't shift a die lower than 1 or higher than the die has faces (no 7s on d6s). You may shift two points for two Heat, three points for three Heat, and so on.

You may use sparks on a die only *after* you have presented the die, never before.

### SPARKS AND OTHER RULESHEETS

Some sparks work directly with certain rulesheets, such as:

- † - inflict two wounds instead of one
- † - add an extra spark to a design

Sparks always cost 1 Heat unless it says so otherwise. The GM never spends Heat; NPC Sparks work for no cost.

CONTESTS

WINNING

INVOKING  
MODULES