



LIVE THROUGH DEATH

A roleplaying game concept by
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*"The way of the true samurai
Is the ability to live through death"*
-Wu Tang Clan, Legendary Weapons

In the year of 1582 the warlord **Oda Nobunaga**, master of all of Japan and the Devil king of Owari, travelled to the temple of Honnō-ji.

At the temple he was ambushed by traitors and the temple burned to the ground. Oda Nobunaga was presumed dead.

In truth he used dark magic to transfer his life into the cursed blade, **Heshikiri-Hasebe**, allowing his soul to **LIVE THROUGH DEATH**.

In **New York City**, in the present day, a shady antique dealer unwittingly breaks the seals and releases the demon king. Once released the demon soul of Oda Nobunaga unleashes his powers and revenant retainers upon the city, making it a hellscape straddling this world and worlds beyond.

Toppling the statue of liberty he summons his dark fortress, and prepares to become the **Dark Shogun of America**.

The only thing standing in the way of his victory is a group of **Lyrical Kung Fu masters**.

Preparation

To play Live Through Death you need:

- Pen & Paper
- At least one six-sided die.
- At least one 20-sided die
- A Game Master. Although you may refer to the Game Master as Dark Shogun to fuel his/her ego.
- Two to Four Lyrical Kung Fu Masters (the player characters)

The Rules

Creating a character

1. You have 14 points to spend on Kung Fu, Flex, Wits and Style.
Each ability must have at least one dot and can have a maximum of 5. Each dot in an ability costs one point except the fifth, which costs two points.
2. Take your value in Wits and divide it by two, rounding up. This is your Defense value and is used to protect yourself in ranged combat.
3. You have 5 Hitpoints (which regenerate at any point your character would have the ability to rest for 15 minutes or so) and 5 Lyrical points. Lyrical points only regenerate between sessions.
4. Write down a numbered list with 20 words. This is your Rhymebook.

Kung Fu

Kung fu is used for hand-to-hand combat and athletics. As Kung fu is both physical and spiritual it's frequently the only thing that can damage supernatural foes.

Flex

Flex is used to attack in ranged combat, to intimidate and to impress.

Wits

Wits is the ability to use and protect your brains, to solve problems and knowing when to keep your head down. To trick fools and not get tricked.

Style

Style is an expression of your bling and lyrical mastery, both to freestyle and to lay on the charm.

Conflict

Order of combat

1. Declare if you're going to use lyrical points to raise your defense.
2. Resolve ranged combat
3. Resolve any Flex or Wits tests
4. Resolve hand-to-hand

Ranged Combat

Each fighter that engages in ranged combat rolls as many six-sided dice as they have dots in Flex. Any 4+ is a success, and for each six rolled you may roll another dice (which in turn is a success on a 4+ and generates a new dice on a six).

You may distribute your successes over any number of opponents. Each dot in Defense (their Wits/2 rounded up) negates a success and an additional dice is negated if the target is in cover. Any remaining successes deal damage. So if an opponent has 2 Defense and is in cover you need 4 successes to deal damage.

Any mook that has a success distributed to them, regardless if this overcomes their defense or not, counts as suppressed and may not engage in hand-to-hand combat. Kung fu masters are only suppressed if the number of successes overcomes their defense.

Hand-to-Hand

Each fighter rolls as many six-sided dice as they have dots in Kung Fu. Each 4+ roll is a success (you do not roll additional dice, even if you roll a six). Compare the number of successes and for each success more than your opponent you deal one damage.

Fighting multiple opponents

When alone and faced with fighting multiple opponents each the kung fu pool of the outnumbering side is combined, which means that even relatively weak opponents can become a threat when attacking in numbers. A lyrical kung fu master can attempt to roll up to one opposed Flex roll and one opposed Wits roll to use agility and cunning to confuse his opponents. If the kung fu master wins then one attacker per test (ie, a maximum of two)

cannot add their dice to the fighting pool. This cannot reduce the number of attackers to zero on any side. If the kung fu master fails he takes one automatic point of damage per failed test.

Mooks cannot use Flex or Wits to confuse their foes, and are thus easily taken down when outnumbered.

Other contests of skill

Any other contests are resolved by rolling a six-sided dice for each dot in the relevant stat.

Each 4+ roll counts as a success. The highest number of successes wins the contest. If both contestants have the same number of successes it's a draw.

Using Lyrical points

Any kung fu master can use lyrical points to gain automatic successes or to raise their defense by one step.

1. Declare that you're going to use lyrical points, and (in the case of a skill test or combat round, how many).
2. Roll as many d20s as you have dots in Style. Compare the rolls to your Rhymebook. Pick one result for each Lyrical point spent.
3. Construct a freestyle rap that is both relevant to the situation and includes each word you selected from your rhymebook. The length of the rap should be appropriate to the situation. Stick to a single verse unless you're facing the Dark Shogun.
4. If successful, add as many successes as you spent lyrical points (or a single point of defense)

The Adversaries

Mooks

Mooks have the following rules:

- Mooks roll between 1 (cannon fodder) and 3 (elite) dice in combat or during skill tests
- Mooks have only one hitpoint.
- Regular and Elite Mooks that are particularly large or heavily armored (like elite samurai, SWAT officers or monstrous Oni) require a double success to injure, representing their tough nature.

Bosses

All bosses have the following special rules:

- **One Man Army:** In hand-to-hand a boss can engage multiple opponents and each combat is resolved on its own (if a Boss is attacked by two kung fu masters he rolls his kung fu dice once against each master, and the masters do not combine their attack pools)
- **Energy:** Part of a boss health pool consists of demonic energy. Energy can only be damaged by Kung fu. Energy can only be damaged once all regular hitpoints have been depleted.

Masao

The Enforcer/First blade of the Shogun/Revenant of Oppression

Description: Masao is a large armored samurai with a massive no-dachi and a demonic facemask. It's up to the GM if he's a revenant in armor, or if the armor itself is his body.

Stats: Kung Fu 4, Flex 2, Wits 3

Defense: 3

Hitpoints: 4

Energy: 6

Unstoppable: Masao cannot be suppressed.

Juggernaut: If Masao is confused by a Flex or Wits test in multi-person combat he switches places with a mook (Masao is allowed to attack and the mook is not). The mook is destroyed as Masao is too eager to get at his enemies to have any concern for his allies.

Scenario Effect: As long as Masao is alive law enforcement supports Oda Nobunaga. Some will continue to support Oda Nobunaga even if Masao is dead, but they're not compelled to.

Orandaijin

The Gunrunner/Second blade of the Shogun/Revenant of Colonialism

Description: Orandaijin is a long, thin man in 16th century european clothing and with a brace of blackpowder pistols (that seemingly replace themselves out of dark smoke after they've been fired).

Stats: Kung Fu 2, Flex 4, Wits 4

Defense: 3

Hitpoints: 6

Energy: 3

Gun-kata: Orandaijin cannot be engaged in close combat as long as he has hitpoints. All attempts will fail due to a hail of gunfire and strange movements until he has been sufficiently injured.

Scenario Effect: As long as Orandaijin is alive there will be Gunpowder spirits roaming New York. (Regular and Elite armored mooks using strange firearms)

Kemuri

The Poisoner/Third blade of the Shogun/Revenant of Environmental racism

Description: Unnaturally thin and wrapped from head to feet in black cloth Kemuri is unnaturally quick, although the impression is more like a puppet on strings than that of a graceful fighter. Kemuri is armed with knives that can both be thrown and used in close combat.

Stats: Kung Fu 4, Flex 3, Wits 4

Defense: 4

Hitpoints: 4

Energy: 4

From the Shadows: To attack or engage Kemuri in close combat you need to roll a contested wits roll. If Kemuri wins you attack only smoke and shadows.

Smoke bomb: Whenever Kemuri is injured or ends a round in close combat he throws a smoke bomb and disappears. Role a contested Wits roll. If Kemuri loses he cannot use Smoke Bomb again (the Kung fu masters are wise to his tricks!)

Scenario Effect: As long as Kemuri is alive the waters surrounding Liberty Island (and Oda Nobunaga's fortress), as well as the subway system, are filled with clouds of poison gas that prevent access.

Oda Nobunaga

Demon King of Owari/The Boss of Bosses/The Dark Shogun

Description: Oda Nobunaga wears magnificent and horrifying samurai armor. He's armed with Heshikiri-Hasebe, a katana that can cut through anything and eat souls.

Stats: Kung Fu 2, Flex 3, Wits 3

Defense: 2

Health: 2

Energy: 12

Heshikiri-Hasabe: Any damage dealt by Oda Nobunaga is returned to him as Energy, up to his maximum of 12.

Demon King: At the start of each round Oda Nobunaga summons 1d2 Demonic Retainers with Kung fu 2, Flex 2, Wits 2 and Defense 2.

Die for my Fleeting advantage: Any hand-to-hand combat involving Oda Nobunaga is resolved last, and he gains +1 Kung Fu (up to a total of Kung Fu 5) for each retainer still standing.

Pen is Mightier: Oda Nobunaga can not be defeated except with a Lyric boosted attack.

Scenario Effect: As long as Oda Nobunaga is alive New York is still in peril!

Moodboard

