

Introduction: How to play

Roles

In the game of Black Rose, players step into a dark fantasy world teeming with monstrous horrors and grim challenges. One player takes on the role of the Game Master (GM), the architect of this eerie realm. The GM weaves intricate narratives, describes sinister environments, and sets up daunting obstacles for the players to overcome. They paint a vivid picture of each scene, asking the players, "What do you do?" to drive the story forward.

The Hunters, the player's characters, are not valiant heroes but ordinary people pressed into the role of monster hunters. Much like reluctant rat catchers, they confront fearsome beasts and navigate perilous situations out of sheer necessity. Their journey is fraught with danger, where every choice can lead to dire consequences.

In this world, exploration might take the Hunters through haunted ruins, desolate forests, or cursed villages. They solve dark puzzles, interact with wary townsfolk, battle monstrous abominations, and uncover forbidden relics. The GM guides them through these challenges, improvising and reacting to their decisions to create a fluid and unpredictable adventure.

The game has no definitive end. Each session builds on the last, crafting an ongoing story filled with tension and dread. As the Hunters survive encounters and complete missions, they grow in skill and resilience, ready to face even more formidable threats. While there might not be a traditional concept of winning or losing, the real triumph lies in the spine-chilling tales created and the unforgettable experiences shared.

In this bleak and unforgiving world, courage stems from necessity, and survival is the ultimate reward.

Steps of play

The basic steps of play for Black Rose unfold in the following pattern.

1. **GM Describes the Environment:** The GM sets the scene by explaining where the hunters are and detailing the surroundings, including options like doors, objects, and characters present.
2. **Players Decide Actions:** The players discuss and describe what they want their hunters to do. This can be a collective decision or individual actions by different hunters.
3. **GM Resolves Actions:** If the action is straightforward (e.g., opening an unlocked door), the GM narrates the outcome directly. For more complex actions (e.g., picking a locked door or avoiding a trap), the GM may require a die roll to determine the result.

4. **GM Narrates Results:** The GM describes the outcomes of the players' actions, leading to new decisions and further actions.

5. **Repeat the Process:** This step-by-step pattern continues, adapting to the scenario, whether it's exploration, interaction, or combat, and ensuring a fluid and flexible gameplay experience.

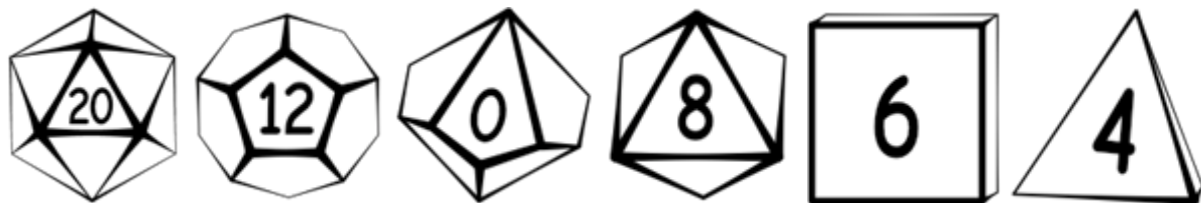
Throughout the game, the GM frequently asks the players, "So what do you do?" to move the story forward and create a unique adventure based on the players' choices and the GM's responses.

Game Dice

This game uses a standard set of polyhedral dice. These Dice are referred to by their number of sides, for example a d4 is a four sided dice, a d6 is a six sided dice, a d20 is a 20 sided dice. When you need to roll a dice the rules tell you how many of which kind as well as any modifiers to add in the standard format of $XdY+Z$. X is the number of dice, Y is the size of dice, and Z is any bonuses or penalties that might be applied. For example, if an instruction tells you to roll $3d8+5$ you would roll 3 8 sided dice and add 5 to the result. If the number of dice is omitted, it is assumed to be 1.

Whenever a rule refers to changing the dice step this refers to increasing or decreasing the size of dice used. This follows a pattern of: $+1>d4>d6>d8>d10>d12$. Any ability which changes dice size cannot take it above d12's or below a flat value.

Different Sections may have specific rules for certain checks and should be consulted when relevant.



Checks

Checks are the base resolution method of hunters actions. Whenever a check is called for the roller rolls $1d20+\text{bonuses}-\text{penalties}$ and compares to a Difficulty Class, abbreviated DC. If the result of the roll meets or beats the DC the check is a success, otherwise, it's a failure. See Degrees of success for more information.

If the DC is not specified the GM can decide to use one of the following DCs.

Difficulty	DC	Example
Simple	5	Cooking an egg, noticing a faint noise in a quiet room, climbing over a low fence, spotting fresh tracks in soft ground
Very Easy	10	Finding a hidden door in an empty hallway, Identifying a common plant
Easy	15	Tracking a wounded monster, discerning the General distance of monster roars
Medium	20	Deciphering an ancient partially worn inscription, Translating an old, faded map that leads to the monster's hidden nest.
Hard	25	Navigating a maze like forest without a map, Convincing a suspicious village elder to reveal a hidden path to the monster's den.
Very Hard	30	Performing a complex acrobatic maneuver, disabling a complex trap
Challenging	35	Leading a Group through a treacherous mountain pass during a storm
Impossible	40	Crafting an intricate, precise potion from rare and unstable ingredients to cure a deadly monster venom

If players modifiers equal the DC of the check -1 or higher they can declare an automatic success and avoid rolling. This counts as a regular success for any results.

Flat Check

Flat Checks are checks which do not apply any bonuses or penalties.

Degrees of success

There are four degrees of success for all checks.

Degree of success	Result
Critical Success	Result is 10 or more above the DC

Success	Result meets or exceeds the DC
Failure	Result is lower than the DC
Critical Failure	Rolls a 1 on the d20 or result is 10 or more below the DC

Multiple Roll Penalty (MRP)

This is the penalty applied to all rolls made in rapid succession to attempt the same result. For example, making multiple attack rolls, skill checks, or saving throws in one turn during combat. This penalty does not only apply to combat situations. Repeatedly trying to persuade a member of the clergy to donate to an orphanage over the course of a short period would incur the multiple roll penalty.

GMs are also free to decide that the penalty applies across the party as with the clergy example.

Roll	Penalty	Agile Penalty
1 st	0	0
2 nd	-5	-3
3 rd +	-10	-6

Bonuses and Penalties

Training Bonus

The most common bonus to apply to checks is the training bonus. This represents a creatures skill with a particular check.

Training	Bonus
Untrained	+0
Trained	+1
Expert	+2

Master	+3
Peerless	+4

Boons and Bane

From time to time players will perform actions which should give them a bonus to the check making it easier to succeed. Situations outside of the players control might likewise inhibit their chances of success inflicting a bane on them. These boons and banes can be given out at the GMs discretion. Any number of boons and banes can apply to a single roll.

Players and GMs can convert Minor boons and banes to their major version and vice versa. 5 Minor boons or banes is the equivalent of a single Major boon or bane.

Boon/Drawback	Bonus/penalty
Major Bane	Misfortune(1)
Minor Bane	-1
Minor Boon	+1
Major Boon	Fortune(1)

Specific Beats general

This book contains rules which govern how this game plays. Many abilities, features or rules governing certain actions break the general rules. These are the exception. If a specific rule contradicts a general one, the specific rule wins.

Round down

Whenever you divide a number in the game, always round down, regardless of the fractional result.

Having fun

The rules laid out within this game are meant to provide a fun and enjoyable experience for all participants. These rules are not intended to be all inclusive of physics, economics, biology, etc. GMs should not allow players to bully their way through the game. Nor should they allow players to break the laws of physics using the rules.

Rules Exploitation

Rules Exploitation occurs when players try and argue for special privileges or carve out exceptions within the rules. Below are the three most common methods of rules exploitation and why GMs should take a stand against them.

The rules don't say I cant

This is one of the most obvious methods of rules exploits used. When using this argument players will argue that they can do something specifically because there are no guardrails within the rules which protect against said actions. The rules are not all inclusive. It is physically impossible to print a rulebook which protect against all player actions. Its why we play TTRPGS. There is a certain level of understanding that certain actions are just impossible even though they are not explicitly covered in the rules. For example, the rules do not specify that PCs cannot walk through walls. Yet any sane GM would recognize that that is something PCs just cannot do. Likewise, unless the rules or situation specifies otherwise, the PCs are all on the ground.

Bag of Rats

Within this rules exploit players attempt to use rules intended for combat or a specific portion of the game outside of its intended space. The titular example is using a bag of rats to trigger combat to allow the use of combat abilities outside of combat. In short, rules are designed for a specific play space and that should be respected.

Peasant Railgun

The ever-infamous peasant railgun is an example of mixing game rules with real world physics to exploit the rules. In it, characters line up hundreds of villagers and pass a spear or other thrown object from one end to the other using a readied action. This will supposedly accelerate the object to near lightspeed given the time constraints of 1 round of combat. This is an example of attempting to mix game rules with real world physics. As with the Bag of Rats, rules are designed for a specific play space and should not be mixed with real world physics to create nonsensical results.

Keywords

Below is a list of common keywords and their meanings.

Fortune(X): Roll X additional d20 and use the highest result.

Misfortune(X): Roll X additional d20 and use the lowest result.

Open: Must be the first action used on your turn.

Close: Must be the last action used on your turn.

Metamagic: An ability which modifies the next spell cast if it is the next action you take. May come with requirements.

Fluorish: An ability which modifies the next weapon attack if it is the next action you take. May come with requirements.

Attack rolls

You attack with a weapon you're wielding or with an unarmed attack or invocation, targeting one creature within your reach (for a melee attack) or within range (for a ranged attack). Make a check using the attack bonus of the weapon (or your spell attack bonus) adding any bonuses or penalties as appropriate, and compare the result to the attacks DC+the targets AC.

Your attack bonus for weapons and unarmed strikes is equal to half of your Grit (melee weapons) or Finesse (ranged weapons or weapons with the finesse property) plus your training bonus with that weapon category. Unless the attack or ability explicitly states otherwise you do not add a second skill to your attack bonus.