

PATREON DISCUSSION FOR FEBRUARY 2023 Q&A

PABLO: How does the decrease in playing quality you see in Hero Wars/Quest editions correlate with how much Robin Laws was involved in them? I thought it was a case of him laying the foundation and then each edition moving away from that (I tend to like his designs quite a lot), but it would seem that he had more input in subsequent editions, at least judging by the name(s) on the covers.

- **Me:** You'd have to ask Robin. The only thing I know is that he wasn't directly involved after the original work (pre-2000), but did/does work with the current Chaosium on Glorantha related material. How that relates to HeroQuest specifically, I don't know.

SEAN: As a bit of a fallen Catholic, I have to object to charactering a papal schism in terms of one or more claimants being a pirate or raider. In all such cases, regardless of origin of one of the claimants, the appropriate response is to blame the French.

- **Me:** Practicing Catholic response to my video: "Huh?" or alternately for intellectuals, "Yep." / Fallen Catholic response: "No! Disrespectful!" and "Actually ..."

NOAH: A beast of a Q&A! Thanks for this wide-ranging discussion, Ron. I think the response to my T&T question got sidetracked into unrelated territory (its length did not help, I imagine). I did not imply that I was seeking a "Luck strategy" of advancement by which a player might optimize their character's effectiveness. Maybe next time we talk over voice we can hash this out in that more dynamic medium. I've tried to write out a few clarifications/redirections, but found them so exhausting to write that I don't have the heart to inflict them on readers. One follow-up question (let me know if this makes better sense as a Q&A, though I'd be curious to see if other Patrons have experience here): Do you have any thoughts regarding defining the consequences of failed Saving Rolls? When GMing, do you often say, "If you fail this S.R., the Leprechaun's DEAD?", or are there other mechanics you've leveraged? I've been playing with a range of approaches, but even the 'gentler' ones have been so brutal that they're only slightly paler shades of disaster (I thought I was going easy when I set a cursed mirror's damage at the minimum MR of 1d6+1 — and ended up killing two of the highest-level characters in the party). I'm not looking for the One True Way, just some inspiring anecdotes or perspectives as I get to know the system better.

- **Me:** In practice, it usually works the other way around. Straightforwardly, if a player says "I do this!!" (usually a fairy doing something egregious), then I call for a Saving Roll because, well, that's the resolution system, effectively. From the GM side, I'm usually saying something terrible is happening or in its very early stage of happening, and someone calls out a preventative or reactive action, so, hence, resolution/Saving Roll time. [in either case, the player may mention the rule instead of me; the point remains the same] What this means, I think, is that quite a lot is happening and being understood already before anyone invokes the rule, so consequences are often already clear. "The winds tumble you through the air away from the tower!" [then one of us says] "Agility Saving Roll!" If they're not, they are easy to mention or clarify enough for ordinary resolution, without elaborate pre-narration, given what we do know.
- **Noah:** "...usually a fairy doing something egregious" -- This is right in line with my experience, though substituting leprechaun for fairy.
- **Noah:** "From the GM side, I'm usually saying something terrible is happening or in its very early stage of happening, and someone calls out a preventative or reactive action, so, hence, resolution/Saving Roll time. [in either case, the player may mention the rule instead of me; the point remains the same]" This point is quite helpful in thinking through the order of operations.
- **Me:** I realized I didn't answer the part about consequences. A very typical case concerns a fairy or leprechaun (less frequently, anyone else) who would necessarily be included in the common "fight" roll, but is doing something else and actively avoiding the fight. If they miss the saving

roll, they don't succeed at whatever they were trying to do, and they are included in the fight roll without contributing their damage to it - i.e., they will take damage if the group roll is defeated. I think that follows logically from all the stated actions and active procedures, but it's also on the mild side. Another mild example (related to my comment above) is when the stated danger is undesirable but not immediately harmful, e.g., high winds blowing the fairies far away from the action, or saving vs. Charisma to avoid panic. The logic that produces these, however, also allows for more nasty results, when the stated effects include damage ("level 2 Luck save or take 3d6 damage, armor doesn't protect"), or in a notable case, the panicked leprechaun running straight out toward the cliff's edge. Our games so far include a fair number of these, which for a fragile character are pretty much the same as death. Rolls like this - often baked into the textual preparation - also include a lot of mental effects and various disadvantaging outcomes like "lose benefit of armor" or "can't move." I like this sort of thing much better than "save or die," not necessarily to avoid characters' deaths in a probabilistic sense, but because I like severe effects to arise from the confluence of several actions and different rolls' outcomes.