

DECLARING DIFFICULTY & COST

MAESTRO-LESS PLAY

Difficulty in GUN&SLINGER ranges 3-12—higher values are harder. The Difficulty is also the Cost. When declaring a Check's Cost consider context!

Here are example Difficulties and Costs:

- Simple (3-4): Convincing a neutral party to offer simple aid, evading quickdraws, knocking down a door.
- Involved (5-8): Maintaining footing on shaky ground, evading hip fire, disarming a simple trap.
- Complicated (9-12): Sneaking past someone actively seeking you, evading aimed attacks, climbing something slippery.

BLIND PAY

To Blind Pay, both Players place a Single from their Hand face-down obscuring their respective cards before simultaneously revealing and combining their value. A Blind Pay's difficulty is calculated as follows: the Maestro sets a difficulty based on the ranges below and flips the Deck's top card—the Modifier—adding it to the Blind Pay's total.

Blind Pays are always used when Players attempt to shoot something but the Maestro can always call for one for simultaneous actions by the Gun & Slinger.

If you'd like to play 2 Player GUN&SLINGER without the Maestro, make the following changes:

- When making a Check, a player flips the Deck's top 3 cards. The other selects one setting the Check's Difficulty.
- If this reveals a Face Card it must be chosen and players act as if the Maestro played it. Collaboratively determine what it means, changing the scene's course accordingly!

EXAMPLE OF MAESTRO-LESS PLAY

The Duo wants to shoot a Twist-Spider rushing from the treeline. One flips the deck's top card revealing a 3, setting the difficulty: a total of 18-21.

They then flip the deck's top card: a 5 which is added to whatever the Duo plays.

Accounting for this, each player plays a Single face-down then flip them simultaneously. A 7 and Ace. $7 + \text{Ace} + 5(\text{Modifier}) = 23$ OR 13. They either Bust or Fail, failing to shoot the spider either way—which lunges at them!

MAESTRO

As the Maestro, you play the world, while created with the players, you control its reaction. The world is a harsh, unforgiving place—but you're not. React appropriately for the shared game's tone, act on foreshadowing. Be the players' fan as you create danger, excitement and drama. Fuel this using tension and tough decisions, keeping players on their toes.

You don't need to come up with everything yourself, however! Treat the game as a conversation and feel free to work with players to make decisions, determine the next fictional step considering questions' answers you share about the world. By sharing worldly authorship with your players you'll collaboratively create something unique and memorable—something games like this are uniquely suited for: so lean in!

SWORD&BEARER

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PAIRS, JAMES & RESOLUTION

The Players & Maestro are participating in Go Fish notably modified to fit RPG structure.

When a player wants to do something under pressure or with an uncertain outcome, the Maestro can request a Check. The Player then asks either the Maestro or the other Player if they have a particular card ("Hey, Gun, do you have any fives?").

The person who is asked must answer truthfully. If they have any cards of that value, they are handed to the petitioner. If not, the asker draws a card from the deck.

If at any point someone's hand contains a Pair (two cards of the same value) it is set face-down on the table in front of them. The Maestro does not make Pairs, keeping all of their Hand's cards.

This area is called their Cache and Pairs remain here until used. Players may peek at their own Pairs whenever but not anyone else's.

After the player making the Check requests a card and either receives or draws one, the Maestro reveals the Check's Difficulty and Cost ("This is an Easy check, doing it costs 4"), and then the Player either pays with a Pair, requests a Bargain or accepts Failure.

A Check's Cost—and occurrence—is the Maestro's decision. The Maestro should rely on situational context and their judgment determining when a Check is appropriate. Some good heuristics for requesting a Check is when:

- The outcome is uncertain.
- There's immediate pressure.

Failure or Mixed success provide interesting narrative outcomes. Important notes about Pairs:

- A Pair has its single-card value (ex. a Pair of 10s is worth 10).
- The total value Paid is the Pair's value plus your relevant Stat.
- You can exceed, rather than exactly pay, the Cost.

THE CARDS AND YOU

As the Maestro, you do not make pairs. Cards remain in your Hand, used as Singles to make moves and mix up the current scene. As the Maestro, you're mainly reacting to the players—detailing NPC or Monster responses to Player actions.

When playing a card from your Hand, be proactive not reactive. You're introducing something new by shaking things up with novel elements, shifting who has the upper hand or other twists!

MAESTRO FACE MOVES

As with Players, Face cards are used differently. For the Maestro, they're spent as singles with unique moves based on the card's Suite and Face. The move you make:

- Kings: Separate the Gun and Slinger.
- Queens: The Gun & Slinger lose something valuable.
- Jacks: Someone receives a Major Injury.
- Aces: Immediately raise the stakes

How you do it:

- Hearts: The Environment
- Diamonds: The Twist

- Spades: The Antagonist

- Clubs: Dealer's Choice