Shirigani Chronicles

24 Hour R P G Project

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Introduction

There are a lot of role-playing games that deal with what happens before you die.
Characters usually live interesting lives, and die in an impressive way.
This isn't one of those games. This is about what happens after death.

Some way or another, you died. It may have been suicide, an accident, or even murder, or something else. But For whatever reason, you didn't want to go on to the afterlife. Something kept you here. Your unfinished business, if you will. It might have been looking after a loved one, or continuing your life's work, or some other reason. But that's okay; there was a place for those who didn't want to go on.

So you became a Shinigami; a Guardian of Death. It's your job to help monitor the mortal world. You're supposed to help make sure people die when they should. Not before, not after. Sometimes this might mean protecting a mortal from a supernatural threat. Sometimes it might mean finding and stopping a mad killer. Sometimes it might even mean hunting down and killing someone who's somehow outlived their allotted time. Mostly it's the first two.

Mostly.

But hey, there are perks to being a Shinigami, in the form of supernatural powers, a monthly paycheck (Yes, you get paid. This is a job after all.), and a warm fuzzy feeling when you help people.
Oh, and there's also the fact that you're really freaking *hard* to kill, what with being dead already. You can take massive amounts of damage, and though it will still hurt like hell, you can regenerate fairly quickly. That's the good news.

The bad news is that you can be destroyed if you take enough punishment in a short enough time. And this is all you get. If you die now, you're gone forever. You just... cease to exist.

There are also other dangers. Demons tend to take your existence personally. And there are the rare few sorcerers and madmen who know about the Shinigami, and try to use that knowledge to their advantage. Usually, it's these same sorcerers and madmen who find ways to live beyond their time, so you'll probably run into at least one eventually. And in a job like this, it's easy to get disillusioned and depressed.

Anyway, that's in the future, and this is now. Welcome to the ranks of the Shinigami.

About the Game

This is a modern mystery/investigation type of RPG with elements of the supernatural and horror. The characters are Shinigami, a combination of detective, mystic, troubleshooter, and hero. They're dead, as well. There isn't a "game world" per se. The game takes place in the modern world, although a darker version of it. A homicidal psychopath might decide to make your life interesting in unpleasant ways, or a demon might take offense because you've foiled a plot. This game tends to lend itself to mature themes. Just a warning. It might be a good idea for the GM and the players to have a discussion about elements they're uncomfortable with.

I'm sure that if you're reading this, you're at least passably familiar with role-playing games. If you're not, here's a quick rundown. This is a game about imagination. It's a lot like improvisational acting. There are the regular players, who each have their own character. Then there's the Game Master (GM), the person running the games. The GM is the person who makes up the basic plot and plays all characters that the players run into, including supporting characters and villains. *Especially* villains. But this doesn't mean that it's the GM versus the players. Everyone's out to have fun; that's the real point, after all.

Character Creation

The first step is coming up with a concept for your character. That's the crux of the whole matter. Once you have a concept, you can flesh it out a little. You don't have to write pages and pages of background if you don't want to (although you certainly could!); just have some idea of where this character is coming from. It's all right if you don't know everything about your character; it's also perfectly fine if you leave most of the background to come out later. All characters evolve while you play, so you may come up with a really cool idea for your character that has nothing to do with the original concept.

The basics –

This is the basic info about your character.

- First of all, you need a name. Duh. Moving on.
- You also need to decide who your character was before they died. This can be as vague as, "She was a doctor" or as specific as "He was a high school student from Texas with a 3.7 GPA, a cheerleader girlfriend, and a silver BMW." It's really up to you.
- Also important is *how* your character died. This can sometimes be important, depending on the way the game goes. Possibilities are suicide, murder, car accident, and illness. You can also be as specific as you like here.

- Something else that might be useful to know is how old your character was when they died. Shinigami don't age, so they'll be that age forever. (Think about that before you decide you want to play an eight year old Shinigami.)
- The most important part, however, is why you decided to become a Shinigami. What was your unfinished business? You need to be as specific as possible here, because the GM will need to know so she can use it in a plot at some point. This game is just as much about why you didn't "cross over" as it is investigation. All Shinigami have some important reason for staying behind, and often they'll use their newfound abilities in pursuit of that reason. (This is why Shinigami have to work in groups.) Once you complete your unfinished business, you have the option of "retiring your Shinigami: allowing them to "cross over," and starting a new character.

Examples:

Hisoka was a sixteen year old high school student. He was murdered by a serial killer (wrong place, wrong time). He became a Shinigami in order to find the man who killed him and take revenge.

Watari was a scientist specializing in chemical research. He died in a freak lab explosion. He became a Shinigami in order to continue work on his dream project: a gender-changing serum.

Once you know all that, and write it down, then you can get to the number part.

Abilities –

There are four basic abilities in Shinigami Chronicles: Physical, Mental, Social, and Spirit. These are basic, inherent qualities that everyone has.

Physical is a measure of your ability to do, well, physical things. This is the ability associated with doing fun athletic things, administering beat-downs, and taking beatings, etc. A high Physical means that you're tough, strong, or athletic. A low Physical means that you're a wimp.

Mental is a measure of your intelligence and reasoning. This is associated with problem solving, general knowledge, and things like that. This is also tied to the ability to use arcane magic; more on this later. A high Mental means you're smart or logical; a low Mental means that you're not so much.

Social is a measure of how you interact with others. This is associated with getting people to do what you want without making them mad. A high Social means that you tend to get along with others, or that you're good at manipulating people. A low Social means that you "don't play well with others."

Spirit is a measure of how in tune you are with the Spirit world. Shinigami are special; they're technically a part of the spirit world, so they start off with a higher Spirit score. Spirit is tied to empathy and any spirit powers.

You have a number of ranks in each ability, ranging from 1-8. One is pitiful, three is average, six is insane, and eight is nigh godly. You can only get up to 6 ranks at character creation.

To determine how many ranks you have in each ability, you have nine ability points. Each ability starts off at zero, except Spirit, which starts at three. You can assign these points how ever you like, but in the end, you have to have a score of at least one in each ability.

Examples:

Tsuzuki is a highly Spiritual person, so he spends two points on Spirit. He then spends three points on Mental, and two each on Physical and Social. This gives him starting scores of Physical-2, Mental-3, Social-2, and Spirit-5.

Tatsumi is a logical man with an interest in arcane magic. He spends five points on Mental. He's not too bad at Physical things, so he spends three points on that. The other point goes into Social (people tend to find him unnerving.) This gives him starting scores of Physical-3, Mental-5, Social-2, and Spirit-3.

Note!

There is a fundamental incompatibility between Mental and Spirit. Partly, this is because they work with radically different magic types, but mostly it's because they represent almost opposite ways of viewing the world. Therefore, if your Spirit score is above four or if your Mental score is above three, you take a penalty. Decrease the lower ability by the same amount that the higher ability is over the limit. **You can't take a penalty that would drop you to zero.** This means that if the penalty would drop you to zero, you either can't take that many ranks in the dominant ability, or you have to spend more points to increase the rank of the lesser ability. This only applies at character creation, however.

Examples:

Tsuzuki's Spirit is five. That's one above the limit, so he has to reduce his Mental by one. This gives him adjusted scores of Physical-2, Mental-2, Social-2, and Spirit-5.

Tatsumi's Mental is five. That's two above the limit; he drops his Spirit by two. This gives him adjusted scores of Physical-3, Mental-5, Social-2, and Spirit-1.

Skills

This is a classless system; it's based more on skills. Each ability has three skills associated with it.

Physical skills are Athletics, Combat, and Toughness. Athletics is a measure of how good you are at running, jumping, dodging, swimming, etc. Combat is a measure of how adept you are at hurting people and avoiding being hurt. Toughness is a measure of how well you resist fatigue and your ability to take a hit.

Mental skills are Investigation, Technology, and Arcane Spells. Investigation is a measure of your ability to use logic, and find and interpret clues. Technology is a measure of your ability to use advanced tech, like computers, and making it do what you want. Arcane Magic reflects your ability to cast spells, and is covered in a later section.

Social skills are Deception, Diplomacy, and Convincing. Deception is a measure of your ability to bluff, conceal, and confuse people. Diplomacy is a measure of your ability to change the way others feel about you. Convincing is a measure of your ability to get people to do what you want.

Spirit skills are Empathy, Spirit Powers, and Summoning. Empathy is a measure of how sensitive you are to other people's emotions. Spirit Powers represents how well you can use special powers; this is covered in a later section. Summoning is a measure of how good you are at summoning spirits to do your bidding. This is covered in a later section.

Skills have ranks as well, and each rank costs on point. You get the number of skill points by multiplying the associated ability score by two. Points can be distributed any way you choose. You do not have to have a rank in a skill if you do not choose to, except for Spirit Powers, which has to have at least one rank.

Examples:

Tsuzuki has a two in Physical. That gives him four skill points for Physical skills. He's not terribly Athletic and doesn't like Combat, so these both get ones. He puts the other two points into Toughness; he may not like fighting, but he can take some abuse. He has a Mental of two, so that's four Mental skill points. Primarily, he's a detective, so Investigation gets a three. However, he can barely use a computer, so Technology gets a one. He wouldn't know an Arcane Spell if it bit him, so he doesn't put any ranks in that. For Social, Deception and Diplomacy get ones; he's not very good at either. Convincing gets a two; he's a little better at talking people into things. He's got a five in Spirit; this is what he does and does well. Empathy and Spirit Powers both get twos; he can be a little oblivious and hasn't concentrated on learning more Powers. But he's a Summoning powerhouse, with six ranks.

Tsuzuki's character sheet now looks like this:

Physical - 2
*   Combat - 1*
*   Athletics - 1*
*   Toughness - 2*
Mental - 2
*   Investigation - 3*
*   Technology - 1*
*   Arcane Spells - 0*
Social - 2
*   Deception - 1*
*   Diplomacy - 1*
*   Convincing - 2*
Spirit - 5
*   Empathy - 2*
*   Spirit Powers - 2*
*   Summoning - 6*

Mechanics

This is a good place to explain how the mechanics of this game work. Basically, this is what you do with the numbers.

This runs on a d6 base core mechanic, which means you only need regular six-sided dice to play. But you need a lot of them.

The basic system works on a "number of successes" principle. Basically, the GM will specify a target number, and a number of successes needed to accomplish a certain action. The goal is to roll that number or higher as that many times or more. The target numbers range 1-6, since we're just using d6s here. Generally speaking, the higher the target number, the more raw skill necessary to accomplish the task. The number of successes range 1-10. Usually, the number of successes needed is a reflection of the complexity of the task. Targets are noted like this: X,Yx. X is the target number, Y is the number of successes. So, if you were trying to meet a target of three, with two successes, it would look like this: 3,2x. The more successes you have (and the higher the successes), the better you did. If you fail a check, the number of successes you were short is an indication of how badly you did.

This is where the ranks come in. They tell you how many dice you get to roll. The most common type of roll is a skill-check. You take the ranks of the relevant skill and add half of the associated ability, rounding down. Then you roll that many dice.

Example:

Tsuzuki is trying to catch a fleeing suspect (an Athletics roll). Not being a particularly athletic man, he has a Physical of 2 and an Athletics of 1. This gives him two dice to roll (1 for Physical + 1 for Athletics). He's rolling for a target of 4 (she's fast!), and needs one success (4,1x). He rolls, and gets a three and a two. Neither one is a success, and the suspect gets away.

Sometimes you'll be trying to do something, and two skills apply, such as (Combat + Athletics) for trying to shoot someone, or (Investigation + Technology) for trying to find important clues on a hard-drive. This is a double-skill check. You get the number of dice by adding both relevant skills.

Example:

Hisoka is showing off in a sharpshooting contest. Guns fall into the Combat category, but Athletics also apply. He has a 4 in Physical, a 3 in Combat, and a 3 in Athletics. He can use the two skill bids together, giving him 6 dice to roll. To win the contest, he needs four successes of three (3,4x). He rolls and gets 2 twos, a three, a four, and 2 sixes. He wins the contest easily.

If a double-skill check comes up, you can either use the two skills, or you can use the single skill check, which ever is higher.

Example:

*In the sharpshooting contest, Hisoka could have chosen to make a straight Combat check or a straight Athletics check instead of the double-skill check. A straight Combat check would give him five dice (1/2*5+3), as would a straight Athletics check. The double-skill check is better with six dice, so that's what he uses.*

Occasionally, you'll need to make a check for something where no skill really applies. In this case, you can make an Ability check, where the number of dice you can roll is equal to your ability score.

> *Example:*
>
> > *Watari is trying to remember what a specific chemical does. The container is unlabeled, and there are no notes, so it's just a straight Mental check. He has a six in Mental, so he gets six dice. Watari keeps a lot of random chemicals in his lab, but he's worked with them for a long time, so he needs two successes of five (5,2x). He rolls and gets a one, a two, a four, and 2 fives. He just barely makes it, and finally remembers what it does.*

The other type of check is an opposed check. This is what happens if you're being opposed by another character (player or otherwise). This could be arm wrestling, chess, an argument, gambling, whatever. Especially combat. Combat is always opposed. In this case, make a skill check, a double-skill check, or an ability check as usual. The target number is announced, but there is no set number of successes. Instead, both parties roll their dice, and whoever gets the highest number of successes wins.

> *Example:*
>
> > *Tsuzuki and Hisoka get into a food fight. There is nothing remotely shaped like a weapon, so this is an Athletics roll. Tsuzuki has a Physical of 2 and an Athletics of 1, while Hisoka has a Physical of 4 and an Athletics of 3. Tsuzuki gets two dice, and Hisoka gets five. Three is declared to be the target. It's only a food fight, after all. Tsuzuki gets a five and a six, giving him two successes. Hisoka gets two ones, a two, a three and a six. This also gives him two successes.*

In case of a tie in opposed checks, both parties roll one more die each, same target number. Whoever gets the highest success wins.

> > *They roll to break the tie. Tsuzuki gets a three, a success. Hisoka gets a five, a higher success. Tsuzuki puts up a valiant fight, but Hisoka emerges the victor (and cleaner).*

It is possible that you might not be able to make a check, because too many successes are needed. This is an automatic failure.

Special Abilities

Arcane Magic

This refers to a character's ability to use spells. Each spell has a point cost. A character has spell-points available equal to his score in Arcane Spells.

Spells have ranks, and can be improved over time (see Improvement). A higher rank means that more impressive or farther reaching effects are possible. However, once a spell rank is purchased, those points are gone. They can't be traded out for a different spell. Unspent points can be saved.

There are five spells. (GMs should feel free to add their own.)

- Shadow - 4 points per rank. This spell manipulates existing shadows. You could change a shadow, cause a shadow to become tangible, animate shadows, etc.

- Flame - 4 points per rank. This spell creates and/or manipulates fire. You could control an existing fire, start a fire, create the ever-popular fireball, etc.
- Earth - 3 points per rank. This spell manipulates earth. You could change the ground into quicksand, turn a stone into sand, cause an earthquake, etc.
- Water - 2 points per rank. This spell creates and/or manipulates water. You could create water, purify existing water, cause the water cooler to attack someone, etc.
- Air - 2 points per rank. This spell manipulates air. You could create a breathable atmosphere, pressurize an area, or create a gust of wind.

Example:

    Tatsumi has a five in Arcane Spells, so he has five points to buy spells with. He decides to get one rank of Shadow. This leaves him with one spell-point. If he increased his Arcane Spells skill, he could get more points.

This magic system relies heavily on the player's description of what they want the magic to do. Magic can be made to do anything that the user can imagine, within reason. Basically, the player describes the effect they want. GMs have the final say on what is within reason for a given spell. They are encouraged to allow highly inventive or very well described uses of magic, as long as the desired effect is appropriate for the rank of the spell.

Example:

    Tatsumi gets into a fight with a homicidal doctor. He wants to use his Shadow spell to call forth the surrounding shadows into life and have them attack the doctor. He describes it particularly well, and the GM decides that he can animate some of the smaller shadows (he only has Shadow 1, after all.)

The only problem with arcane magic is that it's tiring to use. After successfully casting a spell, the character needs to make a Toughness roll vs. (Point cost of the spell), (Rank of spell)x. If they make the roll, then they're fine. If they fail the roll but had some successes, they become fatigued (see Combat). If they don't make any successes, then they pass out. This means that if the character's Toughness score is too low, they're going to have a problem casting spells.

Example:

    After using his Shadow spell to create living shadows in a combat, Tatsumi must make a Toughness roll. Shadow is a four point spell and Tatsumi only has one rank, so his target is 4,1x. He has a Physical of three and a Toughness of two, so he gets three dice. He gets a two, a three, and a four, which is one success. He feels slightly tired, but he's fine to keep fighting if necessary.

Spirit Powers

All Shinigami have some sort of spirit power; that's part of the benefit. A character has a number of powers equal to his Spirit Powers rank. Individual powers don't have a rank; you either have it or you don't. Powers can be maintained for a total

number of minutes equal to the Spirit Powers rank times five. After that period, the character must wait for at least twice that time before using spirit powers again.

There are seven powers. (Feel free to add your own.)

- Invisibility - This allows the user to become invisible. While this power is active, the character cannot be seen or heard. The character can still interact with the environment, but doing so causes invisibility to drop for a short period.
- Intangibility - The user becomes intangible. While this power is active, the user cannot be attacked, nor can they interact with the environment.
- Flight - The user is able to fly. While this power is active, the character hovers in midair approximately fifty feet off the ground, and can maneuver. Speed inversely affects maneuver ability; the faster you fly, the clumsier it is.
- Jump - The user is able to jump to extreme heights. While this power is active, the character can make a standing jump of up to a hundred and fifty feet.
- Warp - The user can warp himself. While this power is active, the character is able to 'warp', that is, move to a different location without having had covered the intervening distance. The character can warp to any place he can see within a hundred feet.
- Swiftness - The user becomes remarkably fast. While active, this allows the character to move almost too fast to be seen. However, this increased speed means that the user cannot make any skill rolls because he is moving too fast to perceive his surroundings.
- Telekinesis - The user is able to move things with his mind. While active, this allows the character to move objects of up to fifty pounds. Some manipulation is possible, but not operating the object; you could pick a gun up and move it around, but you could not fire it.

Example:

> *Tsuzuki has a Spirit Powers score of two, so he can get two powers. He chooses Invisibility and Flight. He can use them, in any combination or order, for a total of ten minutes. After that, though, he can't use either for another twenty minutes.*

Using two or more powers at once is tricky. To do so, the user must make a Spirit Powers check vs. 3, (Number of Active Powers)x. If the check is failed, all active powers are dropped.

Example:

> *Tsuzuki is spying on a suspect. He thinks that the best thing to do is to become invisible, so he does. However, the suspect goes into an apartment on the third floor. If he flies, Tsuzuki can get close enough to hear. He starts to activate Flight, requiring a check for having two powers active. He has a Spirit of five and a Spirit Powers of two. This will give him four dice to roll against a target of 3,2x. He rolls three twos and a three. Oops. His concentration fails, and he becomes visible as he hits the ground.*

Summoning

This is the ability to call spirits to fight for you. Each summon has a point cost, and a character has summons points equal to his rank in Summoning. Spent points are gone for good, but unspent points can be saved up. Summons do not have a rank. A summoned spirit will stay until the end of combat or until dismissed. To summon, the character must make a Summoning check vs. (Point cost of summon),2x.

There are eight summons. (As always, feel free to add your own.)

- Suzaku - 6 points; this is the great firebird spirit. If someone who can summon her is in mortal danger, there is a chance that she will appear without being summoned (GM's discretion.)
- Byakko - 6 points; this is the great white tiger of the wind.
- Sohryu - 6 points; this is the dragon spirit of water.
- Genbu - 6 points; this is the great turtle spirit of the earth.
- Touda - 4 points; fire snake spirit. His abilities are one of the few things that can actually kill a Shinigami, and using him is dangerous, since he often does not distinguish between you and your opponents
- Kijin - 4 points; a lesser dragon water spirit
- Rikugo - 1 point; the six-eyed astrologer spirit. He really doesn't have much combat value; he is mostly called on to provide guidance and divination
- Riko - 1 point; a cactus defensive spirit. Yes, a cactus. Quite possibly one of the oddest summons. His abilities are almost all defensive and water-based. However, if pressed, he can attack.

  Example:

  Tsuzuki has a six in Summoning, so he has six points to spend on summons. He decides to go all out, and gets the Suzaku summon, spending all his points.

  Later on, Tsuzuki is confronted by a vampire, so he summons Suzaku. He has a Spirit of five and a Summoning of six, giving him eight dice. Suzaku is a six point summon, so his target is 6,2x. He rolls a two, a three, four fours, and two sixes. He just barely makes it, and Suzaku appears to lay waste to the vampire.

Summoning can be just as, or even more tiring than magic. After a successful summon, the character must make a Toughness check vs. the same target as the summons check. If the check is successful, there are no further effects. If the check is failed, then the character becomes fatigued. If there are no successes, then the character passes out.

  Example:

  After summoning Suzaku, Tsuzuki must make a Toughness roll. He has a Physical of two and a Toughness of two, giving him three dice. His target is the same: 6,2x. He gets a two, a three, and a five, which is no successes. It took too much energy to summon Suzaku, so he hits the ground, unconscious.

The Secrecy Rule

One of the rules of the Shinigami is that mortals can't be allowed to see them exhibit supernatural abilities. This means that a Shinigami who is caught using magic, spirit powers, or summoning by a mortal is in some pretty major trouble. Spirit powers are bad, magic is worse, summoning can get you fired. This should discourage effects-happy Shinigami from casually using their powers in public.

Combat

Combat is determined just like everything else, mechanics wise. It's just an opposed check. However, it does not stop there. When two characters fight, then there's the very real possibility that they'll hurt each other. Unless one party is using a ranged weapon and the other one isn't, the winner of the combat check does damage to the other, in the form of wounds. (If only one is using a ranged weapon, then he won't take wounds if he loses.) Ranged combat is Combat-Athletics, melee is straight Combat, and actively dodging is straight Athletics. The number of wounds is determined by a Toughness roll, where the target is (Original Target),(Opponent's Number of Successes)x. (Tie-breaker successes don't count.) If the check is failed, then the character takes a number of wounds equal to how many successes he was short.

> *Example:*
>
> *Hisoka is facing off with a dangerous killer. At the moment, he's trying to shoot him. The killer doesn't have a gun, so Hisoka isn't in any danger of taking wounds right now. Hisoka rolls a Combat-Athletics check vs. the killer's Athletics. Hisoka has three in both Combat and Athletics, so he gets six dice. The killer has a four in Physical and two in Athletics, so he gets four. The target is four. Hisoka rolls three threes, a four, and two sixes, giving him three successes. The killer rolls a one, a two, a three, and a four, giving him one success. Hisoka shoots him. The killer must now make a Toughness roll vs. 4, 3x. He has a three in Toughness, giving him five dice. He rolls two ones, a three, a five, and a six, giving him two successes. He takes one wound.*
>
> *Hisoka's had his turn, now it's the killer's. He rushes him, attacking head-on. This time it's just a straight Combat roll. The killer has a three in Combat, so he gets five dice, as does Hisoka. The target is four. Hisoka gets two threes, a five, and two sixes, for three successes. The killer gets two ones, a four, and two fives, also three successes. Hisoka gets a three on the tie-breaker, the killer gets six. Hisoka gets hit. His Toughness is two; he gets four dice, and his target is 4, 3x. He gets two twos and two fives. He takes one wound.*

Combat is divided into rounds, consisting of each person involved acting once, started with who ever declared the challenge. (Alternatively, the players could roll for it, high roll acting first.)

Example:

> *It's Hisoka's turn again, so that means it's the start of a new round. He has a few choices; he could try to shoot the guy again, he could make a straight melee attack, or he could try to summon or activate a spirit power.*

Summoning, casting a spell, and using a spirit power all count as the character's one action. Also, a character can move up to fifty feet and still attack. He can move eighty feet without attacking.

Example:

> *Hisoka is at a disadvantage in melee combat with this guy, so he decides to activate his Warp spirit power. He uses it to Warp a hundred feet away, where he has the advantage. He cannot attack this turn, however.*

Sometimes, a character will enter a combat late. When this happens, they take their turn after everyone else has gone.

Example:

> *Tatsumi has come to Hisoka's aid. Since he's entering combat late, the killer gets to go first. The killer starts to close the distance, but he can't quite make it before his turn's over. He gets to twenty feet away from Hisoka. Now it's Tatsumi's turn. He's not all that great at combat, having a three in Physical, and twos in Athletic and Combat. But he can still take a shot at the killer. He makes a ranged attack, with four dice. The killer also has four. The target is four. Tatsumi rolls a one, two twos, and a three, for no successes. The killer rolls a four, two fives, and a six, four successes. However, since Tatsumi is not in melee, he isn't threatened. He missed horribly, but he didn't take any damage himself.*

Wounds measure how much damage a character has taken. A normal human can take ten wounds before they die; a Shinigami can take twenty. In addition, a Shinigami that has taken one or two wounds will regenerate two rounds later. Three to five wounds can be regenerated over a period of hour. Six to ten wounds take a day, eleven to fifteen take two days, and sixteen to nineteen take a week. At twenty, you're dead.

Example:

> *It's the next round. Hisoka took a wound two rounds ago, but it regenerates now, so he doesn't have any wounds.*

Getting severely wounded can cause fatigue. Once a character hits half of their wound levels, they must make a Toughness check vs. (Combat Target Number), 3x. If they fail, they become fatigued. If no successes are scored, the character passes out. Fatigue means that the character can only use half the number of dice that he normally could on checks. Note: this condition also applies to spell casters or summoners who fail their Toughness checks. Fatigue lasts until the character rests.

Example:

> *Between the two of them, Tatsumi and Hisoka have managed to do a respectable amount of damage to the killer, bringing him to five wounds (half level for a human.) He makes a Toughness check, rolling five dice, with a target of 4,3x. He gets a one, a two, a three, and two fours, for two successes. He fails the check and is fatigued. He can only use half his normal amount of dice for all checks.*

If a character reaches the half mark, and makes their Toughness check, then they can keep fighting at their normal level. However, every time they take a wound after that,

they must make another Toughness check, same target or become fatigued. Once a character has taken three-quarters of their wound levels (round up), they must make a Toughness save vs. (Combat target), 4x, or lose consciousness. Unconscious characters can take no actions and automatically fail all tests. An hour after losing consciousness, the character can make a Toughness check, same target, to wake up. If they fail the check, they can try again in another hour. If they fail that check, then it will take them a day to recover.

Characters and creatures

NPCs (Non-Player characters) are built exactly like player characters, mechanics wise. Some of the numbers are different, as follows.
- o Straight humans start off with a zero in Spirit, just they start with zero in the other three abilities, and have ten ability points to spend. Their ability maximums are six. They don't have access to the Spirit Powers skill, and only special purpose NPCs should have access to Arcane Spells or Summoning.
- o Creatures - usually, there isn't much point in stating out anything other than their Physical skills. You'll have to stat creatures out yourself; I'll just provide the baseline, which is that average for a human is a three (for abilities). A creature is defined as any non-human, non-spirit, and non-demon. They don't have access to Arcane Spells, Technology, Spirit Powers, or Summoning.
- o Spirits - again, use your imagination. The only real purpose to stat these out at all is so you have their combat stats for summoning. Spirits do not have access to Summoning, Arcane Spells, Spirit Powers, or Technology. Feel free to get creative with their attacks; just keep within their associated element.
    - ▪ Six point spirit-summons (Suzaku, Byakko, Sohryu, and Genbu) have their abilities maxed out at eight, with skills focused on combat and athletics. They have sixty wound levels.
    - ▪ Four point spirit-summons (Touda and Kijin) have their abilities at seven, focusing on combat and athletics. They have forty wound levels.
    - ▪ One point spirit summons (Rikugo and Riko) have their abilities at six, and are generally only defensive. They have thirty wound levels. Rikugo has access to the Mental skill of Astrology and the Spirit skill of Divination. Use of either is solely at the GM's discretion. They are used to gain hints about the future (but never more than a hint.)
- o Demons - They probably have the biggest variation in stats. There is a vague hierarchy, based on power. Demons commonly have access to Arcane Spells, but not to Spirit Powers or Summoning. Instead of Spirit Powers, demons have Demon Powers, which are much the same thing. If you want a rough guideline, a greater demon lord is comparable to a six-point spirit-summon, a lesser demon lord is comparable to a four-point summon, a greater demon is comparable to a one-point summon, and a lesser demon is comparable to a Shinigami.

Improvement

Players can earn experience points to improve their characters. This is a slow process, however. A player can earn 1-3 experience points per session. This can be for anything, such as staying in character, accomplishing a plot point, surviving a particularly hellacious combat, or even just role-playing in a memorable way. It's completely up to the GM.

Experience points are spent to improve the character. It costs eight experience points to raise an ability by one rank. It costs two experience points to increase a skill by one rank. Increasing an ability will increase the number of skill points available in that ability, and raising a skill will increase any derived factors, such as Arcane Spells, Spirit Powers, and Summons.

If you choose to, once the characters have maxed out, you can move this to higher levels by increasing the ability maximums and possibly moving up a die size, and changing the target numbers accordingly.

Notes and Ramblings

This is the first time I've created an RPG for the 24-Hour RPG Project. I foolishly started at midnight, partly because I was bored and partly because I needed to stay up all night to get my sleep cycle back on track. Well, in the end, I wasn't bored, but I was lucky to be conscious.

A few notes on *Shinigami Chronicles*. This is heavily inspired by the excellent anime and manga, *Yami no Matsuei (Descendants of Darkness)*. The basic concept, as well as the example characters came out of it. *By the way, *Yami no Matsuei*, Tsuzuki Asato, Kurosake Hisoka, Watari Yutaka, and Tatsumi Seiichiro don't belong to me. Neither do the assorted Shikigami (spirit-summons). I don't own them, I didn't make any money off of this. If you want to get picky about copyright, consider this a fan work, and leave me alone.* If you're having a problem figuring out what kind of plots to run, I highly advise either watching or reading the series. (Avoid the English dub though; it sucks.) Fair warning: there's quite a bit of shonen-ai and implied and occasionally explicit yaoi.

Probably the hardest part of this was coming up with a system that I felt would work. (Granted, this hasn't been playtested as of this writing, but I think it would work.) I quite prefer rules-light systems myself; to me, the best part was always the story. The dice rolling just got in the way. By the way, this is an excellent place to make a point I probably should have made in the Mechanics section (but am too lazy to go back and fix it at this point.) The GM should only ask for a roll when necessary, and as seldom as possible. If it's not dramatically important, don't ask for a roll. If it's really easy, don't ask for a roll. There isn't any point at all in asking for a roll when the target number is one, and rarely is there a point when the target number is two.

Anyway. I wanted a fairly streamlined system without much math, and I think I got that in an acceptable way, especially since this is the first system I've ever created. I know that it probably bears a remarkable resemblance to the FUDGE system, possibly to the official d6 mechanics, and I have no idea about dice pool mechanics. I probably have encountered these things before, and I liked them. That's why what I came up with seems fairly intuitive to me.

Some people might take issue with the way I've handled combat. They can do that, but I had a reason. I wanted to minimalize the combat system as much as possible and still stay within my core mechanics. The actual combat mechanics were always my least favorite part of any system, because they were necessarily much more complicated and took much more time to work with. That's why I didn't take any kinds of weapons statistics into account. Overall, I felt they weren't that important. If you feel the need for weapons statistics, feel free to work them out yourself. Just leave me out of it.

Another issue people might have is the way Shinigami seem to be encouraged to favor Spirit and Spirit-based skills. Yes. It's supposed to be like that. Shinigami are the detectives of the afterlife; you can't become one without developing a close tie to the spirit world. In a sense, Shinigami are part of the spirit world. So things connected with it should come a little easier. And believe me, I reigned back some on what I wanted to do. My original version of Summoning didn't really have a drawback at all. I think I made it more or less balanced when I added the Fatigue check.

Speaking of Summoning, if you want to create different spirit-summons, go for it. The spirits I've presented are also from *Yami*, which is why their names are all Japanese. If you go back further than that, they're also based on Japanese mythology to some extent. Except maybe Riko. I don't know where that came from. I like the idea of the spirit-summons reflecting the "four elements" thing that the Arcane Spells have. I didn't start out to do that; it just kind of happened.

So, anyway. I think that the system itself is fairly stable and workable. I might tweak it some later, but I think I like it the way it is. I also think that I've come about as far as I will content-wise, at least for now. I think any world restrictions I imposed would just limit what a GM could come up with. I know how I would run a Shinigami Chronicles game; I also know how a friend of mine would run one, and neither is remotely like the other. You can make this world as dark or as mysterious as you want. Just because I would concentrate on a horror theme doesn't mean you have to. Later, I may flesh it out more, but not as part of the 24 Hour Project. I'm too damn tired.

Right now, I've been working on this for about fifteen hours, I guess. Like I said, I started at midnight. I shoved a CD into the comp, hit the "loop" button, and forgot about it. (I swear to God that at this moment, it's playing "Who Needs Sleep?") When I decided to do it, I got several ideas right away, and the best one turned out to be this. I may keep the system and design something else using these mechanics; I haven't decided. I spent about… oh, five hours, I guess, working out the system mechanics, and about seven more working out how the Shinigami would work with this system. The rest of the time was spent typing my interesting collection of random notes and making it reasonably coherent. Plus about an hour break to shove food in me and run some errands. (Partly because I needed to run errands, partly because my wrists had given out, and partly because I needed food badly.) I've discovered the freezing pineapple makes it

sweeter apparently. What does that have to do with anything? As Rick O'Connell would say, "Not a damn thing."

I'm starting to ramble, so I guess I'll call it quits. Sadly, this typed version is probably as pretty as it will get for the 24 Hour Project; I have the artistic skills of a squid, and I am *not* up to several more hours of graphic manipulation at the moment. My hands would fall off. Or I'd develop carpal tunnel syndrome. One of the two. Occasional interesting fonts and functional formatting is about as good as it gets for this kind of thing.

See ya, cowboy.

~ Megan Marie McKnight
     Die hard mad scientist cosplayer, confirmed RPG addict, rabid anime
     Freak, student of esoteric lore, and all around goofball
           - April 28, 2005

Character Sheet

Name–   Former Occupation–

    Physical –
        Combat –
        Athletics –
        Toughness –
    Mental –
        Investigation –
        Technology –
        Arcane Spells –
            Spell –   Spell –
            Spell –   Spell –
            Spell –
    Social –
        Deception –
        Diplomacy –
        Convincing –
    Spirit –
        Empathy –
        Spirit Powers –
            Power –   Power –
            Power –   Power –
            Power –   Power –
            Power –
        Summoning –
            Summon–   Summon–
            Summon–   Summon–
            Summon–   Summon–
            Summon–   Summon–

Cause of Death–

Reason for Becoming a Shinigami–

Sample Characters
Character Sheet

Name– Tsuzuki   **Former Occupation–** Unemployed

Physical – 2

Combat – 1

Athletics – 1

Toughness – 2

Mental – 2

Investigation – 3

Technology – 1

Arcane Spells – 0

Spell –	**Spell –**
Spell –	**Spell –**
Spell –	

Social – 2

Deception – 1

Diplomacy – 1

Convincing – 2

Spirit – 5

Empathy – 2

Spirit Powers – 2

Power –	Invisibility	**Power –**
Power –	Flight	**Power –**
Power –		**Power –**
Power –		

Summoning – 6

Summon–	Suzaku	**Summon–**
Summon–		**Summon–**
Summon–		**Summon–**
Summon–		**Summon–**

Cause of Death– Suicide   **Reason for Becoming a Shirigani–**

Attempting to make up for what he perceives as horrible sins

Character Sheet

Name– Hisoka　　　　　　　　**Former Occupation–** Student

Physical – 4

Combat – 3

Athletics – 3

Toughness – 2

Mental – 3

Investigation – 4

Technology – 2

Arcane Spells – 0

Spell –　　　　　　**Spell –**
Spell –　　　　　　**Spell –**
Spell –

Social – 2

Deception – 2

Diplomacy – 1

Convincing – 1

Spirit – 3

Empathy – 3

Spirit Powers – 2

Power – Invisibility　　**Power –**
Power – Warp　　　　**Power –**
Power –　　　　　　**Power –**
Power –

Summoning – 1

Summon – Riko　　　**Summon –**
Summon –　　　　　**Summon –**
Summon –　　　　　**Summon –**
Summon –　　　　　**Summon –**

Cause of Death– Murdered

Reason for Becoming a Shinigami– Get revenge on his killer

Character Sheet

Name– Watari   **Former Occupation–** Scientist/Chemist

    Physical – 1

        Combat – 0

        Athletics – 1

        Toughness – 1

    Mental – 5

        Investigation – 4

        Technology – 6

        Arcane Spells – 0

            Spell –   **Spell –**
            Spell –   **Spell –**
            Spell –

    Social – 3

        Deception – 2

        Diplomacy – 2

        Convincing – 2

    Spirit – 1

        Empathy – 1

        Spirit Powers – 1

            Power – Flight   **Power –**
            Power –   **Power –**
            Power –   **Power –**
            Power –

        Summoning – 0

            Summon –   **Summon –**
            Summon –   **Summon –**
            Summon –   **Summon –**
            Summon –   **Summon –**

Cause of Death– Freak lab explosion

Reason for Becoming a Shinigami– Continue his life's work of trying to create a gender-changing serum

Character Sheet

Name– Tatsumi   **Former Occupation–** Accountant

    Physical – 3

        Combat – 2

        Athletics – 2

        Toughness – 2

    Mental – 5

        Investigation – 3

        Technology – 2

        Arcane Spells – 5

            Spell – Shadow 1   **Spell –**

            Spell –   **Spell –**

            Spell –   One spell point saved

    Social – 1

        Deception – 0

        Diplomacy – 1

        Convincing – 1

    Spirit – 1

        Empathy – 0

        Spirit Powers – 2

            Power – Jump   **Power –**

            Power – Swiftness   **Power –**

            Power –   **Power –**

            Power –

        Summoning – 0

            Summon–   **Summon–**

            Summon–   **Summon–**

            Summon–   **Summon–**

            Summon–   **Summon–**

Cause of Death– Illness

Reason for Becoming a Shinigami– Wanted to take care of his mother