Sometimes the Game Master may want to quickly sum up an encounter rather than track every action round by round. “Quick Encounters” resolve these kinds of situations with good collaborative storytelling, tension, and risk.

**When to Use These Rules:** Use Quick Encounters when you’re pressed for time, the group isn’t as interested in tactical fights, or they do something the GM isn’t prepared for, like infiltrating a large complex she hasn’t detailed.

**The Basics:** Characters make a skill roll based on the type of encounter and their goal and interpret the results narratively with the Game Master.

**Encounter Types**

No Action Cards are dealt in a Quick Encounter. Instead, the GM describes the scene, then the players agree on a general plan and what each of their characters will do.

Once everyone states their intent, they can pick the skill that best represents their actions during the encounter.

Here are some examples:

- **CHASE**: Driving, Repair, Shooting, Common Knowledge (for navigation).
- **COMBAT**: Fighting, Shooting, Spellcasting.
- **CRISIS**: Athletics, Persuasion (to calm bystanders), Repair.
- **HEIST**: Notice, Hacking, Stealth, Thievery.
- **MISSION**: Battle, Boating, Fighting, Persuasion, Piloting, Shooting.
- **TREK**: Common Knowledge, Notice, Survival.

**Modifiers:** The GM should assign modifiers based on the situation. If the heroes greatly outnumber their opposition, pursue much slower prey, have prior experience with the obstacles in their path, or special equipment to deal with hazards, the roll might be made at +1 to +4.

Very difficult encounters, such as powerful foes (relative to the party), faster prey, or extreme conditions inflict a −1 to −4 penalty.

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**Turn Order & Critical Actions**

Players can go in whatever order they want in a Quick Encounter. This might be important if some of their actions are dependent on someone else’s. In a heist, for example, the group might depend on the hacker to shut down a company’s security measures before they can break in. Similarly, the crew of a B-17 in *Weird War Two* might need the navigator to get them to the mission location before they can fend off enemies and bomb a target.

Resolve these kinds of actions in the order that makes sense, and allow those who come after to change their own plans as the situation changes.

If a critical task is failed, the GM must decide if it stops the encounter or simply complicates it (perhaps inflicting a penalty to everyone else’s roll). In the heist example above, for example, maybe the hacker does break in but alerts the guards, inflicting a −2 penalty to Stealth or combat rolls and possibly turning the operation deadly. In the *Weird War Two* example, the navigator might still get them to the location but arrives just as the enemy fighters respond and make things more difficult.

These kinds of complications might also mean resolving the encounter in multiple stages instead of one roll as the heroes must react to the changing circumstances (see **Staged Encounters**, below).

**Staged Encounters**

Quick Encounters are typically a single die roll followed by some narration between the GM and the players. But some encounters might need additional rounds to better reflect the results or any new information or events that come to light.

If the heist to break into a pawn shop and steal a powerful occult artifact goes badly, for example, the next stage might become a crisis when the shop suddenly bursts into supernatural flames. That might then lead to a combat encounter as an artifact in the shop breaks and releases an angry djinn!

The beauty of staged encounters is their ability to handle complex problems when the constraints of time or larger narrative require a speedy resolution.
ENCOUNTER RESULTS

Once each player has determined her skill and any modifiers, she rolls the dice and works with the Game Master to narrate the details based on the total, the situation, and the other players’ actions.

DANGEROUS ENCOUNTERS

If a character fails his roll in a dangerous situation he takes a Wound (or d4 Wounds with a Critical Failure). If he’s the driver of a vehicle, it takes a Wound (or d4 with a Critical Failure) as well. (Remember that vehicles take Critical Hits when they take Wounds, see page 109. This does not cause a control roll, however.) Wounds may be Soaked as usual.

Success means the hero emerges with only Bumps & Bruises (page 125), and a raise means he escapes unscathed.

NONLETHAL ENCOUNTERS

If the encounter isn’t physically dangerous, Failure means the hero doesn’t contribute to the party’s overall success somehow. Critical Failure means she suffers social stigma, loses or breaks a piece of vital equipment, is positively identified, or gets the wrong information. This likely means moving on to a second stage of the encounter as she deals with the fallout of her errors.

SUCCESS & FAILURE

In general, narration and individual actions determine the success or failure of an encounter. If the hacker can’t get past a building’s security measures, for example, and the GM decides it shuts down the operation rather than complicating it, the encounter fails. In other words, let the story tell the tale.

In a more fluid situation such as combat, assume the group “wins” if there are at least as many total successes (one for each success and raise) as there are player characters. They get the information, drive off their foes, complete the mission, or avert (or escape) the crisis.

If there are less successes than player characters, they fail. Specifics are up to the Game Master, but might mean the party has to fall back or retreat from their foes, their prey escapes, they don’t get the object or data they were looking for, they survive the crisis but can’t save most of the bystanders, and so on.

If they can try again, the GM should “reset” the encounter with the new narrative so they have to come up with a new plan. If there’s opposition, their foes are likely on to them now!

EXAMPLE: NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Red and Gabe must break into a museum, steal an ancient book, and stop a global conspiracy that threatens all of humanity.

The group decides to play out the break-in as a Quick Encounter. Red plans to use Thievery to break into the museum, take the manuscript, then escape out the back. Gabe intends to use Hacking to shut down the building’s security system and make sure Red isn’t detected.

The GM decides Red’s Thievery test is at −2 unless Gabe can hack the system. A success reduces her penalty to −1, or 0 with a raise.

Unfortunately, Gabe fails. With the −2, Red gets a single success on her Thievery test. That’s one success and there are two player characters, so they fail the encounter.

The GM says several night watchmen now prowl through the museum. Red and Gabe can continue if they want, but the encounter is now more difficult (−2) and “dangerous.”

With the fate of the world at stake, the heroes agree to press on. Red now uses Stealth to avoid the guards. Gabe decides to distract them by knocking on the door and pretending to be a lost tourist! The GM tells him to use Performance and he rolls a 21! Both characters are successful, and Red secures the ancient manuscript!

“Priceless.”

—Red