

<p>Final Fantasy: Heaven's Rift November 14, 2009 Basic Rules and Scenario</p>

The following are the rules for *Final Fantasy: Heaven's Rift*, a real-time, real-space roleplaying game sponsored by the MIT Assassins' Guild. You are responsible for knowing these rules. Many of them are nigh-impossible to enforce and rely upon the honor system. Do not cheat. Do not abuse loopholes. Play fair. Be your own harshest critic.

The **gamemasters (GMs)** run the game. If you have any problems or questions concerning the game, contact a GM. Rulings they make are final. They may violate the letter of the rules to preserve the spirit. The GMs promise to be as fair and reasonable as possible. Neither they nor these rules are perfect.

This game is intended to be fun. Getting into character, roleplaying, being dramatic, and playing competitively can all increase the fun of the game. Do not take the game too seriously. Even if you are losing, keep a good attitude. When the game is over, the real winners are the players with the best stories.

This is only a game. Everyone involved should act with courtesy, sportsmanship, patience, and taste. The GMs may expel anyone they believe to be violating the spirit of the rules or the game. Emotions may run high. If you think things are crossing the line from game to reality too much, or if you are just getting too stressed, calm down and maybe take a break. Stay in control. Use common sense. Always, play safely, then play to have fun.

This game is a work of fiction. Although it may refer to things in the real world, it does so only for the sake of the scenario. It does not represent the opinions of the GMs or the MIT Assassins' Guild. These rules are modifications of those used in previous games. This game and all materials thereof are copyright 2009 by Danny Bates, Ken Clary, Peter Litwack, and the MIT Assassins' Guild.

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1 Scenario

The World: The Earth is a sparsely populated place. Despite this, it is host to a number of cultures of varying degrees of development and magical and technological advances.

Most of the known world is within four continents (and a scattered few islands). The Eastern Continent, sometimes called Centralia, is a varied land with hills, plains, mountain ranges, rivers, and lakes. It is the most populated of all the continents. The Western Continent, a close second in population, is dominated by expansive, rolling plains of grass and brush. The Southwestern Continent, with its few settlements, is mostly desert and hot, arid mountains. The Northern Continent, containing just a few tribes, is frozen tundra and snowy peaks.

The Eastern Continent: The land of Centralia has a rich and varied history to go with its rich and varied landscape. While it was once covered with small fiefdoms, it is now dominated by E.M.P.I.R.E. Over the past couple of centuries, numerous kingdoms have joined under the Imperial banner, some by force, some by diplomacy, and some by necessity. E.M.P.I.R.E. currently controls nearly all of the southern half of the Eastern Continent.

To the northwest is the Kingdom of Voltavia, an old and large kingdom dominated by many traditions. Advising the monarchy is the Tribe of Elders, who control the Church, which some say has more authority than the Queen. Voltavia is at war with E.M.P.I.R.E. Some say that Imperial forces simply wish to expand further and take control of Voltavia, while others say the war is the result of a secret Church decree in Voltavia. Whatever the cause and reason, the war is tearing through Voltavia and many northern Imperial provinces.

SABRE is a large and powerful megacorporation. Approximately fifty years ago, by buying out a few small fiefdoms, SABRE was able to start what was effectively its own country in the northeast, around the lands that supported its mining industry. The company no longer relies on mining as its primary source of revenue, but it has grown the Corporate Protectorate to dominate the northeast. It maintains aggressive trade relations with nearly every nation it has come in contact with, in any continent.

Close to the border with E.M.P.I.R.E. lies Kirin City. Kirin City is one of the four major cities within the Corporate Protectorate. It is a center of trade, sitting along the Road of Seasons, a truly ancient path of commerce which runs along the edge of the Windy Plains. Of course, the centerpiece of Kirin City is Shintsu Tower.

Shintsu Tower: The tower is ninety-seven stories tall, and is the tallest man-made structure in all of Centralia (but, as the story goes, not in all the world). It is neither as expansive nor as central to SABRE operations as the headquarters in the capitol, but it still an impressive sight. Its shimmering glass and gleaming steel is visible for many miles, from across even the entire expanse of the Windy Plains. On the ninetieth floor is the Grand Airship Dock (supporting all manner of dirigible and zeppelin), the crown jewel of Kirin City's transportation center.

As the sun set, something strange happened. A blinding flash of light and a magical explosion rocked the Tower, and a large volume of glowing red magical energy of indeterminate shape overtook portions of the upper floors. Those in the Grand Airship Dock (or, at least, what was the Grand Airship Dock) and the floors above are trapped. All passages to the lower floors have been blocked by fires (some magical, some not), collapsed rubble, and broken magi-tech systems.

The glowing red volume, which has overtaken large portions of the building, appears to be a dimensional rift of some sort. Some areas have been completely subsumed, while others have changed. Though there have been no sightings yet, all inside can hear the telltale sounds of monsters.

The Game: Game is set in a Final Fantasy-esque world, somewhat detailed above. It follows some of the styles and themes of the Final Fantasy games. It does not use the specific setting or characters of any of the games. If this were a Final Fantasy video game, the events of game would take place less than halfway through disc two (out of four).

One theme common in FF games is the combination and adaptation of many varied concepts, cultures, religions, and stories. This is optimized for impressive visuals and outlandish scenarios, not necessarily for a realistic or completely coherent world. You may see magical creatures, mythological icons, security droids, powerful wizards, medieval villages, corporate megatowers, and fantastical, load-bearing boss monsters. The world may contain airships, machine-guns, and high-powered lasers, but the most powerful warriors still wield swords (sometimes unbelievably large). Overtones of anime are moderate.

2 Getting Started

2.1 Character Packets

Your character packet is a big manila envelope. It contains your role: who you are, what you're up to; everything about your part as a **player-character (PC)** in the game. Read all the contents and generally keep them with you during the game. If you are missing something or find something which doesn't seem to belong to you, tell one of the GMs. Character packets are confidential. Game materials which cannot be given to other players are marked "Not Transferable," whereas things which can be given to others are marked "Freely Transferable" or "Game Item."

Name-Badge: A name-badge with your character name, player name, character description, and **badge number** on it shows that you are in the game; wear it visibly while you are playing. It represents your character's body in-game. Badge numbers are not in-game information. See the *Character Bodies* and *Badge Numbers* sections for more details.

Character Sheet: Your character sheet describes who you are and what you are up to. It contains a list of everything else that should be in your character packet. Do not show or read your character sheet to other players.

Bluesheets: A bluesheet describes information common to members of a group. When in conflict, character sheet information overrides bluesheet information. Do not show or read a bluesheet to other players.

Greensheets: A greensheet describes and expands abilities, mechanics, or in-game knowledge. Do not show or read a greensheet to other players.

Ability List: Your ability list lists all of your abilities, giving the limitations, costs, effects, and incant for each. It also lists your statistics. Do not show it to other players.

Memory/Event Packets: A memory packet is an envelope or stapled piece of paper with a **trigger** which describes when to open and read it. If the trigger is a number, open the packet when you see something with that number. If it's a quoted phrase, open when you hear or read it in-game. If it's a symbol, open when instructed. Do not take game action based on an unopened trigger. Do not show or read a memory packet to other players.

Items: In-game items may be transferred from character to character, and should be marked as such. See the *Items Etc.* section for more details.

2.2 Reality and Game Reality

There is a big difference between reality and game reality. Players must treat each other with courtesy and explain to each other what their characters perceive in confusing situations; e.g. "My character's hands are covered in blood," an **out-of-game** statement. Characters are under no such restrictions, and may do what it takes to further their goals; e.g. "Uh, hi Bob. Just got back from the butcher shop," an **in-game** statement.

Metagaming is inferring in-game knowledge that is inappropriate for your character from out-of-game information. Do your best to not metagame and especially to prevent the risk of metagaming. Be your own harshest critic.

Halts: A halt pauses game action. To call one, say "game halt" in a clear and audible voice; other players around a corner should hear you, but you shouldn't scare some poor grad student. End a halt by saying "three, two, one, resume." Call a halt for one of only three reasons: because a rule instructs you to, for safety and similar out-of-game issues, or to pause game and fetch a GM (which you should avoid).

Not-Here: You may go not-here by turning your name-badge around so the "I'm Not Here" side is showing (or by removing your badge entirely, if you are leaving game). Putting a hand on your head, visible from a distance, helps if you're near other players. Go not-here for one of only three reasons: because a rule instructs you to, to leave game, or to fetch a GM while in a halt (which you should avoid).

When you are not-here, your character is not there. Your character cannot see, hear, or remember any game actions or information you (the player) happen to encounter. Avoid other characters, common game areas, game signs, or any sort of game interaction.

Non-Players: Use tact and common sense when dealing with non-players (**NPs**). You are encouraged to spread the gospel of real-time, real-space roleplaying; however, many NPs prefer to sleep, study, or work undisturbed. If an NP comes across game action, call a halt, with "**NP halt!**" and politely let them through.

Observers: An observer is someone not playing the game who has agreed to watch. They generally wear an observer headband or an observer name-badge. Observers have traditionally been called "ghosts." They should stay out of the way; you can always ask an observer to leave. If a friend who is not playing wants to observe game, send them to the GMs.

Mechanics: Many actions your character can take, such as walking, talking, and general interaction with other characters, are represented by you doing them. Others, like combat, are performed via abstract mechanics, which are described in ability cards, greensheets, and rules. The abstract information for mechanics (like badge numbers) may not be discussed in-game. If you want to do something special for which there is no mechanic, ask a GM.

Become familiar with your mechanics before game starts, especially those which occur under time-pressure (like combat). Game action will not stop for memory packets, greensheets, or such.

A **kludge** (and derivative forms like "kludge-ite") is something impervious to logic and cleverness, usually for game-balance. You can't affect a kludge without a specified mechanic.

Zone of Control (ZoC) is a rough distance measurement. You are within ZoC of someone if your outstretched fingers can touch their outstretched fingers. Double-ZoC is twice this distance, triple-ZoC is three times, etc.

Headbands represent obvious visual effects; wear them visibly on your head. If you see a headband and don't know what it represents, ask. If you are wearing a headband, tell people what their characters see.

Safety: This is a game. Real violence is unacceptable. Game action should cause no real-world damage, either to people or property. If something dangerous is happening, call a halt. Stay in control, use common sense, and do not endanger yourself or others. You should not run or otherwise force your way into or through someone else's ZoC, and you should not make physical contact with another player without permission.

3 Items Etc.

Many in-game items are represented by little white cards with a number and description. Item cards may be shown to others, passed around, stolen, etc. The **item number** on the card is not in-game information and may not be discussed. Not all in-game items have cards or numbers; whatever they are represented by should be clearly marked “in-game item” or “freely transferable.”

Use common sense. You can't carry a hundred rocks in your pocket, fold a sword in half, or hide a life-sized statue in a fire hose. You can't stop a bullet with a set of blueprints or rip apart a metal safe with your bare hands. Even if your bag can carry a shovel in it, the shovel noticeably sticks out (“you see a shovel sticking out of my bag”).

Written Information: If you write in-game information down on a piece of paper, that paper is now an in-game item and must be clearly marked as such. Don't write in-game information on out-of-game documents (character sheet, etc.). Don't write out-of-game information (like memory packet triggers) on in-game documents.

Envelopes: Some items and locations may have an attached envelope (or just be a labeled packet or folded paper). The envelope may include directions for when to open these (“open packet if you press the big red button” or “open packet if you eat this”); otherwise you may only open them if instructed. Close them when you are done. Open and close packets gently.

Signs: Some locations and other game materials are represented by signs or packets posted throughout game area. You may read any signs and must follow any rules printed on them. If a sign or packet doesn't have some sort of in-game description (it only has out-of-game mechanics information, like a number or just a colored dot), then your character doesn't even see it or know that anything unusual is there.

Bulkiness: A bulky item is too big or heavy to be carried or concealed freely. Bulkiness is measured in **hands** or **dots** (how many hands it takes to carry it). If you are carrying a bulky item, make it clear to onlookers (hold the card). A hand carrying a bulky object may do nothing else. With one hand less than required, you may drag a bulky item at a slow pace.

Props: Some items may have props (physical representations or **physreps**) associated with them. The card and physrep should be kept together. If they are separated, the card is the real item. Prop items are as bulky as the physrep. They can be carried in bags that can hold them, on straps that are attached to them, etc.

Character Bodies: A body is two hands bulky and usually represented by a name-badge. It must be willing or unable to resist for you to carry it. Carry the badge conspicuously. Onlookers can't tell if it's dead without close examination, unless it would be obvious (like headless).

Searching, Stashing, and Stealing: To search a place, search it. Normal items can be stashed in any reasonable, legal place. Don't put items behind locked doors, inside ceilings, in construction sites, or in hacking locations; consequently, don't go rummaging through such places for game items. Don't stash or search in places that are not in-game; see the *Game Areas* section for more information.

All searches of characters or their belongings are conducted via player dialogue. Someone must be willing or unable to resist for you to search them. You need at least one free hand to search someone. Anyone within ZoC of either you or your victim can prevent the search by saying “I stop you” or an equivalent phrase. A search reveals all in-game items, and takes as long as your victim spends handing over possessions. If you're the victim, hand over items at a reasonable pace.

To search a **bag** in someone's possession, say “I search your bag.” Keep all bags with in-game items with you. You may not store more than **one** hand of bulkiness in any bag.

4 Combat and Magic

Combat is real-time and mostly based upon player skill at firing and dodging physreps. Keep it safe. Hits to anywhere on the body count the same; don't aim for the head. If a projectile hits clothing or long hair such that it would not hit the body when passing through, it doesn't count. Hits to an item you hold count as hits on you, not the item. If there is a conflict over whether or not a projectile hit, the shooter calls the shot.

In the heat of combat, people may have trouble hearing incants or noticing hits. If you cannot understand an incant, make it clear by calling "**Miscast**." Miscast skills and spells are not used up. Responses such as "**Resist**" and "**Dodge**" mean that an effect was recognized and negated.

Every character has an innate **Weapon Attack (WA)**, which is represented by dart gun combat (selecting the FIGHT command in a battle sequence). You are encouraged to costume your innate weaponry. You are also encouraged to wield your weapon props when using your dart gun (keep it safe). Your **Reload Penalty (RP)** stat is the number of times you must pass your dart gun around your body before you may cock it.

Hit Points and Death: Hit Points (**HP**) represent the amount of damage you can take or be healed. Your HP may not go below 0 or above its starting value. You are **dead** if you reach 0 HP. You may not move, talk, or take any game actions. You may play your body and remember anything you see or hear. You may not become an observer. Some things can bring you back to life. If you are hit by **Final Death**, you are totally dead and cannot come back. If finally dead, do not give out any information about your character or death to any players. You may play the part of your corpse. When you leave, place the front of your name-badge with "Final Death" written on it. Take the "I'm Not Here" side to wear. Stack your items with your body.

Default Damage: If there is no incant, **dart** and **nerf** gun hits do **1 HP** of damage. All other projectiles do no damage if there is no incant. If an attack has an incant, the incant is the entirety of the effects. Incants will specify damage. For example, if someone shoots you with a dart gun and says "Root," you are rooted but take no damage, and if someone shoots you with a dart gun and says "5 Damage," you take 5 damage instead of the default 1.

Spellcasting: Spells cost **Magic Points (MP)** to cast. Your MP may not go below 0 or above its starting value. A **touch** spell may only be cast on a willing target within ZoC. Spell **packets** are used for basic offensive spellcasting. A **Disc** spell is cast as a continuous spray of discs; if you are hit by one or more disc, the spell takes effect once and only once. When casting, fire at least 1 disc per second until you run out of the specified number of shots; a second or more pause ends the spell. You may restate the incant during a long disc spell for clarity. Wait at least **2 seconds** between disc spell castings.

Incants: Do not fake incants. Do not call incants for spells/skills without casting them for real. Speak clearly at a reasonable speed. Your weapon must be out and visible during the entire incant. Incants may state a magic **element**, e.g. "Ice Magic, 3 Damage." Similar elements, like "fire" and "flame," are the same. Incants may contain more info relevant to other mechanics. These are the basic incants you may encounter (touch spells may have other effects):

- **Damage**, as in "5 Damage," does the stated amount of damage.
- **Cure**, as in "Cure 5," heals the stated amount of damage.
- **Death** kills you instantly. **Final Death** kills you totally.
- **Life**, if you are dead, brings you back to life at 1 HP.
- **Root** causes 1 of your feet (your choice) to be stuck in place for 2 minutes.
- **Silence** makes you unable to speak or cast spells for 2 minutes; you may incant non-magic skills.
- **Sleep** makes you sleep magically for 2 minutes; you wake up early only if you take damage.
- **Protect** means that for 2 minutes, all damage you take is halved.
- **Shell** means that for 2 minutes, any Root, Silence, or Sleep effects only last for 10 seconds, and Death only does 1 damage. It does not affect effects you have already taken.
- **Spellshield** lets you choose to resist, once, any magic effect (either packet spell, disc spell, magic incant, or non-damage incant), except **Dispel** or **Final Death**. It is used up when you do so. You can't have more than one.
- **Dispel** causes any duration effects (such as Root, Protect, or Spellshield) to end instantly.
- **Null**, as in "Null Fire," lets you Resist all effects with the stated element for 2 minutes. It does not affect existing effects.

5 Miscellaneous

Headband and Armband Colors: A **white** headband represents an observer. All other headbands represent a “monster” of some sort. If it has a namebadge along with a headband, it is some sort of unique monster. Multiple colors may be braided together to distinguish between different kinds of monsters; you may notice some patterns in how colors are braided; for instance, a **black** headband braided with another represents a more powerful version of the same monster (the sprite has a newer color palette).

A **black armband** represents something that looks obviously badass (the sprite looks mean and dangerous). A **silver armband** represents something very large (the sprite is huge). A **white armband** represents some sort of elemental magic being. For elementals, the headband colors may correspond to the particular element.

Badge Numbers: The first digit of your badge number is your character's apparent age in decades.

Game Times: Game runs from 3pm to 8pm. Surviving PCs are expected to be in-game for the entirety. Game may end early. Cleanup and Wrapup will immediately follow the end of game.

At 6pm, there will be a 30-minute **game break**. During this time you may talk in character and roleplay, but you may not trade items or take other game action. At the end of game break, your HP, MP, and skills are restored to full. If you were dead, you are restored to life. (The characters all reach a SAVE POINT and are able to rest.)

Game Areas: Game area is all publicly accessible areas of buildings 24, 26, 34, 36, 37, and 38; the third floor of 39; and the basement of 32. You may go outside from 34-1 to the north (close) end of 24-0, between the south end of 24-0 and the sound end of 26-1, and between the western door of 38-1 and the 38-west stairwell.

You may not use elevators in-game.

Unless you have a specific way out, you can't leave game space until the end of game.

Avoid places it is illegal for you to go, areas under construction, etc. Don't take game actions in bathrooms, private offices, activity offices, and other places not all players would be allowed to enter. Game action is not allowed in Athena clusters. Don't hide in them, either. You may not use Athena or phones for any in-game purpose.

In-game, the floor number of the Shintsu building is the MIT floor number plus 90 (all basements are considered floor 0, thus 90). Some publicly known locations are the Grand Airship Dock (32-0) and the Shintsu Main Generator Orb (34-3 Lobby) (also known as the “corporate art”).

A sign with two or more lines of tape on the floor represent a **ward**. Stop and read the sign. Do not cross wards unless the sign allows you. If the lines have an arrow pointing across them, you may freely cross the ward in the direction of the arrow. You may always shoot across a ward.

Structures/items made of cardboard, duct tape, and other stuff are **devices**, which will have a accompanying sign. Read the sign before attempting to move/use/damage/etc. any device.

Closing Notes: These rules are imperfect. The GMs may violate the letter of the rules to preserve the spirit. We hope these rules are reasonably clear, but if you have any doubts about your interpretation, talk it over with us in advance. We should also add, as much as we hate to admit it, we GMs are human: when all of our carefully laid plans are going haywire, we may lose our cool. The best way to deal with people is remaining calm and friendly, especially when everyone is tired and hungry.

We hope you have lots of fun. Good luck.