

Rhyme & Reason

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based on *Lasers & Feelings*
by John Harper

Earth's history took a radical turn when, during the Renaissance, the world was overrun by a ruthless race of insectoid creatures called the Fascii. The free thinkers of humanity – the scientists and artists – gathered in secret societies to conduct a resistance. Using a combination of mad science and the magic-like powers that began to manifest from artwork, humanity struggles to liberate itself from their evil overlords.

Players: Create Characters

- 1 Choose or roll a **style** for your character: 1) Debonair 2) Enigmatic 3) Erudite 4) Gregarious 5) Robust or 6) Savvy.
- 2 Choose or roll a **background** for your character: 1) Academic 2) Inventor 3) Mountebank 4) Poet 5) Saboteur or 6) Virtuoso.
- 3 Choose a **number** between 2 to 5. A low number means you're better at **RHYME** (magic, art, intuition, and improvisation). A high number means you're better at **REASON** (science, technology, deduction, and planning).
- 4 Give your character a **name** that sounds appropriate for the Renaissance, which includes people from all parts of the world.

Your gear: Your **clothing** is armored, fashionable, or stealthy. Your **weapon** is concealable, long-range, or chitin-piercing; if it's a ranged weapon, it requires ammunition, which might be hard to find. You also have a set of **tools** that allow you to accomplish great feats of science or amazing magical effects using artwork.

Players: Create the Secret Society

Your society's goal is to defeat or at least impede the Fascii. They do this by undertaking **operations**. These include sabotaging Fascii infrastructure, assassinating their leaders, recruiting rebels, securing resources, gathering intelligence, boosting morale, etc.

Your society needs **resources**: 1) rations 2) equipment 3) support 4) anonymity 5) safety and 6) morale. Each begins at a value of 2 and can go up to 6. At the start of each operation, roll to determine how many points are lost, then roll for each point to see which resource is decremented, rerolling any duplicates. If any remain at 0 at the end of a session, your society disperses. Each operation can raise one or more of these values, but could also have a cost from others. The exact values are up to the narrator.

The Leader: The society is led by a non-player character whose decisions are determined by the votes of all the players. Whenever a decision must be made for the society, all players vote and the result is the leader's decision. Non-player members obey, but the players are free to make their own decisions with potential consequences.

Players: Roll the Dice

When you do something risky or uncertain, roll **one six-sided die** to find out what happens. Roll an extra die if you're **geared** (if your clothing or weapon is appropriate for the action) and another die if you're **skilled** (if your style or background are relevant to the action). Compare the results to your number, counting any dice over or under your number as successes, depending on if what you were attempting focused on reason or rhyme.

- ⬆ If you're using **RHYME**, you want to roll **over** your number for a success.
- ⬇ If you're using **REASON**, you want to roll **under** your number for a success.
- 0 If **none** of your dice succeed, your efforts fail and you suffer a setback.
- 1 If **one** die succeeds, you barely manage to accomplish your task.
- 2 If **two** dice succeed, you accomplish your task, huzzah!
- 3 If **three** dice succeed, you accomplished your task and more!

Helping: Use your action and roll one die. If you get an even number, you give an ally one bonus die, but if you roll a 1, you subtract one die from their roll.

Narrator: Create the Operation

Roll or choose on the table below to determine the specifics of the operation. Halfway through, roll for a plot twist. On a 1-5, reroll the operation detail in that category.

DURING...	
1. A strange Fascii molting festival	4. An intentional human food shortage
2. The week-long gladiatorial ritual	5. The unveiling of a new Fascii monument
3. A brutal crackdown on human culture	6. The trial and execution of a luminary
A THREAT...	
1. A keen new Fascii secret inspector	4. A sadistic Fascii disassembler
2. A traitor within the secret society	5. A meticulous Fascii thought censor
3. A contagious brain-mite infestation	6. An aggressive new Fascii general
WANTS TO...	
1. Eradicate	4. Intimidate
2. Subjugate	5. Assimilate
3. Subvert	6. Incarcerate
THE...	
1. Retired previous leader of the society	4. The inventor of anti-chitin weaponry
2. Savant child of a society member	5. Legendary mute warrior-ballerina
3. An underground sect of poet-mages	6. An expert on Fascii history and origins
WHICH WILL...	
1. Result in a crippling lockdown	4. Harm the society's leader
2. Hatch a new breed of murderous Fascii	5. Ruin a human cultural landmark
3. Cease all transit throughout the region	6. Result in a ban on scientific research

Narrator: Run the Game

Present the players with challenges and opportunities, encouraging them to work together to accomplish their goals. Put them into situations and ask them what they do. Call for rolls when the situation is uncertain. Don't try to tell the whole story, let them add to it with their actions and fill in the narrative blanks whenever possible.

Science and Magic: Science can reveal information about the world and change existing properties of it, while magic is used for creating entirely new things or bending the rules of the universe in ways never intended.

The difficulty for scientific effects is 6 and magic spells is 1, and the proper tools are mandatory to even attempt this roll. Other players can help and the player can get extra dice for every time increment they devote to the task; a minute grants one die, an hour grants two, a day grants three, etc. The Fascii are always watching, though; failing this roll alerts them of the player's location and/or identity.