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# THE FORGE

## A GENESYS RPG PODCAST

### EPISODE 9 - CUNNING CONUNDRUMS

The Forge Podcast is all about bringing new creations to the table, and the Genesys RPG provides a powerful set of tools to do so. When it comes to designing a setting, the skills and talents provided to use during character creation and play, help players immerse themselves in the setting.

The Die Casting segment is about closely examining individual skills and talents and how they relate to creations you craft. In Episode 9 we discussed two seemingly disparate skills that both players and GMs often confuse, namely *Athletics* (BRAWN) and *Coordination* (AGILITY). In comparing these two skills, let's first explain each one.

#### DIE CASTING (SKILLS: ATHLETICS VS. COORDINATION)

The debate of whether to use the *Athletics* or *Coordination* skills in various circumstances has raged since the release of the **STAR WARS ROLE PLAYING GAME**. It's an issue that perplexes GMs and players alike. Its no surprise, however, that there is some overlap between the two skills. First, let's look at what makes up each skill.

#### ATHLETICS (BRAWN)

The *Athletics* skill, explained on page 58 of the **GENESYS** Core Rules, determines a character's sporting prowess and physicality. In game terms, the skill demonstrates the character's fitness to perform actions where their strength and physical conditioning comes into question.

The skill is used in all settings, with the rules providing several good examples on how it's used. Those examples include climbing ropes, leaping across a chasm, lifting objects, long distance running, and swimming in adverse conditions.

#### WHO GETS ATHLETICS?

- **Core Rules:** Druid, Explorer, Knight, Soldier, Tradesperson
- **Realms of Terrinot:** Disciple
- **Shadow of the Beanstalk:** Courier, Roughneck, Soldier

## COORDINATION (AGILITY)

The *Coordination* skill, explained on page 58 of the **GENESYS** Core Rules, determines a character's balance, flexibility, hand-eye coordination, manual dexterity, and sure-footedness. Used in all settings, the rules provide several examples of the skill's use.

Examples include activities such as rappelling down a structure, squeezing into tiny or cramped spaces such as a crawlspaces, sewer pipes, air ducts, or a narrow crevice, swinging back and forth on a rope, and walking across a narrow surface while trying to keep balance.

*Coordination* is also used to lessen damage when falling, and escaping from physical restraints (such as handcuffs or ropes).

### WHO GETS COORDINATION?

- **Core Rules:** Druid, Entertainer, Explorer, Scoundrel
- **Realms of Terrinoth:** Scoundrel
- **Shadow of the Beanstalk:** Con Artist, Courier

### RULES AS WRITTEN

There are several uses for both the *Athletics* and *Coordination* skill in the rules. They are as follows:

- **Athletics:** Lifting an item (page 85).
- **Athletics:** Escaping from ensnared (page 87).
- **Athletics:** Swimming through hazardous waters (page 111).
- **Athletics:** Additional Vehicle actions - Manual Repairs (page 229).
- **Athletics:** Extinguishing fires in vehicles (page 230).
- **Coordination:** Extinguishing oneself (page 87)
- **Coordination:** Maneuvering through gravity (page 110).
- **Both:** Lessening the damage taken from a fall (page 112).
- **Both:** Moving through Impassable Terrain (page 110)

The differentiation between the two skills is that one is based on Agility, the other Brawn. For example, an all-round athlete would possess ranks in both. A sprinter or long distance runner would specialize in *Athletics*, but the long distance runner may focus on

*Resilience* as well. Comparatively, a steeplechase athlete may focus on *Coordination*, yet still have ranks in *Athletics* to sprint towards the end of their race. The thing to remember is that there is always cross over, a fact players don't often forget.

### GEAR

There are several items of gear that provide assistance when using the skill or require a skill check using those skills. Those items are:

- **Snap Locks (SotB) (pg 97):** Requiring a check of either *Athletics* or *Coordination*, with *Coordination* being the easier of the two.
- **Climbing Gear (RoT) (pg. 100):** Removes a Set-back dice from *Athletics* checks when climbing.

### RULES OF THUMB

When examining both skills, the rules they apply to, and the equipment, you can see how varied they really are. When using these skills in your games, we suggest following these two rules of thumb:

#### RULE OF THUMB #1

If what you're doing requires strength or fortitude, use *Athletics*. If what you're doing requires agility or dexterity, use *Coordination*.

#### RULE OF THUMB #2

When you use both, consider increasing the difficulty of the skill least appropriate, depending on the situation.

### NON-STANDARD USES

There are few non-standard ways to use either the *Athletics* or *Coordination* skills. In fact, the rules as written cover most eventualities. But when you want to change things up, the easiest way to modify the way a skill works is through the use of Talents.

The rules provide only a single talent that uses these two skills, and even then it is only *Coordination*. The *Knockout Punch* talent from **SHADOW OF THE BEANSTALK** allows a character to add their ranks in *Coordination* to damage a target under certain circumstances.

We here at *The Forge Podcast* were not satisfied with this lack of talents for these skills and created two talents inspired by the likes of Jackie Chan, Keanu Reeves in *John Wick*, and a slew of modern action heroes who specialize in the use of improvised weapons.

## TAKE THIS!

**Tier:** 1

**Activation:** Active (Incidental)

**Ranked:** No

Once per encounter, your character may use their *Coordination* skill to make a ranged attack with a one-handed improvised thrown weapon.

## TAKE THAT!

**Tier:** 1

**Activation:** Active (Incidental)

**Ranked:** No

Once per encounter, your character may use their *Athletics* skill to make a melee attack with a two-handed improvised weapon.

Try these talents in your game and let us know how they play out.

## THE FURNACE (ARCHETYPES: CUNNING)

Well crafted and thematic archetypes and species go a long way to imparting the feel and tone of a setting. But if those archetypes and species aren't built in a proper way, it can seriously impact the balance of that setting.

Back in Episode 4, we began the first of a series on the topic of archetype and species creation. It focused on the overall rules for species crafting, but then honed in on the serious details of species archetypes with a high Brawn score. In Episode 7, we continued with a dive into high Willpower species and archetypes.

In Episode 9 we shifted our attention towards archetypes and species with a high Cunning score. Clever, observant, and perhaps conniving, high-Cunning species work well for some classic archetype concepts. The following are the two species created by GM Chris and GM Hooly, specifically the Shadow-Kin and the Kitsune.

## SHADOW-KIN ("UMBRAL")

Hailing from beyond the shadows in the dark recesses of the night, the Shadow-Kin lurk, surviving on what society leaves behind. Evolving within the darkness of the shadow realm, the Shadow-Kin learn to thrive where other fears to tread.

Their jet-black, inky skin which seems to shift and change between tones of darkness, causes uneasiness among the more common folk. However, their slight build makes them a constant target of bullies and ruffians.

The Shadow-Kin try and keep out of the spot-light, hiding away from those who wish to harm them. The only positive side effect of this behavior is that they quickly hone skills which benefit career choices such as spies and thieves. Many in society see the Shadow-Kin as untrustworthy, secretive, and prone to mixing with those within the "underbelly" of civilization. While most Shadow-Kin yearn for acceptance within the realms of the dwarves, elves, and humans, this may be a dream too far into the future to comprehend.



- **Starting Wound Threshold:**  $8 + \text{Brawn}$  (+5)
- **Starting Strain Threshold:**  $10 + \text{Willpower}$  (+0)
- **Starting Experience:** 100
- **Starting Skills:** A Shadow-Kin starts with one rank in *Stealth* during character creation. They obtain this rank before spending experience points, and may not increase *Stealth* above rank 2 during character creation. (+0)
- **Dark Vision:** Born among the darkness, the Shadow-Kin adapt to the dark better than many species. When making skill checks, a Shadow-Kin removes up to ■■ imposed due to darkness. (+0)
- **Shadow Blend:** When in areas of dim illumination or darkness, your character gains □ on *Stealth* checks. (-5)
- **Light Sensitive:** When in areas that are well-lit, your character suffers ■ to *Perception* checks and *Combat* skill checks. In areas of extremely bright illumination (per GM discretion), your character suffers ■■. (+10)
- **Dark Heritage:** Once per session, your character may spend a story point to cast a spell using the *Primal* skill. Additionally, any time a Shadow-Kin casts the *Conjure* spell, they may add the *Summon Ally* effect at no cost if the creature summoned is from the shadowrealm. (-10)

## KITSUNE

Mischiefous trickster spirits, the Kitsune are a race of shape-changing foxes that often take human form. Fascinated by the cultures of the world, the Kitsune travel great distances to learn what they can about the beliefs, customs, and religions of the people they pretend to be.

Normally articulate, charismatic, and elegant, a Kitsune uses their social prowess to ingratiate themselves among the social elite. Kitsume find the political games the humans play as a challenge, little more than a toy to play with. Using their natural appeal and ability to manipulate others, the Kitsune turn friend against friend, only to step back and watch the situation unfold.

In their natural form, a Kitsune has fur with unusual colorings such as purples, bright greens, and orange. Their most prominent feature is their nine long tails. Although beautiful, these appendages are their greatest weakness since it remains with them even when in human form. This forces them to hide their tails under a kimono or hakama, a task not easily accomplished.

When discovered, a Kitsune must flee into nearby fields or forests to avoid capture and the possibility of execution. Due to their loyalty to their families, a Kitsune always attempts to lure their would-be captors away from their habitat. Once safe, a Kitsune moves onto another village to cause further chaos and mayhem.



- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 8 + Brawn (+10)
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 12 + Willpower (-15)
- **Starting Experience:** 85
- **Starting Skills:** A Kitsune starts with one rank in either *Charm* or *Deception* during character creation. They obtain this rank before spending experience points, and may not increase their chosen skill above rank 2 during character creation. (-5)
- **Shapeshift:** As an action, a Kitsune may change shape from a fox to a human, or a human to a fox. The Kitsune's attributes remain the same in this form, although their Silhouette reduces to 0. Any equipment carried is left behind in the place where the Kitsune changed form. (+0)
- **Of the Spirit Realm:** The Kitsune gain the *Divine* skill as a career skill and gain 1 rank in that skill. (-15)
- **Sullied Reputation:** When a Kitsune is attempting to disguise themselves as humans, they gain ■■ to any *Deception* or *Skullduggery* checks. If discovered, a Kitsune may be arrested or killed on sight. Any social checks after discovery upgrade their difficulty once. (+10)

*We recommend playtesting these talents and species before using them in your game.*

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