

WILL vs.

Core System Summary

A setting-neutral overview of the Will vs. modernized dice engine

This document summarizes the shared rules engine behind the Will vs. conversion drafts. It deliberately removes splat-specific names, factions, powers, and lore so the system can be explained as a general game framework.

Elevator pitch

Will vs. is a fiction-first, consequence-driven supernatural drama system. Every risky action is resolved by rolling a character-facing Will Die against an opposing Pressure Die. The result answers not only whether the action succeeds, but also how the situation changes, what it costs, and whether darker forces gain ground.

Use this as a player-facing primer, a GM handout, or a design reference when building additional Will vs. modules.

1. Design Goals

Will vs. replaces large pools, target numbers, and long subsystems with a small set of repeatable procedures. The core experience is fast, dramatic, and risky: characters are competent, but every roll invites consequences.

- Fiction first: The table starts with what the character is trying to do, why it matters, and what could go wrong.
- Two-die tension: Each roll is a contest between deliberate action and an opposing pressure.
- Consequences instead of attrition: Harm is tracked through Conditions, Scars, social fallout, mental strain, and escalating clocks rather than simple hit point loss.
- Temptation has rules weight: Corruption and supernatural resource tracks give players ways to seize power at a cost.
- Modular supernatural identity: Each branch of the game can rename the Pressure Die, resource, powers, and corruption path while keeping the same chassis.

2. The Core Roll

When an action is uncertain and the outcome matters, roll two d12s at the same time.

Die	What it represents
Will Die	The character's skill, intent, nerve, training, and chosen action.
Pressure Die	The opposing force: danger, hunger, instability, rage, backlash, ambient doom, or the supernatural cost of acting.

1. Roll the Will Die and the Pressure Die together.
2. Apply the relevant modifiers specified by the move, stat, resource, or current pressure track.
3. If the Will side is higher, the action succeeds.
4. If the Pressure side is higher, the action fails or succeeds at a serious cost, and the GM makes a move.
5. If the die faces tie before modifiers, the result is a critical success.

Generic formula

Will d12 + relevant modifier vs. Pressure d12 + relevant pressure modifier. Some moves use no modifier on one side; some add a current resource or danger track. The move tells you what to add.

Critical Success

A natural tie on the die faces produces a critical success. A critical success is more than a clean success: it is a spectacular success, a breakthrough, or a moment when the character briefly masters the supernatural pressure around them. Many modules also use criticals to restore or generate a supernatural resource.

Advantage and Disadvantage

- Advantage: Roll an extra Will Die and use the best Will result.
- Disadvantage: Roll an extra Will Die and use the worst Will result.
- They do not stack. One source of Advantage cancels one source of Disadvantage.
- A roll made with Disadvantage cannot critically succeed.
- The Pressure Die is usually not doubled; Advantage and Disadvantage are player-side pressure valves.

3. Character Structure

Characters are built from a small number of broad traits, choices, and story prompts. The sheet is meant to communicate who the character is and what kind of trouble follows them.

Common Character Elements

- **Name and Look:** basic identity, style, presence, and first impression.
- **Intro Questions:** short prompts that establish history, need, fear, obligation, or unfinished business.
- **Core Stats:** Physical, Social, and Mental are broad approaches used by basic moves. Ratings usually stay in a tight range, commonly from -1 to +3.
- **Supernatural Rating or Track:** a module-specific measure of power, instability, hunger, rage, insight, or spiritual force.
- **Skills and Specialties:** trained areas of competence. When a specialty clearly applies, the player rolls with Advantage.
- **Backgrounds:** story assets such as allies, resources, influence, safe places, libraries, retainers, artifacts, or other narrative leverage.
- **Moves:** rule triggers that define what the character can do and what happens on success, failure, or a critical.
- **Gear and Armor:** equipment matters through tags, fictional positioning, and the ability to absorb or redirect Conditions.

Identity Choices

Each module can add identity picks - lineage, faction, calling, origin, role, or power source. These choices usually grant starting powers, define weaknesses, and give the GM social hooks. In a setting-neutral explanation, they are simply archetype choices that tie mechanics to story.

4. Moves

A move is a compact rule that begins with a fictional trigger. When the trigger happens, the move tells the player what to roll, what counts as success, and what complications can emerge.

Basic Moves

Basic moves cover ordinary dramatic actions, usually grouped under Physical, Social, and Mental approaches.

- **Physical moves** handle violence, pursuit, endurance, athletics, stealthy action, and risky physical problem-solving.
- **Social moves** handle deception, intimidation, seduction, negotiation, interrogation, command, and reading people.
- **Mental moves** handle investigation, occult or technical reasoning, awareness, research, memory, and interpreting clues.

Signature Moves

Each supernatural module adds signature moves. These define how characters use impossible powers, spend resources, resist their darker impulses, and break normal limits. The specific names change from module to module, but the structure remains consistent: describe the effect, roll when risk matters, resolve the outcome, and let success or failure change the fiction.

Move Results

- On a success, the action works as intended or mostly as intended.
- On a failure, the GM makes a move: reveal danger, inflict a Condition, advance a clock, separate characters, expose a cost, spend a threat resource, or put someone in a worse position.
- On a critical success, the action succeeds with extra force, insight, resource gain, avoided cost, or a scene-shaping benefit.
- Some failures still provide useful information or partial progress. The game often moves forward even when the roll is lost.

5. Harm, Conditions, Armor, and Scars

Will vs. treats harm as meaningful fictional consequences. Characters do not simply lose points until they drop. Instead, they mark Conditions that describe what has happened and how it affects future play.

Conditions

Conditions are grouped by type, usually Physical, Social, and Mental. A Condition can impose Disadvantage, prevent Advantage, limit actions, create obligations, or hand narrative control to the GM under certain triggers. Conditions do not have to be marked in order; the nature of the harm determines what choices make sense.

- Physical Conditions represent wounds, exhaustion, blood loss, immobilization, or being taken out of action.
- Social Conditions represent leverage, shame, coercion, reluctance, broken trust, or social exposure.
- Mental Conditions represent fear, obsession, confusion, fascination, fugue, or psychic trauma.
- Each Condition has a resolution: a fictional action or cost that removes it.

Armor

Armor can be marked instead of taking a compatible Condition. Once marked, armor must be repaired, renewed, or fictionally restored before it can protect again. Armor is usually typed; physical armor will not automatically protect against social, mental, or supernatural harm unless the fiction supports it.

Scars and End Moves

When a character is beaten, broken, or otherwise pushed past ordinary recovery, the player may take a Scar instead of simply ending the character. A Scar is a lasting consequence created by the player and GM together. Scars preserve the character while making the cost visible in the fiction.

An End Move is the character's final dramatic consequence. It may trigger on death, total corruption, complete loss of control, or retirement as a player character. End Moves are not just failure states; they turn the character's final moment into a lasting story event.

6. Resources, Pressure, and Corruption

The system separates ordinary competence from supernatural pressure. The exact names vary by module, but most branches include a track or resource that tempts characters to do more than mortals can do.

Supernatural Resources

A supernatural resource is spent for extraordinary effects: activating powers, improving rolls, healing or canceling Conditions, gaining Advantage, resisting consequences, or doing something that would normally require time, tools, or safety. Resources may be gained through critical successes, feeding or recovery scenes, communion with a source, ritual preparation, or other module-specific actions.

Pressure Tracks

A pressure track measures the danger that follows a character's power. It might represent ambient backlash, hunger, rage, instability, spiritual imbalance, or any other supernatural force. It can modify rolls, fuel abilities, trigger loss of control, or increase the severity of consequences. The stronger the pressure, the more dramatic the choices become.

Corruption

Corruption is the system's temptation engine. A player can mark corruption to gain immediate power, bypass a limit, cancel a consequence, or reveal dangerous truths. This choice should feel useful in the moment and costly in the long term.

- Marking corruption unlocks potent moves that are stronger, darker, faster, or more reckless than ordinary options.
- As the corruption track fills, the character gains power but also suffers checks, permanent changes, lost humanity, spiritual taint, or social consequences.
- When the corruption path is complete, the character usually retires as a player character and may return as a threat.

7. Advancement and Character Growth

Advancement rewards both participation and consequences. The core loop encourages players to take risks because failure, injury, and hard choices still push the character forward.

- Experience is commonly awarded at the end of a session, and often when a character fails a roll or receives a Condition.
- Five Experience usually buys one Advance.
- Advances can increase a stat, add a skill or specialty, unlock a new move, expand supernatural options, raise rank, clear corruption, or erase a Scar depending on the module.
- The every-third-advance structure gives the GM and player a rhythm for larger breakthroughs, reputation changes, deeper powers, or recovery from long-term harm.

8. Gear, Tags, and Fictional Positioning

Gear is intentionally simple. Weapons and tools are described through tags that tell the table what the item can do in the fiction.

Tag	General meaning
Lethal	Can kill unprotected bystanders or NPCs and narrows the defender's safe Condition choices.
Close	Works within throwing distance or immediate scene range.
Area	Affects multiple targets or the immediate zone.
Slow	Consumes a full turn or requires a focused moment.
Loud	Draws attention, disperses crowds, or changes the social situation.
Suppression	Pins targets down or makes them reluctant to act openly.
Concealable	Can be hidden or brought into places where larger tools cannot.

Tags are not just mechanical labels. They are permissions and consequences. A loud weapon may solve a fight while creating a new scene problem. A slow ritual may be powerful but dangerous under pressure. A concealable weapon may matter more than raw damage in a guarded court, nightclub, alley, or sanctum.

9. GM Tools

GM Moves

On a failed roll, the GM makes a move. A move should follow the fiction, escalate pressure, and give players something concrete to respond to. Good GM moves include revealing a threat, separating characters, inflicting a Condition, spending a monster's advantage, advancing a clock, presenting a bargain, showing collateral damage, or turning a previous choice back on the characters.

Escalation Die

The Escalation Die is a visible countdown clock for threats that grow over time: disease, riots, storms, rituals, corruption, hunts, investigations, or spiritual contamination.

1. Choose a die size based on how long the threat should last: d4 for short, d6 for standard, d8 for slow, d10 or d12 for long-term.
2. Set it to its maximum value and write a final consequence for reaching 0.
3. Tick it down when the threat acts unchecked, when players fail to stop it, or when a GM move escalates it.
4. Tick it up when players successfully counter the threat, apply a meaningful countermeasure, or score a critical success against it.
5. At thresholds such as three-quarters, half, and one-quarter, show visible new symptoms or beats.

Adversaries

Adversaries are best treated as pressure machines rather than stat blocks. They need just enough rules to threaten the characters: what they want, how they hurt people, what Conditions or armor they can absorb, what tags their attacks have, what they do when ignored, and what changes when the scene escalates.

10. How to Build a New Will vs. Module

To create a new branch of the game while staying setting-neutral at the core, define these pieces:

- Pressure Die: What force opposes the character when they act?
- Pressure Track: When does that force grow, and what happens when it gets high?
- Supernatural Resource: What can characters spend, how do they gain it, and what does it cost?
- Identity Choices: What archetypes, factions, origins, roles, or bloodlines shape a character?
- Powers: What signature moves or practices define the supernatural fantasy?
- Weaknesses: What threats bypass normal safety or force checks?
- Corruption Path: What can players do when they give in, and how does the character change?
- End Move: What happens when the character is consumed, killed, transformed, or lost?

Quick Play Reference

Roll

When risk matters: roll Will d12 plus the move's modifier against a Pressure d12 plus its relevant modifier.

Read the result

Will higher: success. Pressure higher: failure or costly turn, and the GM makes a move. Natural tie: critical success.

Adjust the roll

Advantage adds a second Will Die and keeps the best. Disadvantage adds a second Will Die and keeps the worst. They cancel and do not stack. Disadvantage prevents criticals.

After the roll

On success, change the fiction. On failure, change the fiction harder. Mark Conditions, advance clocks, spend or gain resources, and show consequences in the scene.

Theme

The core question is never just "Do you succeed?" It is "Can your will overcome the pressure, and what does that victory or failure cost you?"

Source Scope

Prepared from the provided Will vs. conversion drafts. This summary intentionally abstracts specific supernatural lineages, factions, powers, lore terms, and era assumptions into generic system language.

Source files:

- Vampire: Will vs Blood (Dark Ages): <https://faustiangles.com/vampiredark-ageswillvsblood/>
- Werewolf: Will vs Rage: <https://faustiangles.com/werewolf-willvsrage/>
- Mage: Will vs Paradox: <https://faustiangles.com/mage-wod-willvsparadox/>