HELL FOR LEATHER

THE GAME WHERE MURDER EQUALS EXTRA DICE

HELL FOR LEATHER
THE GAME WHERE MURDER EQUALS EXTRA DICE

Contents

BY SEBASTIAN HICKEY
COBWEB GAMES

THE SMALL PRINT

PREP TALK

PAY-PER-VIEW

"When you're desperate enough, you'll do it. You'll sign them papers. You'll go on the show. And afterwards? Afterwards you'll weep. Oh Jesus, you'll fucking weep…"

This is it. In a moment, your name will spill on the airwaves like swill in the trough. The folks out there, they'll swallow you up without chewing. You hear them already, snuffling like piglets, smacking their lips.

"And here they are. Team. Numer-r-o. Uno!" A clamour roars beyond the snapping bulbs. "Masked for now, but soon will be r-r-revealed!"

This is it. No way out.

"… grand prize? Twenty. Five. Million dollars! You heard me! Two and five-oh mil-bills! It's all yours, ladies and—"

Now doors are slamming. First the engine starts, then slow silence numbs the night.

"This is it!" The van stops. Now you're watching the trails of brake lights hook a turn in the road.

This is it. This time tomorrow you'll probably be dead. Whatever you do, do it fast, do it now and do it right. You've only got one chance, so don't fuck it up.

"This is it folks! There's no turning back. Now's the moment you've been waiting for. Make yourself comfortable. On your marks. Get set…"

"… Sure, they're crazy, sure they're deadbeats, but they're people. That's why they watch, you know? Watch them squirm. Watch them wriggle. And eventually… they'll pay subscriptions. They'll pay it all. And it's more than money, it's big, big and messy like a meat grinder grinding us all up. Tearing us up and churning us out. We want it, we buy it, we trade it away. Gimme gimme gimme. And you know what? It tastes so fucking sweet."

HELL FOR LEATHER?

Hell for Leather is a fast flowing action game of explosive death and bloody murder. Using a tower of dice to resolve events, it's tense, speedy and shallow. Perfect for a night of cursing and rivalry.

In the **standard setting***, you play a team of contestants running across the globe, monitored by a gruesome game show called "*Hell for Leather*." In this book, you'll find rules for creating the contestants of that show and for working out how the story evolves. If you're playing the standard game, here's a little back story.

THE SHOW

Hell for Leather is the world's deadliest game show, a celebration of gore and pursuit. Each week the contestants are ruthlessly hunted down and executed as they flee across the globe, slaughtered and then butchered by an elite tactical unit they call the **Hunters**. It's bloody, horrific and totally unfair. In this game, you play the role of these contestants and your job is to survive.

Anyone can cash you in as a prize, from the old lady behind the net curtains, to the freelance syndicates. You're a walking lottery ticket, the answer to a man's prayers. Eligible claimants can phone the **Network** with a tip-off, or just deliver your head in a sack. Last week some kid won twenty grand when his dog found a contestant's wrist bone in a bus wreck. It's a tough old game.

* STANDARD SETTING?

Throughout this text you'll find advice on customising *Hell for Leather*. Want to tell a story about the French Résistance in WWII or pirates on the run from the intergalactic mafia? No problem.

***Hell for Leather* is intentionally customisable. As long as you are telling a story about pursuit and colossal adversity, you can play *Hell for Leather* in any backdrop or setting.**

CONTESTANTS

What sort of screw up would volunteer for such barbarity? You'd be surprised. There's some mega cash bucks in the pipeline, and that's just the start of it. The guys in charge, the Network, they run everything, and that means Everything. You got a brother in prison? Not anymore. You want someone erased? Consider it done. All the world's a stage, and these guys? They run the fucking show.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Daniel, Jason and Susan are playing a game of *Hell for Leather*. Right now, Jason must describe a Scene.

> **J:** *This will be a* **Run Scene (P.23)** *and our Objective is to enter the military camp. It's sunset in the Sahara desert. We are peeking over the edge of a sand dune. Below us, a dozen trucks carry armed soldiers into a bustling military camp.*

(Jason takes a token, called a **Story Pip (P.22)**, from the centre of the table. In *Hell for Leather*, players earn Story Pips as they contribute to the story.)

> **S:** *Ok, let's say that the camp's watchtowers are scanning the dunes with big searchlights. One of the spotlights sweeps over us and we scramble for cover.*

(Anyone, at any time, can add details like this to a scene in *Hell for Leather*. This is a game about group storytelling.)

D: *"The whole army is down there! You told me you had a plan!"*

S: *"Relax. We have them exactly where we want them." I smile and pull out a detonation device. "You see that truck down there? That's the one I armed with explosives. In a few moments you're gonna see some world class fireworks!"*

J: Threat! (P.26) *Let's say that while you're telling Daniel's character about the explosives, we see the truck stop at the gates to the camp. As the truck halts, a small container comes loose from the back. The explosives have fallen off the truck!*

(Jason is opting to take the role of the Threat for this Scene. This is when one player temporarily becomes the adversity for the team. He receives a Story Pip for this contribution.)

S: *Shit! I sneak down to fix it before the truck pulls away.*

D: *Challenge! If you fail, you are caught by the guards before you get there. They tie you up and drag you to their prison for interrogation.*

(Daniel is proposing an obstacle for Susan's character. Susan must resolve this **Challenge (P.31)** using the Target.)

TARGET

Once a player has been Challenged, he must roll dice at a **Target (P.34)** (print out this Target from the Cobweb Games website and stick it to your table with tape). The aim is to get the dice inside the circle without knocking over some other stuff **(see Heat on P.34)**.

If he scores a success, he can describe how his character saves the day. If he scores a failure, he must narrate how his character fucked the whole thing up.

LAST-MINUTE GAMING

Hell for Leather **was designed as a one-shot, zero prep, gaming spectacle. Anytime you need instant roleplaying gratification,** *Hell for Leather* **shines. There's no lengthy setup, and it plays out in under four hours. If it were a food, it'd be a pizza delivery. Perfect for the last-minute occasion.**

The team scores **Victory Points (P.42)** for successes, which are counted up to determine if they complete their objectives. That's the basics. Chew on those details for a minute. Here's what you'll need to play.

WHAT YOU NEED...

- 2-6 players

- 15x **12mm** six-sided dice (No matter what anyone tells you, the **size is important**. The bigger the dice, the easier it is to survive [boring]. Unless you've got a rickety table, we suggest you start with 12mm dice. See diagram…)

- 4x ten-sided dice

- A printout of the **Target** and the **Team Sheet** (from the Cobweb Games website)

- 20 tokens of one colour (**Story Pips)** & an individual marker for each player (**Power token)**

- **Sticky tape** and a **Sturdy table**

12MM DIE
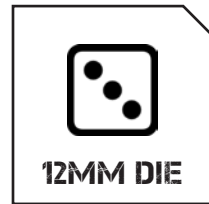
Before you sit down to play a game of *Hell for Leather*, you'll need to read the rules once or twice so that you're comfortable enough to teach the other players. During this time you can also practice your dice bowling skills **(see Roll your Power on P.41)**.

RPG OR BOARD GAME?

Hell for Leather is a roleplaying game, inasmuch as you've got to portray a character and you're playing a game, but *Hell for Leather* is not your traditional RPG.

You're going to be telling a story, and at the same time you'll be building a tower of dice and rolling things at a target. Sound strange? Put the kettle on, take your time with the rules, and ready yourself for some dice toppling excitement.

FRAME SETUP 2
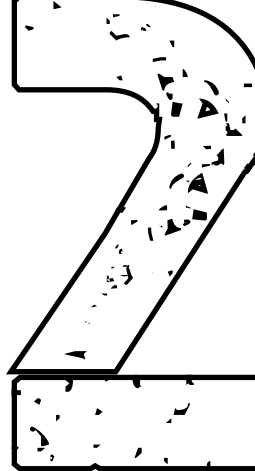
FRAME SETUP

This chapter talks about preparing the components of your game. In *Hell for Leather*, all the players contribute to a description of the tone, themes and setting of the game's story before play begins. This is called building a **Frame**. Throughout this chapter you will find two ongoing examples, "HfL" and "WWII." While both examples illustrate how to build your own Frame, the former uses the standard setting—violent bloodsport in a dystopian future. The latter uses a custom setting, World War II. Until you're comfortable with the rules, we recommend that you start by using the standard Frame as it is presented below.

HFL: STANDARD FRAME

Prologue: Near future, hyperviolent game show, vast public screenings, global slums, sex, drugs and bruises
Adversary: The Network
Gore Threshold: 5

Connection: You decide *(Example: Class of '99)*
Drop-Off: You decide *(Example: London Bridge)*
Destination: You decide *(Example: Insein Prison, Burma)*
Checkpoints: You decide *(Example: Travel to India, Kill the Doctor of Kalaymyo **(P.16)**, Parachute into the Insein Prison)*

BUILD A FRAME

The wrong way to do this is slowly. Do it **as quick as you can**. Playing is more fun than planning. See **P.72** for Quick Framing advice.

1. Decide **Prologue** & **Adversary** *(What's the story about?)*
2. Choose **Gore Threshold** *(Between 3-7, low is gory)*
3. Pick **Connection** *(How do the characters know each other?)*
4. Decide **Drop-Off** & **Destination** *(Where does it all start/end?)*
5. Choose **3 Checkpoints** *(**1st**: Covert. **2nd**: Overt. **3rd**: Access)*

As you build the game, record the details on your **Team Sheet** (available from the website).

FRAME

A Frame is a collection of customisable components that make up the structure of an evening's play. At the back of this book you'll find example Frames to help you understand how to configure your own game.

ANATOMY OF YOUR TEAM SHEET

Find more information on each part of the Team Sheet by following the page numbers indicated...

Drop-Off
Where does the story begin?
P.12

Destination
Where does the story end?
P.13

Checkpoints
Tasks that you must complete along the way
P.14

Finale
Defeat your Adversary in the End Game!
P.56

Violence
Murder equals extra dice...
P.38

Context
Describe your character in relation to the story.
P.19

Flaw
How does your character mess things up?
P.19

Talents
One-shot Talent to help you into/out of mischief
P.19

PROLOGUE

Decide on a story and setting for your game. Who are the main characters and what are they running from? Choose a tone and backdrop in which to place the action. Is it modern? Retro? Futuristic? In space? Are there wizards or Nazis? Or both? You decide. If there's a TV show, describe it. Is it cheap? Is it tabloid? **What is the story about? What does it *look* like it's about?**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the default Prologue is a near-future, hyperviolent game show (see *The Running Man **by R. Bachman***, or *Battle Royale **by K. Takami***). However, you can play *Hell for Leather* in any time or universe. See the Appendix **(P.74)** for example Frames.

ADVERSARY

The Adversary represents the militant, hunting evil. Who's the bad guy? If you're playing a hyperviolent, globe spanning game show, your Adversary is "The Network." If you're playing the French Résistance in WWII, your Adversary is the Third Reich. If you're playing steampunk scientists in Victorian Europe, your Adversary could be the Prussians. Think big, dangerous and hostile!

FRAME A: HFL

Daniel, Jason and Susan decide to play a game of *Hell for Leather*. They imagine an oppressive world of ubiquitous surveillance and hyperviolent entertainment where the characters of the story are hunted on a deadly game show. For Prologue, Jason writes "Near future, hyperviolent game show, vast public screenings, global slums, sex, drugs and bruises." For the Adversary they choose "The Network," the people behind the show.

FRAME B: WWII

Sebastian and Roger would like to play a custom game of *Hell for Leather*. Roger is a big fan of pseudo-historical gaming, and suggests WWII as the Prologue for the game. Since *Hell for Leather* is a game of pursuit, they agree that the game should follow members of the French Résistance in WWII.

Under Prologue, Roger writes "WWII, French Résistance." For Adversary, he writes "the 3rd Reich."

ADVERSITY & PURSUIT!

Hell for Leather requires two conditions for a successful game: **adversity** and **pursuit**. The characters of the story must be opposed by hostile enemies of *epic* proportions and these enemies must be on the hunt. If either aspect is missing, the game will suffer. One solution is to devise treachery: When the game begins, your characters have already orchestrated betrayal against the world's most dangerous superpower— but they know it was you. Remember, **adversity** *and* **pursuit**!

GORE THRESHOLD

Gore Threshold (GT) determines how badly things need to go before the characters of the story start to turn nasty **(see Violence on P.38)**. How quickly do you want the game to escalate to violence? Choose a low number for instant gore, or a high number for a gradual escalation (between 3-7, default: 5). You can learn a lot from your friend's choice of Gore Threshold. If different players want different things from the game, GT provides an opportunity to work it out before play begins. Low GT suits games of intense, sexy bloodshed, while high GT suits games of rarer, pronounced violence. What kind of story do you want to tell?

FRAME A: HFL

By default, the GT is set at 5. This offers a game in which violence is not the always first solution (at least in the beginning), yet allows for some heavy handed **gore** in the middle to late stages of play. This is the right level for most games of *Hell for Leather*.

FRAME B: WWII

Although their story will feature the violence of WWII, Sebastian and Roger would prefer to focus the game on problem solving, so they choose GT7.

The players decide that they want to keep things oppressive. By choosing a higher Gore Threshold, their characters are strongly encouraged to find evasive solutions to the threats of Nazi Germany. They will only use violence if they're backed into a corner.

CONNECTION

Every bunch of characters, whether contestants on a game show, or members of the resistance, need a link beyond the current task. Choose a connection for your team. Are you in the same class in high school? Are you family? Love triangle? Imprisoned together? Did you work together on a project? Also, **whose side are you on? And why does the Adversary want you dead?** Characters in *Hell for Leather* are always connected and they're always running. If Adversary is the "what," then Connection is often the "why."

DROP-OFF

This is when and where the story begins for the characters. Perhaps it is the moment they take off their hoods on London Bridge—now suddenly aware they are contestants on the world's most violent TV show. Perhaps it is during lunch at the dirigible terminal in 1890s Geneva—when the members of Project Thunder realise the Prussians are in town. Or maybe it is on a vineyard in Bordeaux — when the Francois family decide they will journey to Germany to assassinate Hitler. Wherever it is, be sure not to start *in medias res*. If you start in the middle of the action there is no way for the action to escalate. Pick a quiet location, somewhere to make plans, and let the action happen later.

FRAME A: HFL

The players decide that all of the contestants *knew* each other in school ("Class of '99"), and that they are being reunited as a team on the horrific game show "*Hell for Leather*."

They pick "London Bridge" as their Drop-Off. Two things make this a perfect launch for a *Hell for Leather* adventure: There is no implied threat and it's an iconic location. All the better for escalating drama!

FRAME B: WWII

In a game about the French Résistance in the second World War, the obvious connection would be organisational. However, Roger thinks it would be more fun if this was a revenge story, something familial. Sebastian suggests that they are brothers *en route* to Berlin after their family's execution, and that they start their journey in their vineyard in Bordeaux. Don't be shy with stereotypes!

IN MEDIAS RES?

To underscore the point, when writing Drop-Offs be careful when choosing where to begin the action. Try to pick a location where there is *no immediate threat*, so that there is space for the tension to escalate.

DESTINATION

Collectively decide on an Destination—a place your characters can reach that will signify the climax of the game. This is where the Finale happens, so go for drama. Palaces, skyscrapers and ruins are good. Make suggestions, anything that represents a specific, interesting venue for a violent showdown. Make sure it's epic and then write it down on the Team Sheet.

FRAME A: HFL

Jason has been reading about the atrocious institution in Burma called the "Insein Prison." Daniel and Susan agree that this would be an interesting place for a violent showdown.

FRAME B: WWII

If it's WWII and you're members of the French Résistance, where do you place the finale? How about the Kroll Opera House—the dark heart of Adolf Hitler's Germany?

CHECKPOINTS

Think of three cool *tasks* that the characters must do in turn in order to reach their Destination. These are called Checkpoints. Each Checkpoint is themed; **Covert**, **Overt** and **Access**. When coming up with these three Checkpoints, stick to the themes and leave the final wording abstract and open to interpretation. It's more fun to play if you're not sure how things are going to work out.

TASKS NOT PLACES

Checkpoints are actions. Checkpoints are **NOT** locations.

Do this, **Kill** that, **Travel** there. Do you see the verbs?

CHECKPOINT 1: COVERT

Pick a task for your team. It must include an element of **planning**. Travel, sneaking and robbery are all good themes. Especially travel. Pick something *big*, like crossing an ocean, or *difficult*, like getting off a submerged submarine.

CHECKPOINT 2: OVERT

Next, the characters must make a stand, destroy something, kill someone or show some **aggression**. Pick something *big*, like blowing up a landmark, or *difficult*, like kidnapping the First Lady.

CHECKPOINT 3: ACCESS

Lastly, the characters must **gain access** to their Destination by traversing difficult defences, attaining special equipment or negotiating tricky alliances. Pick something *big*, like holding a country to ransom with nuclear weapons, or *difficult*, like robbing a prototype fighter for a HALO jump.

SCALE!

When writing Checkpoints, be careful of scale. Checkpoints need to be **Big**. If you start thinking "how the hell…" then the Checkpoint is probably the right scale. If you can easily imagine a way to accomplish the Checkpoint, then the Checkpoint might be too easy… and **easy isn't fun**. *Ramp it up!*

FRAME A: HFL

Knowing that the journey begins in London and ends in Burma, Daniel, Susan and Jason must devise three Checkpoints. Sometimes the last Checkpoint is the easiest to start with, so they decide to choose that first. How about "parachute into the prison?" That will get them access to their Objective. Where would they get the plane? Will they be followed? What sort of opposition should they expect? These kinds of questions will be answered during play. Leave them for now.

For the first two Checkpoints, the group decide that they must "travel to India," and then, as the second Checkpoint, "kill the Doctor of Kalaymyo."

Travelling is suitably Covert, which fits the requirements of the first Checkpoint. The second, killing the Doctor (discussed in the sidebar overleaf), is exactly **defined**, seems **difficult** to accomplish, and is suitably **confrontational**—just the right characteristics for an Overt Checkpoint.

FRAME B: WWII

Starting in Bordeaux, Sebastian and Roger decide that their first Checkpoint will be "Get to Germany." Both players have an idea how this might work out, but they keep that for the game. For now, it's enough to write down the Checkpoint and leave the particulars for later. If anyone starts suggesting minutiae, cut them off. Be ruthless.

For the third Checkpoint they choose "Steal the *Maus*," the prototype uber-tank that was so big it would have collapsed bridges had it been deployed. They decide that this will be a fun way to get into the Nazi parliament!

That leaves the second Checkpoint. They decide that in order to steal the *Maus*, they will need some information from a Nazi general. They write "Kidnap General Scheiffer" as their second Checkpoint.

It is important to leave the Checkpoints open to interpretation. When choosing Checkpoints, you're trying to pick a **specific** goal without describing the "how."

CHECKPOINT SUGGESTIONS

For your first game you might like to use the suggested Checkpoints on page 8. If you do, here are a few tips for play.

BURMA

Myanmar, also known as Burma, is a poor South East Asian country ruled by a repressive and abusive military regime. Rural Burma is a landscape of jungles, mountains and wasteland. It is a place of monsoons, tigers, temples and elephants. While playing *Hell for Leather*, all of these components can colour your scenes.

KILL THE DOCTOR AT KALAYMYO

Inside Burma, near the borders of India, there lies Kalaymyo, the epicentre of the global heroin trade, a drug refinery of industrial proportions. The team must assassinate the Doctor, the infamous drug emperor who operates here under the patronage of the Burmese army. His jungle army includes armoured cars, mines, explosives and traps, not to mention the countless adolescent soldiers with automatic weapons!

INSEIN

The third Checkpoint can be illustrated with scenes of jungle chases, night time espionage, and the searching spotlights of fenced off airfields. Make sure most of the Checkpoint is spent getting airborne. Once you're up in the air, there's only so many threats you can throw at yourselves to keep things interesting. Do plenty of groundwork!

TEAM SETUP 3

TEAM SETUP

You're going to create a protagonist in a story about violent murder and pursuit. Before you get stuck in, it is worth noting something. The protagonists of this story will be drenched in god-awful murder and gore, where morals will be stretched to the limit. To get the most out of this, you should try to make characters who *have* a set of morals to stretch. Your divorced mother of three who has to decide whether to slash a shopkeeper's throat is going to be much more interesting than a serial killer in the same position.

Hell for Leather is a fun, fast-flowing action game of explosive death and bloody murder. To that end, character creation needs to be quick and lively. Don't worry if your character seems shallow at this stage. Depth, if it's important, will emerge later, during play.

CONTEXT

Context identifies your character's part in the Connection **(P.12)**. Think of it as a mixture of occupation and personality.

Start off by choosing a role. For example, if your Connection is "freedom fighters trying to liberate the space slaves," your Context might start as "hacker," "demolitions guy" or "spy."

Now decide how your character knows the other characters. Try to include interesting personal relationships. Are any of the characters lovers, ex-lovers or family? Is one of the characters your boss?

FLAW

Pick a **Flaw** that colours your character's personality. In the game, this Flaw will illustrate how your character's nature leads to failure **(see Complication on P.49)**. Choose a condition, something that might get a person into trouble, for example:

- **Abusive**
- **In love**
- **Cowardly**
- **Obsessive**
- **Addicted**
- **Negligent**

GRIPE

Another character's Flaw has affected your character in the past. You can determine which character that is through discussion, you can work it out randomly, or choose multiple Gripes per character. There is only one rule: **every character must have at least one Gripe against him**.

Working with the player of that character, figure out what happened. Maybe the other character was an abusive lover? Or maybe their negligence got you fired?

TALENT

What is your character good at? How does he excel? Everyone gets one **Talent**. Talents are single-use bonuses, used to gain extra dice **(see Talents on P.40)**. Choose a **nonviolent** description, for example:

- **Robbery**
- **Intimidation**
- **Lies**
- **Negotiation**
- **Sex**
- **Sneaking**
- **Command**
- **Sharp as a tack**
- **Steely glare**

RECRUITMENT

Each player in turn should now introduce their character by describing his or her **Recruitment**. This is the moment the character became irreversibly attached to the story. In the standard Frame, characters have been recruited into the game show *Hell for Leather*. What does that mean for your character? Was he kidnapped or blackmailed? Did he volunteer?

If you are using a custom Frame, consider why the Adversary wants you dead. There must have been a significant event to trigger this animosity. **How did your character contribute?**

Now imagine the scene in which the event took place. Describe it, paying attention to the location of the event, what your character is doing and what he looks like. Don't take too long. This is just the introduction. Once everyone has described their Recruitment, you're ready to get started.

TEAM SETUP EXAMPLE

Daniel, Jason and Susan are playing a game of *Hell for Leather*. Their Connection is "Class of '99."

> **Daniel**: Dillon Dunne, **Context**: The star quarterback, now a barman in a dingy nightclub, **Flaw**: Abusive pervert, **Gripe**: Sabrina dumped him, **Talent**: Charm.

> **Susan**: Sabrina Stockwell, **Context**: Dillon was her high-school romance, now she's a librarian in a dead-end town, **Flaw**: Arrogant, **Gripes**: Dillon was an abusive lover, John beat her up, **Talent**: Brains.

> **Jason**: John Jackson, **Context**: The school misfit, now an ex-cop, discharged from the force, **Flaw**: Sadist, **Gripe**: Sabrina said she was too good for him, **Talent**: Cop.

For their Recruitment, the players decide to describe a sequence of video interviews as though each contestant were applying for the *Hell for Leather* TV show. In turn, each player spends just a couple of minutes narrating their interview.

STORY
PIPS
4
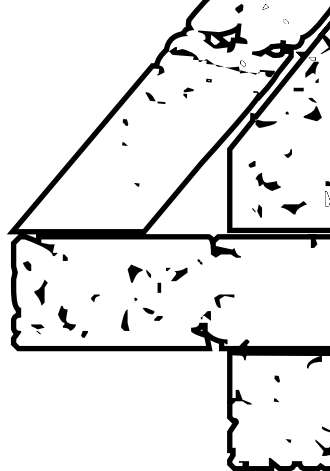
STORY PIPS

In this chapter, you'll learn about storytelling. One player describes a situation and then everyone figures out what happens to the characters involved. During storytelling, players earn **Story Pips**.

You'll need 20 beads or tokens, called the **Pool** of Story Pips. Spill them out onto the table, making sure they are within easy reach of all players. During the game, players award each other Story Pips from this Pool according to their contributions to the fiction of the game.

THE 3 PIP RULE

Players can only earn **one Story Pip per contribution** and may **not hold more than three Story Pips** at any time.

Exception: If a player already has three Story Pips and he is Challenged **(P.31)**, he can take a fourth Story Pip. Got that? Now it's time to talk about Scenes.

SCENE

As the result of a Challenge **(P.31)** or at the start of the game (see below), you might be asked to start a Scene. First, choose the type: Run or Rest. Now **raise the Heat by one (P.52).**

Run Scenes, which make up most of the game, are used to get your characters closer to the finish line. **Rest scenes** are used in the later stages of play and help your characters to get out of trouble. When you've decided on the Scene type, **take a Story Pip**. Now see Run (below) or Rest **(P.28)**.

FIRST SCENE

Pick one player to start. That player starts the first Scene at the location of the Drop-Off **(P.12)**. The first Scene is always a Run Scene. **Don't forget to increase the Heat!**

RUN

Run Scenes make up the meat of the game. Run Scenes can include anything from boarding a ship to seducing a Nazi spy, as long as they contribute to your next Checkpoint. They describe the plot of the story.

RUN STEP 1: OBJECTIVE & LOCATION

First, choose the Objective. The **Objective** describes the purpose of the Scene. It must relate to the Checkpoint **(P.14)** but it cannot match the Checkpoint's description. So, if your Checkpoint is "*blow up the Mafia*," the Objective for this Run Scene might be "*locate the Mafia*," or "*steal the bomb*," but it **cannot be** "*blow up the Mafia*."

Think about what the characters have achieved so far and what is still required. Don't be afraid to ask for **suggestions**.

Once you've decided on the Objective, pick a **location**. Choose somewhere that fits the Objective. Describe the place as if you were looking at it on the big screen. Talk about the noise and the things that are going on in the background. If you're stuck for ideas, read the examples throughout the book.
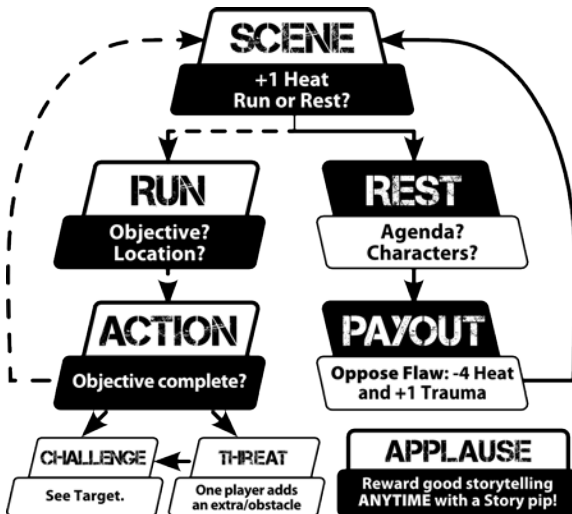
RUN STEP 2: ACTION

After the Objective is picked and the location described, *all players* have two jobs: roleplay and colour. This makes up the **Action**.

Roleplay is when a player tells everyone what his character says and, importantly, what his character *does* during the Scene. When roleplaying, only talk about *your* character.

Colour is when a player adds something to the Scene, like a description of an alley or a police officer. Anyone can add nearly anything to a scene **(see Howabout on P.26)**.

Through roleplay and colour, your characters might **complete the Objective of the Run Scene**. For example, if your Objective was "to steal a car," maybe one of the players narrates how he sneaks into the garage and robs a Hummer. In this case, the Run Scene ends and you must start a new Scene.

START A NEW SCENE

Whenever the text asks you to "start a new Scene," the player with the fewest Story Pips starts the next Scene (to break a tie, choose the closest clockwise). There are two rules: (1) The same player cannot start two Scenes in a row. (2) A player who has just been Challenged (P.31) cannot start the next Scene.

RUN SCENE EXAMPLE:

Daniel, Susan and Jason are playing a game of Hell for Leather *using the characters outlined in chapter three* **(P.20)**. *Jason is going first, so he must set the Scene at the Drop-Off at London Bridge and it must be a Run Scene.*

Dialogue "in quotation marks" indicates in-character dialogue— dialogue that is spoken by the player as the character.

J: *This is a Run Scene. The Objective is to* plan how to get to India. *The story begins when our team of contestants tear off their hoods and watch the drop-off van speed away on London Bridge. It's an evening drenched in thick mist, rush hour cars zooming past us, head lamps blooming through the haze like searchlights.*

IN-CHARACTER DIALOGUE?

Each player should contribute to the story, describing what their contestant says and does, in whatever way they think is fun. Talking in-character, that is, talking as your character would talk, makes up what some people think to be the most enjoyable part of *Hell for Leather*. For others it is a chore. Do what you like doing. There is no "right" way.

(Jason takes a Story Pip for starting the Scene and increases the Heat by one, **see Adjusting the Heat on P.52.**)

S: *Can I add some stuff to the Scene?*

J: *Sure. Anyone can add anything they want, whenever they want. This is called adding colour.*

S: *Okay, below the bridge, floating down the Thames is an enormous decommissioned light cruiser from the Korean War. There are men on deck shouting and drinking. One of them looks up and yells "Happy New Year!" Maybe it's a private party.*

(Daniel awards Susan a Story Pip for Applause. Applause is covered on **p.31**.)

S: *Sabrina is this slender librarian in a tight, white blouse with cute black glasses and tumbling brown hair. Eyeing both of the men with a slow, languid stare, she tilts back her head and snorts haughtily, "What's going on here? Where are we?"*

D: *"Hey Sabrina! Wow. You're all grown up," Dillon says to her in his rough Boston accent, pawing at the dossier in her hand. "So… been seeing anyone?"*

(Susan smiles and passes Daniel a Story Pip for Applause.)

S: *"Watch it, jerk," Sabrina replies, and shoves the dossier at his chest.*

J: *"Keep it cool. If anyone suspects us, we're in serious fucking trouble. Look," he holds up the* Hell for Leather *dossier, "says here we have to escape to India. Maybe someone down there might be able to help us." John Jackson points to the cruiser, where one fat, drunk guy in a navy uniform waddles across the deck.*

S: *"That's our man. If you can get me on board, I should be able to persuade him. Let's find our way down to the port where it's docking."*

J: *I think we've completed our Objective. New Scene?*

(Daniel starts the next Scene, as he is the next clockwise player with the fewest Story Pips.)

HOWABOUT

If you think that someone's narration doesn't fit the tone of the game, you can raise your hand and call a "Howabout." Immediately follow it up with a suggestion.

N.B. **You cannot call a Howabout without giving a suggestion— there is no such thing as a simple "I don't like that."**

RUN STEP 3: THREAT

Sometimes during a Scene, the action will wane and you'll want to spice up the story. Either Challenge (opposite) or insert a Threat.

When you insert a **Threat**, you temporarily become the adversary. You may introduce **extras** (minor characters—nameless cops, TV reporters, clerks, bank tellers, etc.) or **obstacles** (time bombs, wire fences, etc).

Take a Story Pip from the Pool, **hold it in the air** and announce "Threat!" Now introduce an extra or an obstacle into the scene.

Instead of roleplaying your own character, roleplay the extras or use the obstacles to threaten the other players. When you've finished adding the Threat, **take the Story Pip** for yourself.

Extras are useful if you want to provoke action. For example, an old man behind a desk might be great colour for a hotel lobby. But what if a player takes control? Maybe he'll call the police, raise a hullabaloo or grab his shotgun from under the counter.

THREAT EXAMPLE

Continuing the example **(P.27)**, *the three characters had just decided to find a way to board the ship. Daniel is starting this Scene.*

D: *This is a Run Scene. The Objective is to board the cruiser. We see the pier now, a small one made of wood, and the cruiser is about to dock to pick up partygoers.*

(Daniel takes the Story Pip for starting the Scene.)

S: *I'd like it if there were a big queue of sassy revellers, all in snappy white suits and glittering dresses. Maybe some fireworks popping in the sky above, barely visible through the heavy mist?*

J: *Sweet!*

(Jason gives Susan a Story Pip for Applause, **see p.31**)

J: *Threat*! *There's also this big navy type, you know, buzz cut, zero neck, nose like a pancake. He stomps down the walkway and starts checking people's tickets.*

(Jason takes a Story Pip for adding a Threat.)

RUN STEP 4: CHALLENGE

After a player announces an action for his character during a Run Scene (his character ***does*** something) you may want to call a Challenge.

> ### VIOLENCE
>
> **Particularly, if a player describes his character acting violently, you should probably call a Challenge. See Violence on p.38.**

Take a Story Pip from the Pool, **hold it in the air,** announce "Challenge!" and place the Story Pip in front of the player you are Challenging.

Now, paying attention to the character's **Flaw**, you must announce, "**If you fail**," followed by a description of the potential outcome. This is a good opportunity to hose your fellow players. When you're done, the target player must overcome the Challenge using the Challenge Target **(P.28)**.

IF YOU FAIL

The *If You Fail* clause is important. You are telling the player what will happen to his character if he does not complete the Challenge successfully.

The nastier you are with the *If You Fail*, the more fun you will have. Use the character's Flaw for inspiration—look at the Flaw and describe an embarrassing failure.

CHALLENGE EXAMPLE

*Continuing the example **(P.24)**, the three characters are trying to find a way to get past the guard. Daniel's character's Flaw is "abusive pervert."*

S: *"Dillon, you think you can distract that guard for me honey?"*

D: *"Don't worry about a thing guys. I've got a plan…"* Dillon says, sneaking off into the darkness. Dillon dives into the sea and climbs onto the ship by the anchor chain.

J *(holding a Story Pip in the air): Challenge!*

(Jason gives the Story Pip to Daniel. Even though Daniel already has three Story Pips, he is allowed to receive a fourth because this is a Challenge.)

J: *If you fail*, Dillon doesn't make it to the ship. All the lights on the dock will suddenly burst into life. We will see Dillon Dunne caught in one of the big spotlights, staring at Sabrina with his hand around his cock. There will be a squeal from the revellers as the navy grunt comes running down the dock to get him!

(Now Daniel must resolve this Challenge using the Target, **see p.34**)

REST

Rest Scenes give your team a break. The only way to reduce the Heat **(P.34)** (the big, wobbly stack of dice in the middle of your table) is through a Rest Scene.

Together with one (or more) of the other players, you are going to force your character to face his Flaw. First, announce the Rest Scene and describe your character in a situation where he is **using (or about to use) his Flaw**.

At this point, the player who has a Gripe **against your character** also introduces his character into the Rest Scene. His job is to convince your character to change his habit.

At any point, any other player may introduce his character into the Rest Scene too. This is completely optional.

Players must now roleplay to determine the outcome of this Rest Scene. If there is any conflict of interests, the player who started the Rest Scene gets to determine what happens.

The person who started the Rest Scene decides when the Rest Scene is over. Now check the Payout (overleaf).

PAYOUT

As the player who started the Rest Scene, if your character *is not* persuaded to abandon his Flaw, there is no game effect.

If your character *is* persuaded to abandon his Flaw, your character gains a **Trauma**: Immediately move your Power token one space to the right **(see Power on P.35)**. However, you also get to **reduce the Heat** by four dice **(see Adjusting the Heat on P.52)**. Woohoo!

You may now *opt* to change your Flaw description. That is, if you were persuaded not to stop acting "abusive," you *may* want to change your Flaw to something like "guilty" or "timid." It's up to you.

Now, start a **New Scene (P.24).** Remember, the same player cannot start two scenes in a row.

REST SCENE EXAMPLE:

Daniel, Jason and Susan are playing Hell for Leather. The Heat is at eleven dice (which is incredibly wobbly) and the players are feeling nervous. Dillon's Flaw is "abusive pervert."

D: *This is a Rest scene. The jungle is rippling with the cackling hoots of monkeys and birds. The characters have stopped in a clearing to fill up their water bottles. While Dillon collects raindrops from wide leaves, Sabrina goes behind a tree to do something private. She doesn't hear him creep up on her. "Hey!"*

S: *"Jesus Dillon, you gave me a fright!" She's pulling up her trousers, looking nervous. She smiles for a moment, but it is obviously false.*

D: *"I don't get you, babe. One minute you're as hot as bacon and the next you're as cold as cream."*

S: *"What are you talking about, Dillon?"*

D: *"You gotta stop teasing me like this." He strokes her shoulder.*

S: *"Jesus Christ Dillon! Get you're fucking hands off me!"*

D: *"You've been making eyes at me ever since this whole thing started." Dillon starts tearing at her clothes, grabbing her hair and trying to kiss her. He makes animal noises and starts to get rough.*

S: *"No, Dillon, NO!" She pounds on his chest and tries to wriggle free.*

D: *"You know you want it. Come on baby! Like old times!"* In the struggle, he pushes her to the ground.

S: *Sabrina falls hard and bangs her head. Blood runs down her scalp.*

D: *"Oh fuck! Oh, sorry babe! Oh Jesus!"*

S: *Sabrina comes to, touches her face, and looks at her bloody fingers. "You're sick, Dillon. You're sick in the fucking head. You think I wanted this? You think I ever wanted you?"* **Etc.**

(During the remainder of this Rest Scene, Sabrina convinces Dillon not to rape her. Daniel takes a Trauma—moving his Power token one space to the right—and reduces the Heat by four dice. Daniel opts to change Dillon's Flaw from "abusive pervert" to "overprotective of Sabrina." A New Scene begins.)

APPLAUSE

You are encouraged to reward players for telling interesting stories. If any player does or says something interesting or funny while narrating, show your appreciation: **Award them a Story Pip**.

This is your way to say, "You're awesome!" Think of it like giving out gold stars in school. Applause can be awarded **any time** during play (except during the End Game, **see p.55**).

It's a common mistake to forget about Applause. Don't fall into that trap: **Be generous!**

SUMMARY: RUN SCENE

1. Increase **Heat by one** and **take a Story Pip.**

2. Pick the **Objective** and describe the **location.**

3. Roleplay the scene and add **colour.**

4. Insert a **Threat**, a **Challenge**, or **complete the Objective (P.24)** and start a **New Scene**.

5. Applaud good narration **(P.31).**

SUMMARY: REST SCENE?

1. Increase **Heat by one** and **take a Story Pip.**

2. Describe your character using (or about to use) their **Flaw.**

3. Character(s) with a **Gripe against you** try to convince you to change your ways.

4. If you agree, take a **Trauma** and *reduce* the **Heat by four**. Otherwise, start a new Scene (above).

5. Applaud good narration **(P.31).**

SUMMARY: THREAT

1. Take a Story Pip.

2. Take the role of an **extra** or insert an **obstacle.**

3. The Run Scene continues.

SUMMARY: CHALLENGE

1. After a player announces an action, hold a Story Pip in the air and call "**Challenge!**"

2. Check the character's **Flaw** and use it to describe what happens *If They Fail*.

3. The *If you fail* clause should describe an embarrassing failure. Remember to use the character's **Flaw as inspiration**!

4. **Give the Story Pip** to the Challenged player. That player must use the **Target** to resolve the Challenge.

CHALLENGE TARGET 5
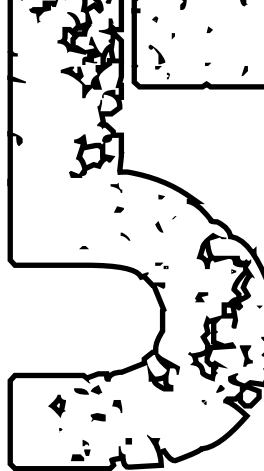
CHALLENGE TARGET

This chapter describes how to resolve Challenges. Whenever a Challenge is called, the Challenged player must resolve it using the Target. This player is now called the **Actor**. He has to do all the rolling, and he'll be the one who gets the credit or suffers the failure.

SET UP THE TABLE

Before play begins, you'll need a copy of the **Target** which you can print out from the Cobweb Games website. Put it on a small, sturdy table. *Hell for Leather* doesn't require a whole lot of space and can easily be played on a coffee table. If you have the choice of a wobbly, large table and a sturdy, small table, go for the latter every time. You'll see why.

Put the Target playsheet in the middle of the table and, if your table doesn't mind, **stick it down with sticky tape**.

HEAT

In the centre of the Target playsheet there's a white circle. That's the actual Target itself. In the middle of that, you'll see a representation of a die. Put one 12mm six-sided die (d6) there, making sure the number showing is a 3. **That's important**. Now stack two more dice on top of the first. You don't have to worry about which numbers show on those dice. At this point, you should have a stack of three dice (see overleaf). This stack is called the **Heat**. Your job will be to throw dice into the Target, like a game of bowls, at the same time trying to *avoid* the Heat. You don't want to knock that over.

Heat represents how much attention you're getting from your Adversary and, in the standard Frame, how badly the good citizens of the globe want to cash in your corpse at the bank. The height of the Heat goes up and down, but mainly up.

TARGET

As the Actor, rolling one ten sided die (d10) at a time you are trying to get the die inside the target so it does not touch the boundary of the target. You must roll a number of dice as indicated by your Power.

POWER

At the top of the Target Playsheet is the Power track. At the beginning of the game, *each player* should place one *unique* token (called a **Power token**) on the circle marked Power 1.
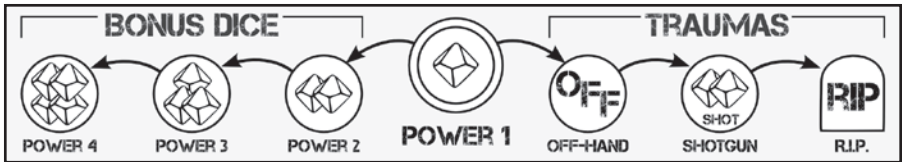
There are seven levels of Power: **Power 4**, **Power 3**, **Power 2**, **Power 1**, **Off-Hand**, **Shotgun** and **R.I.P.** When your character receives a Trauma **(P.50)** move your Power token one space to the right. When you commit Violence **(P.38)** or use Talents **(P.40)**, you get to temporarily move your token to the left. Where your token sits during a Challenge determines how many dice you get to roll and how you roll those dice:

POWER 1

At Power level 1, you may roll only one d10.

POWER 2, 3 OR 4

One by one, roll a number of dice equal to your Power. It is not mandatory to roll all the bonus dice. Roll as many as you prefer.

OFF-HAND

At Off-Hand, you may roll only one d10 and you **must** use your off-hand. If you're ambidextrous, good for you!

ROLLING PROPERLY

There are only two rules for rolling your dice in *Hell for Leather*. (1) The die must leave your hand before it touches the table and (2) no part of your body may cross the dashed edge at the border of the playsheet during any part of the throw.

For greater accuracy it is recommended that you use the Release Technique. Placing a loose fist on the table and gripping the die between index and forefinger, release the die by extending your forefinger quickly.
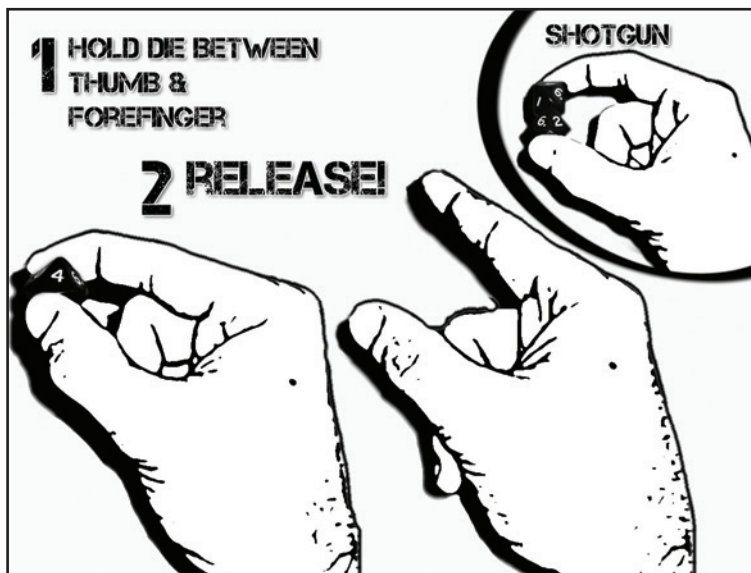
ROLLING SHOTGUN

Using your off-hand, hold the two dice between your thumb and forefinger, making a D shape. The dice will be braced against one another by the grip of your forefinger and thumb.

Both dice must leave your hand **at the same time**.

SHOTGUN

At Shotgun, you must roll two d10 **at once**, using your off-hand. Because of the difficult nature of the two dice combination, the effects are unpredictable.

R.I.P.

Game over. Rest in fucking peace. The player should describe a fitting end, preferably with blood, torture and violation. If there are no easy ways to incorporate the rolled Challenge into the character's death, no problem. Cue the Adversary. Sniper shot to the face. Now you're dead, how do you contribute to the game? **(see Dying Early on P.69)**

LOSS OF POWER EXAMPLE:

When play begins, Susan has Power 1. During play she receives a Trauma. She moves her Power token one place to the right, to the circle marked "Off." Now Susan must use her off-hand to roll.

GAIN POWER EXAMPLE:

Later during play, Susan commits ☆☆ *Violence* **(P.38)**. *This allows her to temporarily move her Power token two spaces to the left, from Off to Power 1 to Power 2. This temporarily removes the off-hand penalty and grants her two dice for the Challenge.*

RECOVER

If you have a Trauma (your Power is at Off-Hand **or** Shotgun), you can recover after certain die results during the game **(P.43)**. To record the recovery, move your Power token one space to the left. Now add something to the narrative to explain this change of heart— medical attention, drugs and a vengeful spirit might do the trick!

A GAME OF SKILL

Because *Hell for Leather* is a game of skill *as well as* a game of imagination, clumsy players may seem naturally disadvantaged. However, it's really only a problem if there's a big difference in player aptitude. See the Appendix for more advice (P.68).

RESOLVING A CHALLENGE

1. Do you want to commit **Violence** (below) or use a **Talent (P.40)**?
2. Roll your **Power (P.41)**
3. **Risk (P.51)**
4. Check **Results (P.44)**
5. **Checkpoint (see Checkpoint on P.52)**?

VIOLENCE

First, decide if you want to use Violence. If not, see Talents **(P.40)**. This is where it gets nasty. When we talk about Violence, we're talking Serious Fucking Crime. You know the moment you decide there can't be any witnesses? Cue Violence.

The Heat must be equal to or higher than the Gore Threshold. If not, **raise the Heat** to match the value **(see Heat on P.34)**. *E.g. if the Heat is at three and the Gore Threshold is six, first raise the Heat to six.*

Before you roll, you must announce what grade of Violence you are committing. Violence has three ratings: ☆, ☆☆ and ☆☆☆.

If the result of the Challenge is a Hit or a Spotlight **(P.47)**, you **must** narrate violence according to the guidelines below.

Otherwise, you fail and the violence is **not** included in the narrative.

After a Hit or Spotlight result **(see Results on P.44)**, describe **one violent action**. Your narration must be coloured using specific constraints (see below).

☆ VIOLENCE: CRUNCH

Something snaps. You must include at least one broken bone in your description. **You may not include blood**. *E.g., "When he hits the ground, his ankle shatters with a crackling pop."*

☆☆ VIOLENCE: SPLATTER

Make a mess. You must include **bodily fluids** in your description. *E.g., "When he hits the ground, a sharp railing impales him through the throat, spilling blood from the wreckage of his neck."*

☆☆☆ VIOLENCE: DOMINO

Domino! You must include one spectacular, **murderous side-effect** in your description. *E.g., "When he hits the ground, a school bus swerves to avoid him, spinning out of control and smashing into an oncoming juggernaut. Metal rips through flesh in a whirlwind of blood and death."*

RECORDING VIOLENCE

For each ☆, immediately fill in an equal number of ☆s on the **Violence Rank** on your Team Sheet, starting from the left hand side, and **add one to your Power** for *this* Challenge.

VIOLENCE EXAMPLE:

Daniel, Susan and Jason are playing Hell for Leather. The Heat is at eight dice. Susan is Challenged after trying to sneak through airport security. Susan decides to commit ☆☆ Violence!

(Susan marks down two stars on the Violence Rank and raises her Power by two levels for this Challenge. Susan succeeds in her roll—**see Results on P.44**—and narrates the Violence.)

S: The woman at the security desk gives Sabrina a funny look. Suddenly Sabrina grabs her by the hair, smashes her face into the monitor and takes her gun. Blood pops all over the screen as the woman's nose connects with the glass.

(After you narrate the Violence, you are free to continue narration. For example…)

S: *Now the airport is filled with the screams and yells of panicking civilians. In the confusion, Sabrina grabs the broken nosed woman and points the gun into her cheek. "You're gonna get us out of here," she hisses into her ear. "Do a good job and I'll let you live." When the airport security finally barge through the chaos of terrified passengers, Sabrina and her hostage have already disappeared.*

☆☆☆ VIOLENCE EXAMPLE:

How might Susan have used ☆☆☆ Violence (Domino) in the above situation? To qualify for ☆☆☆ VIolence, the narration must include a spectacular, murderous side-effect. Perhaps the crowd, stricken with terror, begin to stampede, crushing one another underfoot. Or the airport security engage in a firefight, slaughtering hundreds of civilians.

*Whatever you choose, make sure it's murderous. And don't be shy with the **gory details!***

VIOLENCE RANK

The total number of earned ☆s is called your team's **Violence Rank**. This is **added to every Miss or Collapse result (P.46)**, so watch your step.

If you run out of ☆s on your Violence Rank, you can still commit terrible violence, but there is no positive game effect (you don't get extra dice).

TALENTS

If you've decided **not** to use Violence, you may opt to use your Talent. Otherwise, see Roll Your Power (overleaf). At the beginning of the game every character starts with one Talent **(P.19)**. Talents work exactly like Violence, except they have no negative side effect. That is, they don't increase Violence Rank.

If you use your Talent, you may add one to your Power for *this* Challenge. Once used, you must cross out the Talent on your character's bio and it cannot be used again. Furthermore, the narrative must be coloured by the use of your Talent, much in the way that Violence colours the narrative, except with less gore.

EXAMPLE:

Daniel, Susan and Jason are playing Hell for Leather. Daniel has been Challenged after trying to befriend an engineer with a phone in his hand. His character's Talent is "charm."

D: *I want to use my "charm" Talent.*

(Daniel marks off his Talent and temporarily gains one extra Power. His roll is successful **(see Results on P.44)***, so now he must colour the narrative with "charm.")*

D: *I put my finger to my lips and slink over beside him, looking anxious. "See that woman over there? The vindictive bitch playing with the hacksaw?" I point at Sabrina. "She is capable of some seriously dodgy shenanigans. I've seen her hack out men's eyeballs, teeth… tongues. Even if your backup does arrive, she'll still take it, your tongue that is. I'd stop her if I could—"*

Before I finish, the engineer lifts the mouthpiece to his lips and croaks "false alarm."

ROLL YOUR POWER

Crack your knuckles, roll you neck and put up your guard. It's time to bowl some dice. You must roll a number of dice as indicated by your Power.

The results change depending on where the d10 lands in relation to the Target, or whether or not the Heat gets knocked over. The circular area in the centre of the playsheet is what matters, and this area, not the sheet itself, is what is meant when the Target is mentioned.

DIE RESULTS

Once you've thrown your die, you determine the results of the throw by checking where the die lands. You have to get the whole die inside the Target circle (touching the boundary of the circle is bad). If there's any doubt whether it's touching the boundary, then it's touching. That's that. You've gotta draw the line somewhere…

Hit: The d10 lands inside the Target, not touching the solid boundary of the Target

Miss: The d10 lands outside the Target, or touches the solid boundary of the Target

Collapse: The Heat gets partially or fully knocked over

Unless you score a Collapse (which is resolved immediately), the results are counted after the last die has been thrown (so it is possible that one die could be knocked by another die to change the results). Furthermore, unless you score a Collapse, only the best results are counted.

USE BEST DIE EXAMPLE:

*Let's say Susan has Power 3 for this challenge. She rolls the first die and it lands inside the Target, but it touches the boundary. That's a Miss. Now she rolls the second die. This time it lands inside the Target, without touching the boundary, which is a Hit. She opts **not** to roll the third die. Since only the best results are counted, Susan completes the Checkpoint with a Hit (and ignores the Miss).*

KNOCK IN EXAMPLE:

If Susan's second die had not only landed inside the Target, but had also knocked the first die inside the Target, the result would be different. Since the results are counted after the last die has been thrown, there would now be two dice inside the Target, indicating two Hits.

VICTORY POINTS

When you roll a Challenge, it is possible for you to win **Victory Points (VP)** for your team. You'll need a **Victory Cup** (a bowl or other vessel) to hold your team's Victory Points. Victory Points enable you to complete your Checkpoints.

When the Actor (the player resolving the Challenge) achieves a Hit during a Challenge, he **converts his Story Pips into VP** by placing them into the Victory Cup. Simple as that.

If the Actor scores **two Hits**, he scores an *extra boon*: He may immediately heal one Trauma from one character **(see Recover on P.37)** in addition to converting his Story Pips.
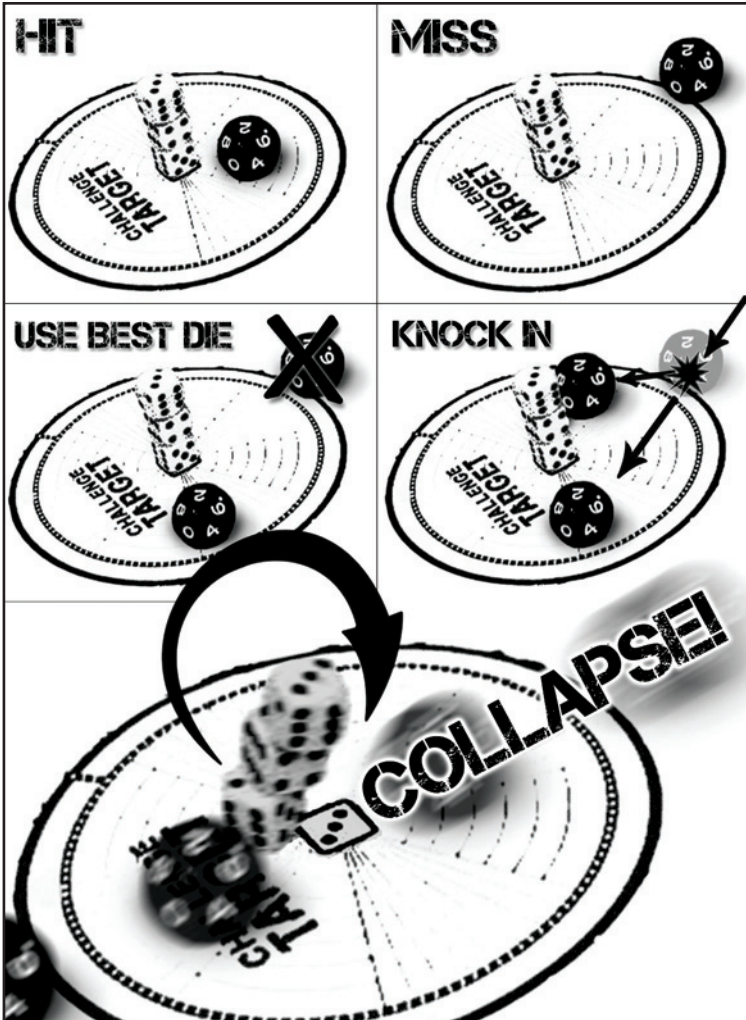
AFTERMATH

At the end of a Challenge, there is always an Aftermath. Each result has different Aftermath rules, so make sure to read them carefully.

RESULTS

HIT

First the good news. When you score a Hit, you get to narrate a successful outcome and you may ignore the "if you fail" clause **(see Run Step 4: Challenge on P.27)**. The narrative **must** contribute to the completion of your Checkpoint. As a fuzzy guideline, determine the quality of that contribution by the number of Victory Points earned.

Aftermath: The Actor **converts his Story Pips** into Victory Points. Now, start a **New Scene (P.24).** Remember that a Challenged player **cannot start the next scene**.

HIT EXAMPLE:

Continuing from the ongoing example **(see Challenge Example on P.28)**, *let's see how play might unfold if Daniel had scored a Hit when confronted by the grunt on the docks. Daniel opts to incorporate the "if you fail" clause. Also, knowing that this Hit is worth four Victory Points (that's how many he will earn), Daniel makes sure it contributes significantly toward the Checkpoint.*

D: *So, since I didn't fail, that means the lights never turned on and Dillon never got caught. Instead, Dillon sneaks onto the cruiser, tosses a rope over for the other two, and then, while they climb up, that's when Dillon undoes his zipper and, you know, does what Dillon does best. When Sabrina gets near the top of the rope, he puts out his hand to hoist her up…*

(Daniel converts his four Story Pips into four Victory Points by placing them into the Victory Cup. Since Jason has the fewest Story Pips, Jason must start the next Scene.)

Note that Daniel used some of Jason's "if you fail" to colour his own narration: Jason had described Daniel's character getting caught *in the act* and Daniel chose to carry on the motif. Sometimes you

will want to use the ideas presented in the Challenge during your narration, even when you score a Hit. Other times, you won't. Remember, it's your Hit, so it's your choice.

WHAT CAN MY CHARACTER DO?

Your character is not a superhero. Nevertheless, he can do some pretty cool stuff. Before play gets too heavily underway, it's a good idea to set the tone of the action. By default, think of Jason Bourne in the *Bourne Ultimatum* or Daniel Craig's *Bond*. You can do what stunt men do. If you start taking the piss, the other players have the right to veto your action (see p.26).

WHAT SHOULD MY CONTESTANT DO?

Hell for Leather is a game of grit and blood. The rules try to steer players toward nasty situations, but the story is going to be told by you, the players. Do whatever you like, according to the tone of your game, and try to be faithful to your character's motivations. Oh yeah… don't forget the gornography.

EXAMPLE

If you've got to run through a shop to escape the cops, why not burst into a sex dungeon en route, or escape by shoving a shard of glass under the cop's helmet? Instead of "punching the guy and running away," why don't you "stamp the guy's knee so hard it snaps like wood, and dart out the back as he sobs and vomits in agony?" Whatever you were trying to do, dial it up a notch. You have the power to make this nasty. Only you.

NARRATE OTHER CHARACTERS?

No. While you're narrating action, just describe your character's actions. If you do have to talk about what the other guys are doing, keep it trivial. It's okay to narrate other characters being tumbled inside a toppling helicopter, but it's a different thing to describe how they react to a murder scene.

MISS

Using the number showing on the die that scored the Miss, check the **Miss Chart** (opposite) to determine the results. Add your team's **Violence Rank (P.40)** to the result for the purposes of determining the effect. In the case that there is more than one die resulting in a Miss, use the lowest showing number to determine the Miss result.

Aftermath: See Spotlight, Complication or Trauma for the possible Aftermaths.

MISS EXAMPLE:

Susan rolls two d10s, both outside the Target, one scoring a three, the other scoring a nine. As you must use the lowest showing number to determine the Miss result, Susan uses the three.

COLLAPSE

Now for the really bad news. The Heat represents how close the enemy is. When you fuck up, they catch up. Whether or not you have more dice available to throw, as soon as the Heat falls, the Collapse result is to be applied immediately. Using the total showing on the fallen Heat dice (the six-sided dice), plus your team's **Violence Rank (P.40)**, check the **Miss Chart** (opposite) to determine the results. If only some of the Heat falls over, it's still a Collapse, and each die remaining in the Heat counts as a three for determining the Miss result.

Aftermath: See Spotlight, Complication or Trauma for the possible Aftermaths.

COLLAPSE EXAMPLE:

*Susan partially knocks over the Heat so that two dice fall (showing a two and a six) and four dice remain in the stack. The two dice that fall score (2 + 6) eight. The four dice that remain count as three each, for a total of 12. The total Collapse result is 20 + **Violence Rank**.*

But what if the Heat falls when no one is rolling dice? That (and more) is discussed in the Appendix **(see How the stack falls on P.68)**.

MISS CHART RESULTS

Whenever you consult the Miss Chart, either from a Miss result or from a Collapse, things start to get hairy. Check the results below and apply the effects.

MISS CHART

Score	Result	Score	Result
1-6	Spotlight	29-44	Trauma x2
7-12	Complication	45+	Trauma x3
13-28	Trauma		

SPOTLIGHT

You've succeeded but the Adversary has found you. Treat this result just like a Hit—but immediately after your narration, the person who Challenged you must narrate a remote scene involving the Adversary. A cutaway to the Adversary's H.Q. is appropriate.

If you're playing a custom Frame and you're the person who Challenged the Actor, think about how the Challenge could pique the interest of your Adversary and describe that scene. If you're playing using the standard Frame (game show hyperviolence) this is a great opportunity describe the TV show.

TV SPOTLIGHT:

You've been spotted. Somehow, whether you've been turned in or caught on CCTV, your actions are now being broadcast across the globe. Describe a snippet of the Hell for Leather *TV show, including footage of the failure. Try to ham it up with cheesy commentary and explosive production costs. Think Sports Night. If there are any victims, now's the time to paint them as people. After you're done, switch back to the "live" coverage of the character. Done well, this can make a great "cut-to-the-action."*

Aftermath: The Actor **discards half his Story Pips** (round up), converts the remainder into VP and raises the Heat by two **(see Adjusting the Heat on P.52)**. Now, start a **New Scene (P.24).** Remember that a Challenged player **cannot start the next scene**.

SPOTLIGHT EXAMPLE:

Continuing from the example in the last chapter **(see Challenge Example on P.28)**, *let's see how play might unfold if Daniel had scored a Spotlight.*

(Daniel describes his success, as per the Hit example on p.44. Now Jason, as the Challenger, must narrate a Spotlight.)

J: *We cut to the TV show which is running a special on Dillon Dunne. First we hear the thrash metal intro music and then a voice. "Abuse! Gets! Loose! You know him as Dillon Dunne, but to his family, he's known as the Tough Lover." Cut to a photo of the bruised family in a hospital. In the bottom of the screen we see the words "reconstruction." We start hearing the voice of the wife, "he's an evil, terrible man. He used to beat us loads, sometimes at breakfast. I hope they kill him." Now we cut back to the CCTV footage as Dillon's hands go down his trousers and he begins to sweat and grimace on global TV.*

(Now Daniel discards half his Story Pips (two), converts the rest into VP and raises the Heat by two. Since Jason has the fewest Story Pips, Jason must start the next Scene.)

COMPLICATION

You must narrate the result according to the "**if you fail**" clause at the beginning of the Challenge **(P.31)**. Try to incorporate your Flaw **(P.19)** into the narrative.

Sometimes you will want to take up just where the "**if you fail**" left off, other times you may want to explore the "**if you fail**" in more detail, maybe adding in some extra narrative. As long as your character comes off badly from it, you can make some minor changes.

<u>Aftermath</u>: Actor **discards two Story Pips** (down to a minimum of zero) and increases the Heat by two **(see Adjusting the Heat on P.52)**. Now, start a **New Scene (P.24).** Remember that a Challenged player **cannot start the next scene**.

COMPLICATION EXAMPLE:

*Continuing the struggle **(see Challenge Example on P.28)**, let's say that Daniel scored a Complication when Challenged with the grunt on the docks. First of all, Daniel continues from the "if you fail" description and then incorporates his Flaw, "Abusive pervert."*

D: *Dillon is caught in the lights, looking sheepish with his cock in his hand.*

The grunt looks Dillon up and down and starts to chuckle. "I know you. You're that guy on TV. So you're a pervert, huh?"

Immediately Dillon turns red and starts foaming with spittle. "Calling me a fucking pervert? You shit flinging, ape-man, piece of c*@ting #@$%!! Your momma was the one who was perverted when I—"

Next thing you know Dillon is underwater. When he resurfaces, the grunt is pacing up and down the pier like an angry bear, growling and shouting.

(Now Daniel loses two Story Pips, raises the Heat by two and since Jason has the fewest Story Pips, Jason must start the next Scene.)

J: *So, we'll do a Run Scene and the Objective is to save Dillon. We'll start where we just left off. We're still in the shadows watching the grunt pace up and down the pier. Etc.*

TRAUMA

Something goes disastrously wrong. Your character is physically or psychologically wounded.

Traumas are scored against your character's Power (and are equally a measure of a downed spirit as bleeding guts). Immediately move your Power token one space to the right **(see Power on P.35)**.

Now it's time to narrate the consequences. Your character has been horribly traumatised or wounded and you're job is to make the other players understand that. Shattered fingers, lost loved ones, gouged eyes, intense fear and burst nostrils, they're all fair game. If in doubt, be cruel.

Aftermath: Actor **loses two Story Pips** (down to a minimum of zero) and **decreases** the Heat by two **(see Adjusting the Heat on P.52)**. Now, start a **New Scene (P.24).** Remember that a Challenged player **cannot start the next scene**.

EXAMPLE:

Let's see how play might unfold if Daniel had scored a Trauma in his struggle with the grunt.

> **D:** *The grunt shouts "Hey you, you little shit, come out where I can see you!" Dillon starts to go into a rage, mouthing off obscenities. "You wanna say that to my face you ape-faced mother—"*

> *CRACK! A steel baton shatters Dillon's cheek.*

> *Now he feels liquid spilling over his lips like warm tea. The dock spins and leans like an ocean and soon he hears the muffled thud of skull bouncing off stone. Blackout.*

(Daniel loses two Story Pips, reduces the Heat by two and his Power token is shifted one space to the right. Since Jason has the fewest Story Pips, Jason must start the next Scene.)

MULTIPLE TRAUMAS

It is possible to score several Traumas (P.50) with one Miss. If that is the case, the Actor may choose to take the extra Traumas himself, or to pass them on to other players on his team. Players always describe their own Traumas. For each Trauma received by the team, reduce the Heat by two. If a result of multiple Traumas kills a character, any excess Traumas are ignored.

Example:

Susan scores 48 on a Collapse, indicating three Traumas. Susan may take all three Traumas, or she may take one of them and assign the others to the rest of her team. If Susan was already hurt, and only one Trauma was enough to kill her, the other two Traumas would be ignored.

RISK

If you **did not commit Violence** and you are unhappy with the result of your roll, unless the result was a Collapse, you may take a Risk. Immediately, **add one die to the Heat** (yes, add another six-sided die on top of the stack of dice!) and **re-roll.** Whatever die you just rolled, go and pick it up and roll it again. You may take as many Risks as you like, but each time you must raise the Heat by one die before re-rolling. If any dice fall, that's an instant Collapse.

EXAMPLE:

The Heat is at five. By using a Talent, Jason is rolling a Challenge with Power 2. Jason rolls two Misses and decides to Risk. He raises the Heat to six (by adding a sixth die to the top of the Heat stack), and re-rolls the last die he threw, scoring another Miss. Jason decides to Risk again. However, while adding the seventh die to the Heat, he accidentally knocks it over. This is a Collapse.

ADJUSTING THE HEAT

Apart from Risk (above), there are two ways to adjust the Heat as result of the game mechanics: **Reduce** and **Raise**.

- **Reduce**: As a consequence of a Trauma or a Rest Scene, you may be asked to reduce the Heat. Immediately remove the dice from the stack (down to a minimum of three). It doesn't matter if any dice fall (just rebuild the stack afterwards).

- **Raise**: As consequence of Complication or Spotlight, you must raise the Heat. Take two dice and place them **beside** the Heat. Do not add them to the stack yet. At the beginning of the **next Challenge**, the new Actor must add these to the Heat before he rolls. If any dice fall, that's an instant Collapse.

CHECKPOINT

Checkpoints are the story components that measure how close you are to the finish line. As soon as the team earns **nine** Victory Points, the Actor *must* cash them in for a Checkpoint. In the Checkpoints area of the Team Sheet, mark off the first available Checkpoint and return all Victory Points and Story Pips to the Pool.

Starting with the Actor, **each player narrates his character's role in the completion of the Checkpoint**. Try to keep these descriptions brief. Once each player has contributed, the Checkpoint is considered complete. When you achieve all three Checkpoints you reach the Destination.

EXAMPLE:

Daniel, Susan and Jason are playing Hell for Leather. They have 6VP in their Victory Cup, and Jason has two Story Pips. In the last scene, the team boarded a British cruiser and fought their way onto the bridge. Jason describes how John Jackson takes control of the bridge.

*D (holding a Story Pip in the air): Challenge! **If you fail**, you sadistically push the captain overboard. Now, the bridge will be empty! Radars will bleep. Screens will ping. Lights will twinkle. The moment you arrive, you will hear an incoming transmission.*

"This is Rogue Base to Hunter Two, do you copy? Dispatching assault team in response to distress call. ETA two minutes. Do you copy? Over." We will see the searchlights of six helicopter gunships en route to the cruiser.

(Daniel gives Jason a Story Pip, bringing him up to three. Now Jason must roll a Challenge.)

J: *I'm going to use my Cop Talent.*

(Jason temporarily increases his Power by one, to Power 2. On the first die, he rolls a Miss. On the second die, he rolls a Hit. Jason must narrate the outcome as a success, incorporating his Cop Talent.)

J: *"Come in Rogue Base, this is Hunter Two. Abort the assault!"*

"Copy that. Please confirm abort…"

John Jackson searches around for a dossier, flips it open to the last page and wipes it with his palm. Some of the ink smudges. Squinting, he makes out the code underneath. "Yeah… that's an abort code Golf Oscar Romeo Echo… Must have been a practical joke… You have a good night now…" There's a pause.

"Copy that. Happy New Year."

(Now Jason converts his three Story Pips into Victory Points, bringing the total to 9VP, which means the team have reached their Checkpoint. Starting with Jason, each player narrates his character's role in the completion of the Checkpoint.)

J: *We see John Jackson at the helm, starting up the engines and taking the ship out to sea.*

D: *Dillon Dunne is rounding up the sailors at gunpoint and tying them up in the brig.*

S: *Finally, we see Sabrina Stockwell at a large map. She pulls a pencil from behind her ear and starts to make calculations. As the sun rises, the cruiser breaks into the ocean, on its way to India.*

(Play continues as normal, until all Checkpoints are complete, or all characters are dead.)

DESTINATION

As soon as you get all three Checkpoints you've reached the finish line, but it doesn't stop there. It's time for the End Game.

CHALLENGE SUMMARY

1. Violence (P.38) or **Talent (P.40)?**

2. Roll your **Power (P.41)**

3. Risk, if you can **(P.51)**

4. Dice inside the Target? That's a **Hit (P.44)**

   *If you've got 9VP, **Checkpoint** (P.52)*

5. Otherwise, check the **Miss Chart (P.46)**

6. Aftermath: *Hit/Spotlight*—Gain Victory Points **(P.44)**, *Complication/Trauma*—Lose Story Pips **(P.48)**
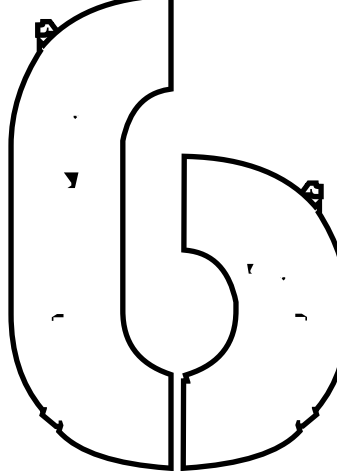
7. Player with fewest Story Pips starts a new scene

GAME DURATION

A standard game of *Hell for Leather* takes around three hours.

- Explain the Rules - 20 mins
- Build the game and characters - 30 mins
- Complete all of your Checkpoints - 1 ½ - 2 hours
- Finale - 30 mins
- Epilogue - 15 mins

END GAME

END GAME

Once you earn **three Checkpoints (P.14)**, your team has reached the Destination and it's time for the conclusion.

OPTIONS

You've got **two choices**. Kill the bad guy, or kill each other.

We call the first option the **Finale** and the second option **Deathmatch.** Each will be described in its own section. For now, figure out which road to go down. If you've used the standard Frame **(P.8)**, or a Frame about blood sports, the Deathmatch option is probably the most appropriate. However, if you've devised a custom Frame it often makes sense to use the Finale option.

In the standard Frame, the Network want you to murder each other. Live on TV. You could do what the Network tells you (Deathmatch). Or you could fuck their shit up (Finale).

OPTION 1: FINALE

You want to destroy the Adversary? The Finale is hardcore, so expect heavy casualties.

RULES DIFFERENCES

In the Finale rules, there are no Story Pips, Violence, Talents, Risks or Misses. The **Heat starts at four** and a **Collapse kills instantly**—holy shit! Furthermore, you *only narrate if you score a Hit*.

Now throw all your Story Pips and Victory Points (VP) away.

PREPARATION

In the top part of the Team Sheet you'll see a section titled Finale. You've got to fill out all four Finale **Missions**—unless you're playing with less than four players. If there are three players, cross off the first Mission before you start, and if there are only two players, cross off the second as well.

Finale Missions are similar to Checkpoints **(P.14)** in that they provide short term narrative goals. However, a Mission is often of a much

smaller scale than a Checkpoint. For example, opening a high security jail cell might be too simple for a Checkpoint, but it would probably make a fine Mission. Now fill in the Missions using the following guidelines:

MISSION 1: INFO (4 or more players only)
You need some information in order to complete Mission 2, 3 or 4. Keep it simple and write it down. E.g., "Get the password for the bunker," "Locate the Network President," or "Contact and bribe the mafia."

MISSION 2: STEAL (3 or more players only)
You've got to go somewhere or steal something. Make sure you're trying to avoid a dreadful danger, e.g., "Sneak through Hitler's bunker," "Steal $25 million from the Network," "Locate the mini-nuke."

MISSION 3: DESTROY
How can you bring down the Adversary? Kill someone, destroy something, blow something up? Write it down. E.g., "Kill Hitler," "Kill the Network President," "Blow up the Network Broadcasting Aerial."

MISSION 4: ESCAPE
You've got to run away or get into hiding. Write down your plan, e.g., "Escape the collapsing bunker," "Flee the Network," or "Hideout with the mafia." Don't spend too long thinking about it. Just write it down.

FINALE PLAY
Nominate one player as the **Actor**. The Actor must **first raise the Heat by one** and then roll according to his Power. If he rolls a Hit, he scores **1VP**, narrates how his character helps the team toward their Mission and play passes to the next clockwise player.

If he rolls a Miss, play passes to the next clockwise player on the team *without* narration. That player becomes the Actor—raising the Heat by one **before** rolling.

If he scores a Collapse? Oh dear. See overleaf.

N.B. There is **no narration before the roll.** This is the End Game, and too much narration will make things clunky. First raise the Heat, then roll, then narrate if it's a Hit. That's the rule.

MISSIONS

A Mission is achieved as soon as you earn **4VP**. Immediately describe your character's role in the completion of the Mission.

COLLAPSE

You will find that play progresses quite quickly, as each player adds a die to the Heat, rolls, and sometimes narrates (if a Hit was scored). Sooner or later, however, the Heat is going to get too high and the dice are going to fall. In the Finale rules, that means instant death. If it is your turn when the Heat falls, game over buddy. **Gain 1VP for your death** and describe how your death contributes to the Mission. Ham it up. The remaining players **reset the Heat to four** and play resumes.

N.B. A Collapse supersedes any other roll result. So even if you just scored a Hit, and then suddenly the Heat Collapses from bad engineering, you're still to blame. Scratch that Hit. Sorry pal. R.I.P.

FINALE EXAMPLE:

Sebastian and Roger are playing the Finale. Since there are only ***two players****, they cross out the first and second Mission. For the third they write down "Kill Hitler," and for the fourth they write down "Escape Berlin."*

The Heat is reset to four, and Sebastian goes first. He raises the Heat to five and rolls a Miss. Misses are ignored in the Finale rules.

Now play passes to Roger. He raises the Heat to six and rolls a ***Hit****.*

R: *We're surrounded by Nazi guards. I walk over to one of them, smile, and throw him an uppercut. As he falls I take his gun and start shouting "freeze!"*

(Roger puts 1VP into the Victory Cup)

Sebastian raises the Heat to seven and rolls a Miss.

*Roger raises the Heat to eight and rolls a **Hit**.*

R: *Suddenly there is chaos. People are running and screaming. I start running for the bunker elevator. We cram inside just as the guards start opening fire. When the doors open, we find ourselves in some kind of communications headquarters.*

(Roger puts 1VP into the Victory Cup)

Sebastian raises the Heat to nine and rolls a Miss.

Roger raises the Heat to 10 and rolls a Miss.

*Sebastian tries to raise the Heat to 11, but knocks it over. **Collapse**.*

S: *Fuck! As we burst into the HQ, I start shouting for everyone to get on their hands and knees. You are trying to tug me back into the elevator, but I ignore you, screaming like the devil. I feel cold metal press against my temple, but before I realise what's going on it's too late. There is a bang as my blood spatters the elevator door. Now Adolf Hitler steps forward with a bloody grimace.*

(Sebastian puts 1VP into the Victory Cup and resets the Heat to four)

Roger would continue playing on his own, raising the Heat and rolling. He still needs 1VP to complete this Mission (which means his next Hit would kill Hitler) and then another 4VP for the next Mission. He'll probably get killed. But you never know…

VICTORY

If you manage to complete the last Finale Mission, bravo! It's rare to see more than one player survive. As a reward, each surviving player gets their own Epilogue.

SURVIVOR'S EPILOGUE

"Hell for Leather Mayhem." "Network in Trouble." "Vigilante on the Loose."

Headlines sizzle through the media like fiery serpents while cold corporate uproar drowns out the electric cries of fans. Lots of questions need to be answered. Like how did they let it happen? What really went down in Network HQ? And what ever happened to the survivors?

Whether you played the standard Frame or not, it's time for a cut to the surviving character, several years later. You've got 30 seconds to describe your epilogue. Did everything work out? Are you back where you started? Don't spend too long thinking. It's time to wrap it up. **Well done!**

FINALE SUMMARY

1. Reset the Heat to four

2. Actor must raise Heat by one and roll

3. If he scores a Hit, gain 1VP and see 6

4. If he scores a Miss, see 7

5. If he scores a Collapse, he dies, gain 1VP, reset Heat to four

6. If you have enough VP to buy a Mission

… narrate the achievement of the Mission, see 7

… otherwise, narrate working towards the Mission, see 7

7. Play passes to the next clockwise player and see 2

OPTION 2: DEATHMATCH

It's like a night at the Oscars. Paparazzi glitter like diamonds, flash bulbs popping like popcorn. Searchlights sweep the clouds and glamour rolls across the city like a red carpet. In a blaze of shouts, queries and questions, you are ushered inside—the baggage of your crimes replaced by the mask of superstardom. It's a global fight night and there's only one survivor. Cheers follow you as the doors click shut.

DEATHMATCH RULES DIFFERENCES

In the Deathmatch rules, there are no Story Pips, Victory Points, Violence, Talents, or Misses. The **Heat starts at four** and a **Collapse kills instantly**. Furthermore, you *only narrate if you score a Hit*.

Now throw all your Story Pips and VP away.

PREPARATION

Its time to think about murder. The Deathmatch takes place in the location you all chose as the Destination. All characters enter. Only one survives. Whatever way you kill your enemies, it'll have to happen inside the Destination or in the surrounding area. When you begin the Deathmatch, all of your characters are assumed to have done some homework—choose an appropriate weapon to help you defeat your teammates (suggestions overleaf).

Now, each player narrates his entrance. Make it bloody and sensational. When you're done, the Deathmatch begins. Get ready. Get set…

ENTRANCE EXAMPLE:

Daniel, Susan and Jason opt for the Deathmatch. After they choose an appropriate weapon, all players announce their grand entrance. If anyone is any good at satirising North American sports commentary, now's their time to shine.

D: *Dillon enters the Insein Prison with a Gatling gun spinning menacingly at his hip.*

S: *Sabrina kicks the door open, tugging the chord of an automatic nail gun. Thud-thud-thud!*

J: *"Ex-cop: Disgraced. Disowned. Desperate. You've seen him on the streets. Now, for one night only, delivering his own kind of justice… Please welcome, the barbaric, the savage, the juggernaut of death… Joooooohn Jacksonnnn!"* He tosses a grenade into the main courtyard and comes running through the smoke, spraying bullets from two Uzis!

WEAPON SUGGESTIONS

TRAPS
If your character has been evasive and cowardly, your character may have laid traps in secret places. Have a think about what and where those might be and how it might be fun to present them in your narrative.

ALLIES
If your character has been manipulative and treacherous, your character may have enlisted a troupe of allies. Have a think about what sort of violent group would risk their lives for your character, what would he offer them in return, and how will you use them to tell the story of your fight.

WEAPONS
If your character has been tyrannous and aggressive, your character may have come heavily armed. Think about what sort of weapons your character might have requested from the Adversary and some creative ways to introduce them on your turn.

DEATHMATCH PLAY
In the Deathmatch, players challenge one another in a very specific way. One player describes how he is murdering another. The victim gets a chance to defend himself. If the victim is successful, he returns the challenge back to the person who tried to kill him. If unsuccessful, he is killed instantly.

The **Heat starts at four**. Play begins with the player with the most wounds (in a tie, start with the younger player).

ATTACKER

The first player (attacker) **raises the Heat by one** and then rolls according to his Power. If he does not score a Hit on his first roll, he must keep taking Risks **(P.51)** until he scores a Hit or a Collapse **(P.65)**.

After a Hit is scored, he describes how he slaughters another player (called the Victim). Don't pussyfoot around. Kill, kill, kill.

FIRST PLAYER EXAMPLE:

Daniel, Jason and Susan are playing out the Deathmatch in the Insein Prison. Susan has the most wounds, so she goes first, and chooses Daniel as her Victim. The Heat is set to four. Before her first roll, Susan raises the Heat to five, and then rolls and scores a Miss. Since she must Risk until she scores a Hit, she increases the Heat to six and re-rolls. This time she scores a Hit, and narrates…

S: *Sabrina sees Dillon at the end of prison wing, raises her nail gun and sprays him full of steel.*

VICTIM

The Victim must now defend himself. He must **raise the Heat before rolling** and must Risk until he scores a Hit (or a Collapse **p.65**).

After a Hit is scored, he describes how he slaughters the Attacker (the last person to narrate). It should be done in such a way so as to **negate** the Attacker's description.

VICTIM EXAMPLE:

Continuing the above example, Daniel has been attacked by Susan and now gets a chance to defend. Daniel raises the Heat to seven, and then rolls a Hit. He must now narrate the murder of the Attacker (Susan).

D: *As Sabrina's nails hurtle toward him, DIllon dives for cover into one of the putrid prison cells. Sabrina comes running after and turns the corner, just as bullets shred her face in a blaze of light and noise.*

REPEAT

Once a player scores a Hit and narrates, the other player gets a chance to defend himself (as per the Victim rules). And so on.

Always make sure to describe a murder, and make sure it is targeted against the guy who just attacked you. Because each new narration negates the previous one, no one actually dies until someone rolls a Collapse.

REPEAT EXAMPLE:

Continuing the above example, Susan gets a chance to defend herself. She raises the Heat to eight and rolls a

Miss. She raises the Heat to nine and this time scores a Hit.

S: *While Dillon Dunne fires his weapon, Sabrina is sneaking around the back. She bursts through the wall behind him, roaring above the noise of her nail gun. Dillon Dunne looks over his shoulder just in time to see a barrage of nails burst through his skull.*

Daniel raises the Heat to ten, misses and must add another die. During that Risk, the nerves get the better of him and the Heat falls. That's a Collapse.

COLLAPSE

Anyone who scores a Collapse in the Deathmatch dies instantly. Splat. Game over. As a reward, you get to describe your own death in full, technicolour glory. Be dramatic, gory and specific.

As soon as you're finished the death scene, **reset the Heat to four**. The Attacker picks a new Victim and play continues.

COLLAPSE EXAMPLE:

Continuing the above example, Daniel just scored a Collapse.

D: *Shit! Okay, so Dillon is screaming as he sprays the prison walls with bullets, exploding the bricks and mortar into shards of brittle stone. Suddenly he hears the thudding of the nail gun, turns around and sees Sabrina towering above him with the glare of murder in her eyes. "Sabrina! No! Don't do it! Think of everything we've been through!" She snarls and presses the nail gun to his throat. There's a splash as his neck is torn apart. He gurgles and sputters for seconds. Dead.*

Daniel is out of the game. The Heat is reset to four and Susan becomes the Attacker. She selects Jason as the new Victim, raises the Heat by one and picks up her dice…

GAME OVER

As soon as there's only one character alive, it's game over! There is a roaring cheer from outside. Stepping into the glaring spotlight of the media, the fans scream in adulation. All in a day's work. It's time for the epilogue.

WINNER'S EPILOGUE

The game show host grins into the lens. "You remember that night last year? Ever wonder what happened to the winning contestant? Well tonight, for the first time, we contact the victor: one year later and one year richer."

The winning character gets one last glory run. Whether you played the standard Frame or not, it's time for a cut to the surviving character. How did it all work out? If this was a movie, imagine the last shot. You have 30 seconds to wrap it up.

EPILOGUE EXAMPLE:

John Jackson is the only survivor, so Jason gets to narrate the epilogue. Jason describes a paradise island. "The camera swoops over a grand, white villa, to a long football pitch. John Jackson is running quarterback against a team of cardboard cutouts, snorting with laughter. He topples through them. Trips. Face in the mud. Hahaha, he snorts. Hahahaaaa!" The end.

DEATHMATCH SUMMARY

1. Reset the Heat to four. **Attacker** chooses a Victim.

2. Attacker raises the Heat and rolls.

*If he scores a **Collapse**, he dies instantly. Victim becomes Attacker. See 1.*
If he scores a Miss, he must Risk until he scores a Hit.
If he scores a Hit, he narrates Victim's death. See 3.

3. Victim raises the Heat and rolls.

*If he scores a **Collapse**, he dies instantly. See 1.*
If he scores a Miss, he must Risk until he scores a Hit.
If he scores a Hit, he narrates Attacker's death. See 2.

APPENDIX 7
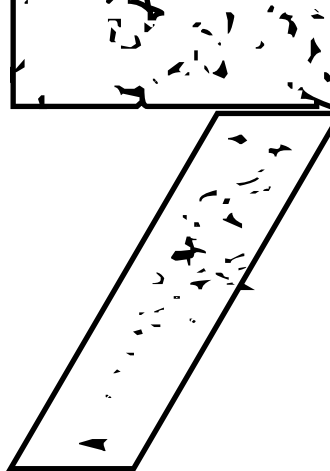
APPENDIX

HOW THE STACK FALLS

So the Heat has just toppled. Whose fault was it? Who gets punished? And all that other argumentative nonsense.

- If you're taking dice off the Heat or rebuilding the Heat (up until the *final* die), it doesn't count if the Heat falls.

- If someone knocks the table, rebuild the Heat. No harm no foul. Let it slide. But if it happens again, **gain one Violence Rank**.

- While adding the *last die* to the Heat? That's a Collapse. Calm the fuck down, butter fingers!

- If you've taken your turn and the Heat hasn't fallen down but it looks shaky, take back your d10s as quick as you can. If you get your d10s off the Target playsheet before it falls, you're safe. Phew!

HANDICAP RULES

Only **FIRST TIME** players should use the **Beginner's circle** to resolve a Challenge. Also, during your first game, if you (collectively) complete the first Checkpoint without any Traumas (after healing), all players must immediately **upgrade to the Expert circle**.

Some players find *Hell for Leather* **TOO EASY**. No one wants that. To keep the game interesting, individual players may upgrade to **Master** after their first game (playing from the corners of the playsheet marked Master). The extra distance from the diagonal adds difficulty = fun.

Conversely, if anyone finds the game **TOO HARD**, that player should *always* use the Beginner's circle. Furthermore, you might give the player a couple of extra Talents, increase their Power by a rank, **or** let them ignore the penalty effects of Traumas. Whatever handicap you award, decide it **before play**, make sure everyone understands, and *be strict* about enforcing the limitations.

DYING EARLY

You can avoid killing characters by sharing out Traumas **(see Multiple Traumas on P.51)** and going for two Hits instead of one if you've got the extra dice **(P.43)**. Nevertheless, sometimes luck is not on your side and someone dies before the End Game.

When a player's character dies before the End Game, that player should take over all new Run Scenes. Of course, if another player dies, this role should cycle between dead players after each Scene. Dead players can still make Challenges and give Applause.

DYING EARLY EXAMPLE:

Eoin, Joe and Pooka are playing a game of Hell for Leather. Pooka has just suffered his third Trauma and his character is now dead. The rules call for the player with the fewest Story Pips to start a new Scene, but since Joe wants a Run Scene, Pooka takes the job.

P: This is a Run Scene and the Objective is to escape the building. While you watch my body twitch in the final the throes of death, you hear the rush of a hundred footfalls and the shouts of soldiers bearing down on your position.

TROUBLESHOOTING

So, it's not working out. Why? It might be because your Story Pips aren't moving around the table. If so, review Chapter 4. Otherwise, it gets more complicated. Without going into extensive detail, here's a list of warnings:

PLEASE, PLEASE…

Don't choose small Checkpoints **(see Scale! on P.14)**

*Don't try to make **every** scene super-cool (or you'll get brain freeze)*

Don't worry about failing

Don't forget to roleplay (lots of the humour comes from dialogue)

Don't break the game (overleaf)

BREAKING THE GAME

If you're interested in a game about politics, art or intellectual drama, you're playing the wrong game. *Hell for Leather* can discuss these things, but only by accident. If you must make a point, do it with satire.

Don't write a Frame about the emancipation of women in settling America, write a Frame about Salem witches with blood boiling curses and men with flamethrowers and tactical ballistas. If you want to write a Frame about soldiers in Afghanistan, pitch your characters against an army of cursed werewolves ruled by a Machiavellian European parliament—who are possessed by the minions of Cthulhu. Fire the scriptwriter. **Make a B-Movie**.

Hell for Leather is all about **stoopid**, **sexy violence**. If you're itching to make it do something else, you're kind of breaking the warranty.

THAT BEING SAID...

There are certain, solid ways to make Hell for Leather do things outside of the box. These are discussed in **HfL: Freestyle (P.76)**.

CHECKPOINT TIPS

Make sure every Checkpoint is **impossible**, **specific** and **open**.

Impossibility ensures that the task will require several steps for its execution. *Example: "Steal the ship" is okay, but "Steal the submerged submarine" is impossible!*

Specificity ensures clarity. *Example: "Kidnap an official" is okay, but "Kidnap the First Lady" is specific!*

Openness (room for interpretation) ensures emergent strategies. *Example: "Act as the presidential chauffeur in order to capture the president's wife" is not open for interpretation, but "Kidnap the First Lady" is perfect!*

Be *specific* for the "what" and *open* for the "how." That is, the objective should be clear while the practicalities of its completion remain mysterious.

TIP: WATCH THE CLOCK

When you get **nine** Victory Points, you achieve your Checkpoint. That means you *always* know how close you are to completing your Checkpoint.

For example, if you have two Victory Points, you know you are *far away* from completing your Checkpoint. If you have seven Victory Points, on the other hand, you know you are *very close* to completing your Checkpoint. **Think of it like a clock**.

Try to phrase your Scenes to match that clock.

For example, *if you have eight Victory Points and your Checkpoint is Travel to India, the next Run Scene should offer a way to get to India. No matter what the characters are doing, it should be possible to phrase the Run Scene appropriately. You could have the characters ambushed in an airfield, have them betrayed by an international smuggler or get them kidnapped by a gang of traffickers.*

TIP: SIDELINE

It is also (less) problematic if you reach the Checkpoint too early. That is, you arrive in India and you've only scored a couple of Victory Points. This tends to happen when the scale of a Checkpoint is too small. Therefore, the easiest fix is to make sure all the Checkpoints are of a suitable scale **(see Scale! on P.14)**.

If you need to fix things on the fly, watch the clock. That is, keep an eye on the number of Victory Points. If there are too few, insert a Run Scene that will sideline the plot. For example, **you're on your way to India and the plane is touching down. You could describe a crash-landing scene, or surround the plane with a squad of Hunters.**

TIP: PACE

Another problem occurs when players throw in too many Challenges. Remember that players can describe action—even wild, daring do—without the need for a Challenge. If you find that you're very close to achieving all your Victory Points but you've not described enough story, talk more, complete Run Scenes without Challenges and don't make the final Challenge until you're ready to complete the Checkpoint.

QUICK FRAMING (OPTIONAL)

So, you're going customise your own Frame? Awesome. This section explains an **optional** method that will get you from nought to gaming in record time—suitable for demos and conventions.

Give each player **two pips** (coins, beads, whatever). You will use these to offer your suggestions. Think of them like coins that you pay to speak. Building a Frame has seven **segments**:

1. Prologue
2. Adversary & Gore Threshold (treated as one segment)
3. Connection
4. Drop-Off & Destination (treated as one segment)
5. Checkpoint 1
6. Checkpoint 2
7. Checkpoint 3

Each segment is addressed individually and in turn. Start with the Prologue and work through them in order.

Any player can suggest a solution for a segment by spending one of their pips. Once a suggestion is made, any player may counter that suggestion with a suggestion of his own—by paying a pip. Once there are no more counter-suggestions, the latest suggestion is accepted. Now move on to the next segment. This continues until either no one has any pips (at which point you move onto the next segment and everyone takes a new pip) or the Frame is complete.

Importantly, there's no such thing as "no." If you've got a problem with someone's suggestion, put your money where your mouth is. Suggest an alternative and spend a pip.

Because you're going to build a Frame quickly with this method, you should be especially careful to make sure the Adversary and the Checkpoints work. Specifically, is the Adversary powerful (and angry) and are the Checkpoints epic?

QUICK FRAMING EXAMPLE:

Eoin, Joe and Pooka are going to play Hell for Leather. Each player starts with two Quick Framing pips.

J (2 pips): Let's do Cthulhu cultists who have just awakened an Old One! [Joe spends a pip.]

E (2 pips): I'd prefer something classical like Greek heroes. [Eoin spends a pip, nobody counters, so they move onto Adversary.]

P (2 pips): For Adversary, let's say Zeus and the other gods are after us for something and all of Greece know us as heretics! Also, there's gotta be a lot of gore. Gore Threshold 4. [Pooka spends a pip, no one counters, so they move on to Connection.]

J (1 pip): We are heroic sailors. One of us seduced Zeus's wife and now we're trying to evade his wrath! [Joe pays his last pip.]

E (1 pip): What if we stole something, maybe the "egg of wisdom?" [Eoin pays his last pip.]

*J (0 pips): Remember that for Connection we need to have done something pretty bad for the Adversary to want us dead, probably something we can't easily undo. Maybe we ate the egg already rather than just stole it? [This is more of a reminder of the guidelines than a counter-suggestion. **If you're riffing off an idea in order to suit the game guidelines it's not a counter-suggestion**—so you don't have to pay.]*

E (0 pips): I see what you mean, but it's not very epic. What if we destroyed the nest of Zeus' beloved eagle while getting the egg? Now he's mad. Grrr. [No one counters, so they move on to Drop-Off/ Destination.]

P (1 pip): Our Destination is the river Styx—the only safe haven from the gods… and our Drop-Off is the Acropolis, where we hear the portent of our doom. [Pooka pays a pip and, since no one has any pips, they move on to Checkpoint 1 and everyone takes a new pip.]

E (1 pip): For the first Checkpoint we should seduce the Oracle of Delphi [Eoin pays a pip. Etc.]

In the above example, notice how nobody said "no?"

If you're about to say "no," change it to "what if" and pay a pip.

FRAMES

During a design contest, some interesting Frames were built by various designers and playtesters. If you're stuck for ideas, you can scavenge these for ideas, or even run them as described.

THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME By Sam Zeitlin

Prologue: Victorian, steamships, tropical jungles, waistcoats, hansom cabs, survivors seeking revenge

Adversary: The Somerset Gentlemen's Club & Hunting Lodge
Gore Threshold: 3
Connection: Survivors of the wreck of the SS Jeddah

Drop-Off: The rocky beach of Ship-Trap island
Destination: London, England

Checkpoints: Escape the Colonel's island, Hijack the RMS Oceanic, Kill Lord Chancellor Chelmsford.

ROME By Daniel Z. Klein

Prologue: The Roman Empire, 1st century AD. After Rome burned to the ground, Nero pretty much declared open season on the early Christians. You are early Christians.

Adversary: The Roman Empire. The entire Roman Empire.
Gore Threshold: 5
Connection: First Underground Christian Church of Pompeii

Drop-Off: Pompeii, AD 79, as Vesuvius erupts.
Destination/Finale: Storm Titus Flavius's coronation ceremony at the Colosseum in Rome. Kill the fucker dead.

Checkpoints: Retrieve the scroll of scripture (from the underground temple in burning Pompeii), Convert and martyr Gaius Tacitus (the prefect in charge of Christian persecution), Hijack the chariots of the Third War Chariot Squad (where they are preparing to lead the triumphal procession into the Colosseum).

FRENCH WARS OF RELIGION By Eoin Corrigan

Prologue: 16th Century France

Adversary: The Crown
Gore Threshold: 7
Connection: Huegenots of Paris seek to flee France during and after the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

Drop-Off: Ile de France, Paris
Destination/Finale: Board a ship to England

Checkpoints: Escape Paris, Kill the Duke of Guise on the road to Cherbourg, Infiltrate the closed port of Cherbourg.

TERRAN RESISTANCE By Hudson

Prologue: A remote sector of Space on the outskirts of a newly formed Empire. The dominant race secretly plan mass slavery.

Adversary: The Portallerig, the Warrior Caste, hunters and enforcers who impose conformity amongst the Member planets.
Gore Threshold: 5
Connection: A group of Terrans exposed to the Empire's plans.

Drop-Off: K'ltarhi, one of the few Terran planets scattered amongst the Empire. Under lockdown by the Portallerig.
Destination: The vast, interstellar Network Array

Checkpoints: Escape off-world, Engage the Portallerig (foment the beginnings of a resistance), Break into the Network Array (to broadcast proof of the Empires plans to all the Member Planets)

TOO MANY TO FIT

See also **Aztec** (by Jason Hickey), **Inside the Code** (by Ben Wright) and **Angel Apocalypse** (by Christopher Heath) on the Cobweb Games wiki.

If **you** generate an awesome Frame, get in touch! We're always looking for cool ideas—to play *and* publish!

HFL: FREESTYLE

Up until now, we've only talked about cursory customisation. That is, how to alter the tone and setting of your games while still preserving the thrill of bloody pursuit. But what if you want to tell a story **without murder**? How would Violence work?

HfL: Freestyle explores *Violence* in greater depth, presents the new *Subplot* rules for extended storytelling, and examines *HfL: Online*, the Target-less gaming solution.

HfL: Freestyle. Coming 2011.

THE LAST PAGE

Six months after *Hell for Leather* was submitted as an entry to the 2G1N competition, there was some controversy about the kind of gaming it produced. In response to a vulgar play report, RPG.net put a ban on all *Hell for Leather* Actual Play threads. Fair? Maybe. Heavy handed? I'll let you decide. In any case, it was my first game and it had already been banned before it had been released.

I don't want to get too sentimental here. But thank fuck for Daniel Klein. And Joe Murphy. And Eoin Corrigan. Thank fuck for my brother, Jason Hickey, the ping-pong board of my creativity and thank fuck for Gregor Hutton, the big hearted stranger.

Somehow you're reading this page. That tells me something about you. So, you know what? Thank fuck for you too.

Time to wrap it up. It's getting late.

This is my happy ending.

Sebastian Hickey
18th June 2010

GLOSSARY

Adversary: Bad guys. If they find you they will kill you.

Challenge: When a player forces you to face a new threat, using the Target, and awards you a Story Pip.

Character: A fictional persona, ranging from the story's protagonists (contestants) to the throngs of nameless extras

Collapse: When a die knocks over the Heat, or when the Heat falls while a new die is being added to the top.

Miss: When the die touches the border of the Target, or lands outside the Target.

Gore Threshold: How bad does it have to go before things get messy? Limits use of Violence during play.

Gorn or Gornography: Hyperviolent supergore. Gore is to gornography what sex is to pornography. If storytelling is the meat of *Hell for Leather*, gornography is the roast potatoes.

Heat: The stack of six-sided dice in the centre of the Target.

Hunters: A highly experienced tactical force, sent in great numbers to hunt down and execute the contestants of the *Hell for Leather* TV show.

Narration: When you add something to the fiction of the game, this is narration.

Network: The global mega corporation behind *Hell for Leather*.

Hit: When one die lands inside the Target, without touching the unbroken border of the Target, without knocking over the Heat.

Story Pip: A token awarded for contributions to the story.

Target: The white circle on the Target playsheet, used to determine the results of a Challenge.

Talent: A character's single use situational bonus (extra dice).

Victory Points: A measurement of your team's progress toward their next Checkpoint.

Violence: Gore, committed by a character in order to roll extra dice.

SUMMARY SHEET

All the complicated stuff in one place.

If you haven't done so, check online for the **Target** (which contains an overview of most of the game's rules), the **Cheat Sheet** (which contains the rest, including setup) and the **Team Sheet**.

You'll also find **video tutorials**, updates and free stuff on the Cobweb Games website.

www.**cobwebgames**.com

CHALLENGE SUMMARY

1. Violence (P.38) or **Talent (P.40)**?

2. Roll your **Power (P.41)**

3. Risk, if you can **(P.51)**

4. Dice inside the Target? That's a **Hit (P.44)**

If you've got 9VP, Checkpoint (P.52)

5. Otherwise, check the **Miss Chart (P.46)**

6. Aftermath: *Hit/Spotlight*—Gain Victory Points **(P.44)**, *Complication/Trauma*—Lose Story Pips **(P.48)**

7. Player with fewest Story Pips starts a new scene

MISS CHART

Score	Result	Score	Result
1-6	Spotlight	29-44	Trauma x2
7-12	Complication	45+	Trauma x3
13-28	Trauma		

FINALE SUMMARY

1. Reset the Heat to four

2. Actor must raise Heat by one and roll

3. If he scores a Hit, gain 1VP and see 6

4. If he scores a Miss, see 7

5. If he scores a Collapse, he dies, gain 1VP, reset Heat to four

6. If you have enough VP to buy a Mission

  … narrate the achievement of the Mission, see 7

  … otherwise, narrate working towards the Mission, see 7

7. Play passes to the next clockwise player and see 2

DEATHMATCH SUMMARY

1. Reset the Heat to four. **Attacker** chooses a Victim.

2. Attacker raises the Heat and rolls.

  *If he scores a **Collapse**, he dies instantly. Victim becomes Attacker. See 1.*
  If he scores a Miss, he must Risk until he scores a Hit.
  If he scores a Hit, he narrates Victim's death. See 3.

3. Victim raises the Heat and rolls.

  *If he scores a **Collapse**, he dies instantly. See 1.*
  If he scores a Miss, he must Risk until he scores a Hit.
  If he scores a Hit, he narrates Attacker's death. See 2.

INDEX

INDEX

HELL FOR LEATHER
CHEAT SHEET

NEW SCENE

Who chooses what?

1. Player with *fewest* Story Pips starts a new scene (to break a tie, choose the closest clockwise). The same player **cannot** start two Scenes in a row.

2. A Challenged player **cannot** start the next Scene.

RUN SCENE?

Aim for the Checkpoint!

1. Increase **Heat by one** and **take a Story Pip.**

2. Pick the **Objective** and describe the **location.**

3. Roleplay the scene and add **colour.**

4. Insert a **Threat** (centre), a **Challenge** (centre), or **complete the Objective (P.24)** and start a new Scene (above).

5. Applaud good narration **(P.31).**

REST SCENE?

Sacrifice yourself for the team!

1. Increase **Heat by one** and **take a Story Pip.**

2. Describe your character using (or about to use) their **Flaw.**

3. Character(s) with a **Gripe against you** try to convince you to change your ways.

4. If you agree, take a **Trauma** and *reduce* the **Heat by four.** Otherwise, start a new Scene (above).

5. Applaud good narration **(P.31).**

THREAT

Insert a badass complication!

1. Take a Story Pip.

2. Take the role of an **extra** or insert an **obstacle.**

3. The Run Scene continues.

CHALLENGE

Make it nasty for them to fail!

1. After a player announces an action, hold a Story Pip in the air and call "**Challenge!**"

2. Check the character's **Flaw** and use it to describe what happens *If They Fail.*

3. The *If you fail* clause should describe an embarrassing failure. Remember to use the character's **Flaw as inspiration!**

4. **Give the Story Pip** to the Challenged player. That player must use the **Target** to resolve the Challenge.

MURDER = EXTRA DICE ●

HEAT

Why does it go up? How do we get it down?

UP

Every *New Scene*, **Heat +1**

When you *Risk*, **Heat +1**

After a *Spotlight* or *Complication*, **Heat +2**

DOWN

For each *Miss Trauma*, **Heat -2**

For a *Rest Scene Trauma*, **Heat -4**

HOW TO ADD DICE

For *Risk*, add the die to the Heat **immediately**.

For *New Scene*, *Spotlight* and *Complication*, place the extra dice inside the Target. **The next Challenged player adds these to the Heat before rolling.**

VIOLENCE

Gory details!

Describe **one violent action**. According to the level of Violence committed, include…

☆ VIOLENCE: CRUNCH

…at least one broken bone. **No blood.**

☆☆ VIOLENCE: SPLATTER

…at least one **bodily fluid.**

☆☆☆ VIOLENCE: DOMINO

…at least one **murderous side-effect (P.39).**

HELL FOR LEATHER

DROP-OFF

DESTINATION

TEAM SHEET

PROLOGUE & ADVERSARY

GORE THRESHOLD

CONNECTION

SCENE
+1 Heat
Run or Rest?

RUN
Objective?
Location?

REST
Agenda?
Characters?

ACTION
Objective complete?

PAYOUT
Oppose Flaw: -4 Heat and +1 Trauma

CHALLENGE
See Target.

THREAT
One player adds an extra/obstacle

APPLAUSE
Reward good storytelling ANYTIME with a Story pip!

CHECKPOINTS

1 COVERT **9VP**

2 OVERT **9VP**

3 ACCESS **9VP**

FINALE MISSIONS

1 INFO **4VP**

2 STEAL **4VP**

3 DESTROY **4VP**

4 ESCAPE **4VP**

VIOLENCE RANK (ADD TO MISS CHART)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

1
NAME
CONTEXT
FLAW
GRIPE | TALENT

2
NAME
CONTEXT
FLAW
GRIPE | TALENT

3
NAME
CONTEXT
FLAW
GRIPE | TALENT

4
NAME
CONTEXT
FLAW
GRIPE | TALENT

5
NAME
CONTEXT
FLAW
GRIPE | TALENT

6
NAME
CONTEXT
FLAW
GRIPE | TALENT

1. BUILD A FRAME

PROLOGUE & ADVERSARY

Choose a fictional backdrop for the game. Is it modern? Retro? In space? What does it look like? Who are the characters in the game? Contestants, slaves, anarchists? Now choose an **Adversary**. Who's the bad guy?

GORE THRESHOLD

How quickly do you want the game to escalate to violence? Choose a low number for a game of bloody gore, or a high number for a game of edgy pacifism (between 3-7, **default: 5**).

CONNECTION

Choose a connection for the characters in the story. Were you in the same class in high school? Did you work together in an office? Are you family? Love triangle? Imprisoned together? How do you know one another? Why are you in trouble?

DROP-OFF / DESTINATION

Where do you start your game? Where does it end? Go for drama. Be sure **NOT** to start *in medias res*. Really. Fucking. Sure. If you start in the middle of the action there is no way for the action to escalate.

CHECKPOINTS

CHECKPOINT 1 (COVERT)

Pick a *task* for your characters. Must include an element of **planning**. No action. That comes later. Travel, sneaking and robbery are all good choices.

CHECKPOINT 2 (OVERT)

Pick an **aggressive** *task*. Something with explosions, kidnap or assassination.

HELL FOR LEATHER
SETUP SHEET

CHECKPOINT 3 (ACCESS)

How do you **get access to your Destination**? Bribe an official? Parachute? Kill lots of people? Make sure all your Checkpoints are **Big** (as in epic).

If you want to speed up the Frame building process, see the Quick Framing guide on **page 70**.

2. THE CHARACTERS

CONTEXT

What role did you play in the Connection? How do you know the other characters?

FLAW

Choose a troublesome condition, for example abusive, cowardly, or negligent.

GRIPE

You have been hurt by another character's Flaw. Whose was it and what happened? Every character **must have one Gripe against them**.

TALENT

What is your character good at? Everyone gets one Talent. Choose a **nonviolent** description, for example stunts, sex or negotiation.

MURDER
=EXTRA
DICE●

3. BASIC GAMEPLAY

STORY PIPS

A player may never have more than **three** Story Pips (unless its the result of a Challenge).

POOL

Pile of 20 tokens. Players award each other Story Pips from this Pool according to their contributions to the fiction of the game. Only one Story Pip may be earned per contribution.

TARGET

Roll a d10 into the white Target (while keeping your fingers outside the dashed border).

Collapse: If you knock over the stack of dice (the Heat), use the combined d6 results to check the Miss Chart (treating any that remain in the stack as a 3).

Miss: If you miss, or it touches the boundary, it's a Miss. Check the number on the d10 and compare it to the Miss Chart (add Felony Rank). Tell us how you mess up.

Hit: If you get the die inside the circle, that's a Hit. Convert your Story Pip(s) to Victory Point(s) (by putting them into the Victory Cup). Tell us how you succeed. **Bonus**: 2 Hits = Recover 1 Trauma from one character.

HANDICAP

By default, use the Beginner's circle to resolve a Challenge. If you (collectively) complete the first Checkpoint **without any Traumas**, it's time to up the ante. All players must use the **Expert circle** for the rest of the game.
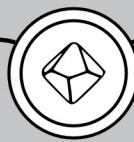
POWER DICE

Check Power & Roll

BONUS DICE

POWER 4	POWER 3	POWER 2

POWER 1

TRAUMAS

OFF — OFF-HAND	SHOT — SHOTGUN	RIP — R.I.P.

MASTER · MASTER · MASTER · MASTER

HELL LEATHER

VIOLENCE
Raise Heat to Gore Threshold
Add 1-3☆ to Violence Rank
Boost Power by same

2
Roll Power (above)
Risk? (see RIsk)

RISK
No Risk for Violence
+1 Heat/reroll

CHALLENGE TARGET

1
Use Talent? (+1 Power, one use)
Commit Felony? (see Felony)

3
Hit?
Aftermath: Take VP, New Scene

Beginner

Expert

4
Miss/Collapse? (see below)
Add Violence Rank!

CHECKPOINT? (9VP?)
Starting with Actor, all players narrate their role in the Checkpoint's completion

---

MISS/COLLAPSE

DICE RESULT + VIOLENCE RANK   DICE RESULT + VIOLENCE RANK

1-6 Spotlight:
Narrate success, lose **1/2** Story Pips, Take VP, narrate Spotlight, increase Heat by 2

7-12 Complication:
Use *If You Fail* clause to narrate the failure, increase Heat by 2, lose 2 Story Pips

13-28 Trauma:
Describe a Trauma, reduce Power by 1 & Heat by 2, lose 2 Story Pips

29-44 Trauma x2:

45+   Trauma x3:
Actor may share excess Traumas

Aftermath: Did you add your VIOLENCE RANK? Start a New Scene.

Copyright © 2010 Sebastian Hickey and Cobweb Games. Permission granted to photocopy this playsheet for personal use.

POWER DICE

Check Power & Roll

BONUS DICE

POWER 4 → POWER 3 → POWER 2 → **POWER 1**

TRAUMAS

POWER 1 → OFF-HAND → SHOTGUN → R.I.P.

OFF-HAND (OFF) · SHOTGUN (SHOT) · R.I.P. (RIP)

MASTER · MASTER · MASTER · MASTER

VIOLENCE
Raise Heat to Gore Threshold
Add 1-3☆ to Violence Rank
Boost Power by same

2
Roll Power
(above)
Risk?
(see Risk)

RISK
No Risk for Violence
+1 Heat/reroll

CHALLENGE TARGET

1
Use Talent?
(+1 Power, one use)
Commit Felony?
(see Felony)

3
Hit?
Aftermath: Take VP,
New Scene

Beginner

Expert

CHECKPOINT? (9VP?)
Starting with Actor, all players
narrate their role in the
Checkpoint's completion

4
Miss/Collapse?
(see below)
Add Violence Rank!

MISS/COLLAPSE

1-6 Spotlight:
Narrate success, lose **1/2** Story Pips, Take VP, narrate Spotlight, increase Heat by 2

DICE RESULT + VIOLENCE RANK

7-12 Complication:
Use *If You Fail* clause to narrate the failure, increase Heat by 2, lose 2 Story Pips

13-28 Trauma:
Describe a Trauma, reduce Power by 1 & Heat by 2, lose 2 Story Pips

DICE RESULT + VIOLENCE RANK

29-44 Trauma x2:

45+ Trauma x3:
Actor may share excess Traumas

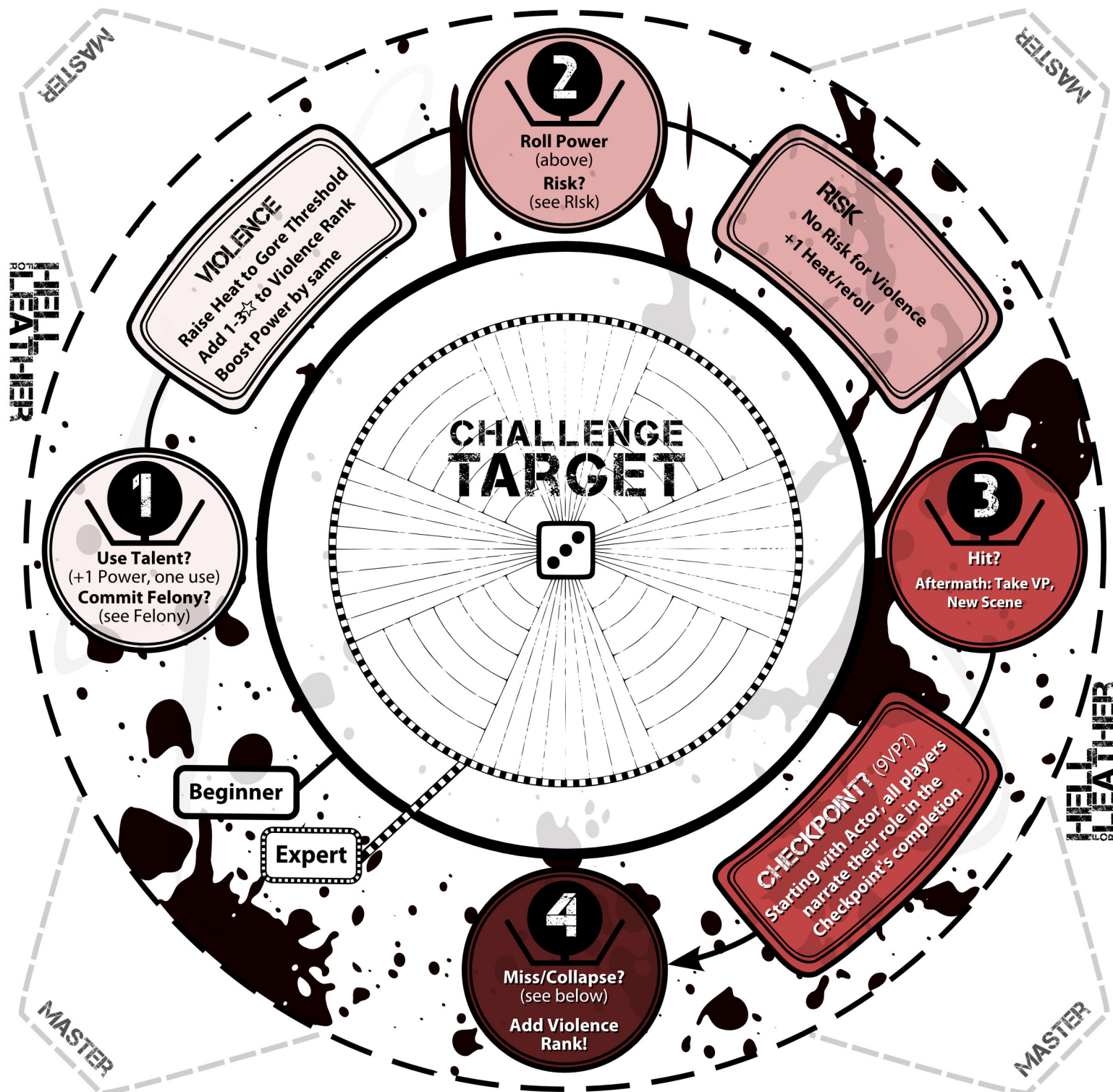**Aftermath: Did you add your VIOLENCE RANK? Start a New Scene.**