

A circular sculpture made of dark, polished material, possibly bronze or wood, depicting several human figures intertwined in a circular, almost circular, pose. The figures are positioned in a way that suggests a continuous, flowing movement, with their limbs and bodies forming a complex, organic shape. The background is dark and atmospheric, with some light reflecting off the surfaces of the sculpture. The overall mood is mysterious and artistic.

# Norwegian Style

An anthology of  
Norwegian role-  
playing games



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# **Norwegian Style**

**an anthology of role-playing  
games by Norwegian designers**

**edited by Matthijs Holter and Even Tømte**

**contributions by Erlend Sand Bruer, Tor Kjetil Edland, Arvid Falch,  
Ole Peder Gæver, Martin Bull Gudmundsen, Matthijs Holter,  
Magnus Jakobsson, Håken Lid, Lasse Lundin, Anders Nygaard,  
Tomas HV Mørkrid, Erling Rognli, Margrete Somerville,  
Øyvind Stengrundet, Even Tømte and Rune Valle**

**book design by Håken Lid**

**photos by Nicolai Strøm and Håken Lid**

**statues by Gustav Vigeland**

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Norwegian Style  
norwegianstyle@yahooogroups.com  
<http://norwegianstyle.wordpress.com/>  
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Cover and book design by Håken Lid



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# Norwegian Style

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## Role-playing games

follow the traditional form where each player controls one character, and the game master is rules arbiter and provides adversity and conflict material.

## Story games

shift the players' attention more towards the story, using the characters as tools and vessels to create exciting narrative. Often the traditional GM functions and narrative powers are distributed across all players.

## Role-playing poems

are short, often larp-like games designed to be played in 15 minutes. They often focus on a specific experience, rather than character or narrative.

## Supplements

are meant to be used together with existing role-playing games to enhance or change the playing experience.

## Chamber larp

is a short live action role-playing game which lasts for no longer than a few hours and which takes place in a compact area, maybe just one room. Compared to larger larps a chamber larp is a type of game which easily can be produced in different cities by other groups than the original organisers.

# **Foreword**

by **Even Tømte** and **Matthijs Holter**

# This is Nørwegian style

Is there such a thing as a Norwegian style of gaming? Well – Norwegians mostly play the same games as everyone else, World of Darkness and D&D being the heavy hitters. But some don't. The people who talk the most about games, who write games, who play everything that calls itself a role-playing game (and some things that don't) – those manic few are redefining the role-playing landscape. Nørwegian Style.

Role-players have never been happy about being docile consumers. As anyone who has ever held a d20 knows, gaming is impossible without engaging in creative action. So, as we explored our hobby, we went from drawing our own dungeons on graph paper to designing our own worlds, and rules, and entire games. We read and talked about other ways of gaming and even developed some new methods ourselves. Before we knew it we had grown up, and our games were being read and played, and the established publishing houses even published a few of them, and we realized they were unlike everything else we'd ever seen.

So yes, there is a Norwegian style. It's sweet, sexy and enchanting.

Here is a taste of it. Read on.

## Early years: We're all fan boys!

The first published Norwegian role-playing game, as far as we know, was «MEGA», a system-heavy, super-realistic fantasy RPG in English. (Nørwegian Style? Hardly.) When it was published in 1987, rumour had it that the money came from the Church of Scientology. Due to a series of business misfortunes, and possibly because there were enough fantasy RPGs even then, the game was never a huge success. It had cool critical hit charts, though. When fighting

a giant snake, you could hit any one of its twenty different hit locations.

In 1993 a little game called «Muu» was doing the con circuit. In this experiment in non-combat-oriented mechanics. Players portrayed short, mellow, strongly empathic creatures called Muu. Each Muu was called Muu; together they were also called Muu. The author-publisher wanted to make sure people played his game the right way, so if you wanted to buy the game, you had to meet him and take lessons before earning your certificate. Around 27 copies were sold. The game is still legendary, and its author, Tomas HV Mørkrid, continues creating games to this day. In hindsight, Muu was the harbinger of things to come. Play was meditative, experiential, entrancing; at the same time, it was silly, informal, weird. Muu conveyed the feeling that everything was allowed in gaming – including being serious about it.

The same year saw the publication of «Imperium 3000». Another creator-published game, of course. This science fiction setting had a diceless system slapped on only days before going to print, and despite enthusiastic reviews it never succeeded in wowing the public. Still, three supplements were written and published, and it remains the best supported Norwegian RPG so far.

Also in 1993 the fanzine «Imagonem» started out. It soon became a meeting ground for people with an unhealthy passion for role-playing games. A large part of the authors in this book have written articles for Imagonem through the ages – and several are, or have been, editors. Imagonem lives on as a webzine, and while retaining its strongly iconoclastic vibe, the 'zine irregularly interviews interesting foreign designers such as Jonathan Tweet (Over the Edge) and Ron Edwards (Sorcerer).

In 1996 everything turned political. A game

aply titled «Anarki» saw print; the print run of approximately 80 sold out quickly, and the author, who made no secret of his love for the market forces, was very satisfied. Reception was mixed – the game was, design-wise, the opposite of Imperium 3000: A system with a setting tacked on. Those who expected details about an anarchistic setting had to look elsewhere.

The first electronically-published game arrived the same year. «NOR:2000» was a political/religious satire set in the then-near-future, detailing how Christian Democrat fascists staged a coup and seized power in Norway, and devils disguised as angels roamed the earth. The game was sold on floppy disk, and contained a PowerPoint presentation with meagre setting information and no actual rules. A fan-written scenario soon appeared in Imagonem. Whether the game was ever played is anybody's guess.

### **The turning point: Hey! Stop growing up!**

Suddenly, in 1999, things turned serious. Tomas Mørkrid's «Fabula» was published by a major publishing house, Cappelen. (There are no RPG publishing houses in Norway. Cappelen publishes novels, non-fiction – you know, real books). The game itself was a fairly standard fantasy RPG, with easy-to-learn rules and setting; however, fans visiting the web pages were surprised to find descriptions of sex and violence at serious odds with the book's pleasant vibe. At cons, players otherwise used to adult themes treated in an adolescent fashion were blown away by the uncompromising realism of scenarios about war and moral choices.

A year later, in 2000, a scenario called «Aylafeiring» appeared in gaming stores, seemingly out of nowhere. Starting tongue-in-cheek with the familiar scene «A man in a tavern recruits you for

an important mission», the scenario was a straight fantasy plot using the authors' Nuron rules – which, to this day, haven't actually been published in a complete and playable form. Still, the scenario has seen two print runs. Aylafeiring came and went without causing many ripples in the pond, but signalled the appearance on the scene of two important players: Magnus Jakobsson and Even Tømte.

In 2000, a major turning point was reached when Tomas Mørkrid established the organization «Stiftelsen Norske Rollespill». Receiving the equivalent of tens of thousands of us dollars from the Arts Council Norway, the organisation supported game designers with scholarships of up to NOK 10 000 (approximately USD 1 500). Only one of the supported designs was finished and submitted for publication.

In 2004, that game, «Draug», was published by the small non-fiction publishing house Spartacus, with funding from the Department of Culture. (Without that funding, the game would never have seen publication.) Draug used a simplified version of the FUDGE rules, while the setting was strongly based on folk tales collected by the nationally renowned folklorists Asbjørnsen & Moe in the early 1800s. These are stories that most Norwegians are familiar with, having heard them from infancy. One supplement was published.

### **Towards the present: Games ejaculation!**

The year 2004 also saw the founding of Spillskaperlaget – the Game Designers' Association. Organizations for people playing games were not unknown in Norway, but here was one for people making games. While small and lacking in resources and manpower, Spillskaperlaget has nevertheless contributed to fostering people's identities as game



designers, and has hosted workshops about Big Model theory and Danish-style scenario writing.

Somewhere along the way, our perception of what a role-playing game is supposed to be changed. Most published role-playing games are big, clunky things, with hundreds of pages of rules algorithms, history and geography, little of which is actually used while playing the game. But the focus shifted towards playability. Some of us brought home impulses from abroad, web sites such as The Forge and Story Games and those Danish self-contained small games, but we gave it our own twist.

The result was a surge of small, instantly playable games. The distilled essence of this approach is found in the «rollespillpoesi», a term coined by Tomas Mørkrid. This literally translates into «role-playing poem», meaning an instantly playable fifteen-minute RPG.

Around the same time, the newly-formed organization Hyperion – the Association for Fantastic Leisure Activities – established itself as The Big Organization for all things nerdy. Gamers have always been a scattered and anarchic lot. Hyperion, however, managed to win support as an umbrella organization for various groups of gamers and geeks, without meddling in their autonomy and creative freedom. Suddenly, we had an organization with around 12.000 members which could talk to media and politicians. Even more importantly, it could get funding from

the Ministry of Culture and channel state funds to creative projects on the ground. The game designers' association Spillskaperlaget, for example, receives funding from Hyperion. Two leaders of Hyperion are also contributors to this book – Erlend Bruer, leader until 2008, and Lasse Lundin, leader from 2009.

Another turning point came in 2006, when Matthijs Holter was given an arts grant to write a series of role-playing games about the persecution of Jews during the second world war. This signalled that in the eyes of government bureaucrats, at least, role-playing was not only culture – it could even qualify as art.

A new crowd of game designers entered the scene through the R.I.S.K game design competition, which has run annually since 2005 through the web site rollespill.net. Dozens of designers have tried their hand at designing a game from scratch in one week. Several of the resulting games are found in this book.

The indie game convention Holmcon, hosted by Matthijs Holter, has become a creative hub and a test lab for new games. By fostering new game designers, you also get a host of competent game critics. As a result, we soon had a vibrant game designers' community on our hands, pulling each other toward new heights.

In 2008, while we were putting this book together, the game «Itras by» was published. Seven years in the making, this game of surrealism and

### Official Government-sponsored Creativity

Are money grants for game developers from official departments a good thing? Most people in the Norwegian design community will say yes – getting money for doing cool and artsy stuff is a dream come true. Some everyday gamers and non-gamers will think it's a waste of government money; shouldn't we be building hospitals and buying jet fighters instead? However, one troublesome fact that hasn't been talked about much is who decides what games get sponsored. Right now, to get money, a game has to have strong literary qualities, or qualify as a work of art. By those definitions, RPGs with strong focus on gaming systems and a lack of pretentiousness – in the style of Dungeons and Dragons – would probably have trouble getting grants in Norway.

On the other hand: Who cares about the government? Do people need grants to create games? The answer, at least if you look at the games in this book, is «duh, no». Publication on the internet, creating games to play with friends, games xeroxed in very limited print runs for use at cons – these are the norm, having games in book form is pretty rare. Norwegian Style is about getting your shit out there and playing it.

improvisation is strong and consistent in its use of creative challenges and openness to player input. Itras by took the scene by storm, based on word-of-mouth, continuous buzz on the Internet (including a much-debated Wikipedia article) and the authors' heavy promotion. The game got significant media attention (the trailer for the game even being published on the web pages of the major Norwegian newspaper Dagbladet). The authors also engaged the Arts Council Norway in public debate about the funding of role-playing games.

### Cross-over madness

As for Norwegian – or Nordic – larps, live-action role-playing games, the Nordic larp scene is dominated by games that are less crunchy and put a higher emphasis on drama or character immersion than most larps you'll be thinking about if you live in, say, the UK or the US. There are variations here as well, different regional traditions and schools of thought, but that's beyond the scope of this book.

What's important to us is that the boundaries between tabletop and live-action are, at times, becoming blurry and hard to define. Several of the authors of this book are larpwrights. Many participate in larps. They bring together impressions and techniques from both forms of play, shake and stir. One of the games in Norwegian Style is a larp. Several of the role-playing poems can and have been played both as larp and tabletop games.

We are still talking about two different media, but less so than before.

### Here we are: Norwegian Style

The Norwegian game designers' community is a small group of dedicated people. We are journalists, authors, students, teachers. Most of our games feature a strong element of cooperation, and there

is generally speaking little crunchiness. We are inspired by fiction and real life alike, but maybe with an eye for slightly off-track phenomena. Rules are simple, designed to facilitate the process of cooperative creativity and make people come up with cool stuff together. Brevity is considered a virtue; games that, in other traditions, might cover dozens or hundreds of pages, are condensed to the bare minimum. But we are not an established school of thought. We are in a constant state of flux, and the scene is small enough that trends can be started or ended by the whims of single individuals.

So what is Norwegian Style? It's about Muu – about serious fun, about being allowed to experiment, about not always knowing why something works, but accepting that it does. It's about Itras by – about challenging and inviting others to participate, to co-create, to get their ideas out there in the open and see what happens. It's about role-playing poems – about the moments of magic, the willingness to experience something different, the realization that beauty and wonder are in what happens between the players in a room, not between the covers of a book.

So. We play and discuss each others' games, but whether anyone else plays them, apart from the commercially published ones, we don't really know. But we want you all to have the opportunity. So we made this book.

Here it is. These are some of the games we have made. Read and play, and enjoy.

*Matthijs Holter  
Even Tømte*







# **Fuck Youth**

a story game by Matthijs Holter

written: 2007  
form: story game  
players: 3-5  
duration: 2-3 hours  
need to play: pencils, paper  
included cards

# Introduction

THIS role-playing game is made to pick up and play. It doesn't require a game master. You don't need any preparations. All you have to do is gather a group of 3–5 players, including yourself.

The game takes about 2–3 hours. It's written especially for those of us who remember our youth. I don't know how it works if you're a youth yourself. Try it.

If you've played role-playing games before, you may have some expectations for this game – that there will be dice and numbers, for example. Put those expectations aside.

When the group has gathered around a table, give this text to the youngest player. He or she should read all the rules out loud. The reading is part of the game. Read calmly, and make sure you understand everything.

Where you see a picture of leaves in the text, that means you've just been given some instructions to follow. Carry them out before you continue past the leaves. They look like this:



Imagine that you draw the essence from your own youth. You boil out the juices of the billowing leaves and make an elixir that gives you all of it, refined.

The real teenage years had many false starts. The party you couldn't find. The boy or girl who never became a boyfriend or girlfriend. The time you went out for

drinks and all your expectations of magic weren't fulfilled.

Tonight something will be fulfilled. We don't know yet what it is.

We'll fill the game with memories and dreams. Everything we only half remember – or perhaps want to forget until it resurfaces. The powers we have inside us are gathered, woven together and distilled into a life with a power borrowed from the divine.

The events take place in our time, in the country we're in. We won't define more than that. It's not allowed to say years or names of places, or to describe things that define exactly when and where the game takes place.

We'll get the best atmosphere for the game if we engage with it. It's good to accept input and ideas from others, and not try to push the game in a particular direction. The rules of the game will make sure the story finds its own flow.

## The place

There is a beautiful and secret place, a little world that only we know about. Perhaps we're the only ones who can see the beauty in it. A forest clearing; the mound of gravel behind the generator house; the garage which is the only place John's mom doesn't clean; the hidden beach with the white stones.

The first thing we do in the game is to describe this place together. First we each say a detail from the place, in turn. Then one of us – the youngest – tells us what the place is, what it looks like, what we

### Matthijs Holter's

(b. 1972) first game, *BeastWorld*, was written during English class in 1987. Three xerox copies were sold to friends. It was, of course, awesome. In 1993, he started the fanzine *Imagonem*. In 2004, his game *Draug* was published by *Spartacus*. In 2008, he edited this book.



do there. We start now, with the player to my left.



### The characters

The characters are youths – teenagers. We know that each of them represents a trait of youth. They don't know that themselves. The traits could, for example, be the wildness of youth; the naiveté of youth; the self-assuredness of youth; the beauty of youth; the half-finishedness of youth.

We'll all make characters. First we will, in turn, decide for the player to our left what trait his or her character represents.

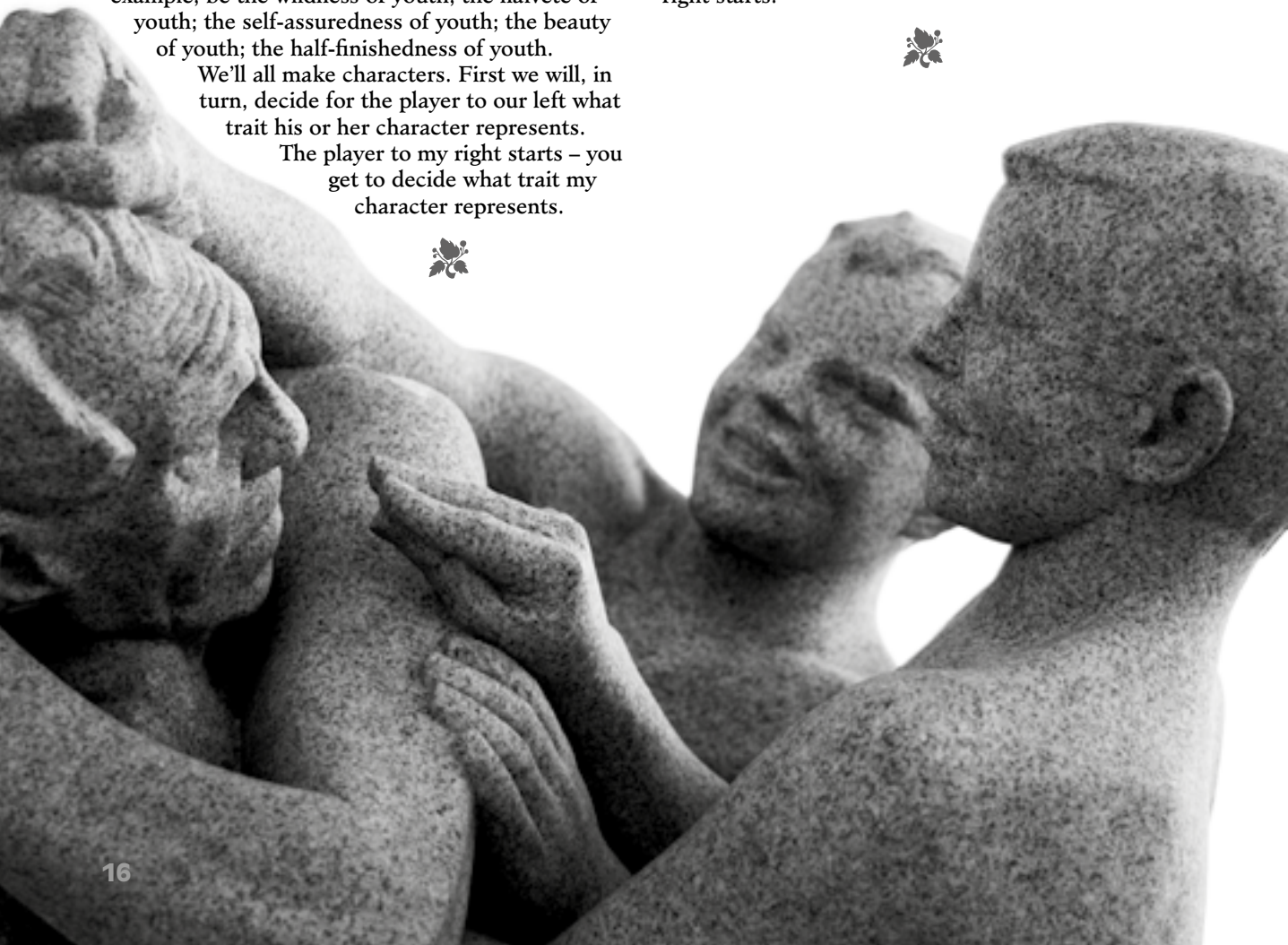
The player to my right starts – you get to decide what trait my character represents.



Then we will, in turn, say the names of our characters. The player to my left starts.



Then we will, in turn, give a description of our characters. Don't mention any relationships to the other characters yet; we'll come to that. The player to my right starts.





Finally we will, in turn, say what relationship our character has to one of the other characters. We continue doing this until each character has a relationship to each of the others. Relationships can be asymmetric; if you say your character hates mine, perhaps I'll say that my character loves yours.

Give each other suggestions and comments – but the person who's turn it is decides what relationship he or she wants to describe, and how.

It can be a good idea to write down the names of the characters and what relationships they have to each other. That makes it easier for us to remember it during the game.

The player to my right starts.



Soon the game will begin. It's divided into scenes. In each scene one of us will set the scene, and one or more of us will play our characters. Whoever sets the scene decides who gets to play their characters – but some scenes have special instructions for these and other things.

We're going to shuffle the scene cards and put the stack face down. Then put the top three cards on the table, face up.



### The scenes

In the game we'll start our scenes in turn. When it's your turn, you pick up one of the face-up scene cards and use it for inspiration. If there are any scene cards marked «Play immediately», you must choose one of them on your turn.

The descriptions on the cards are only keywords – read them literally or metaphorically,

as you like. The scene cards also show how many characters can be present – you decide which ones. It's a good idea to make sure all the characters get their time in the spotlight. If there are any characters that haven't been played for a while, try to include them in the scene.

You start the scene with a description, which has to include the place the scene starts and the names of the characters present. If you want to, you can ask some of the other players to describe parts of the scene, for example what their house looks like or where they're working this summer.

The players who have characters in the scene play freely until you finish it. You can contribute to the scene, for example by playing secondary characters and portraying the environment, but you don't have to. You can also play your own character, if it's in the scene.

Remember that even though you decide when the scene ends, it's a good idea to be sensitive to atmospheres and situations. Feel what the scene needs, and give it the time to play out.

When the scene is done, draw a new card and lay it face up, so there are always three open cards.

**To sum up:** When you start the scene, choose a scene card and decide what characters are present. Describe where the characters are, and how the scene starts. The players involved play until you finish the scene. Then you draw a new card and lay it face up.

In the final scene it can be a good idea to have all the characters present, so we can see how everyone's story ends. When the last scene has been played, the game is over.

The player to my left starts the first scene.





**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**



### **A death in the family**

1–2 characters

### **The music**

1 or more characters

### **The secret place is discovered**

1 or more characters

### **Where they go every day**

1 or more characters

### **Psychoactive substances**

1–3 characters

### **Love breaks down**

2 characters

### **Breaking the rules**

1 or more characters

### **PLAY IMMEDIATELY**

### **Who's against them?**

1 character



**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Fuck Youth**  
**Scene card**

**Strongly inebriated together**

2 or more characters

**Talking all night**

2 or more characters

**The limits of the body**

1 or more characters

**The seduction**

2 characters

**Submerged**

1 or more characters

**Lies and truth**

2 or more characters

**PLAY IMMEDIATELY****Repeating motive**

Introduce a motive – an object, a vibe  
– that repeats during the game  
1 or more characters

**PLAY IMMEDIATELY****The creature**

Choose a mythological being that will be  
present symbolically during the game.  
1 or more characters





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# It Wasn't Me!

a story game about murder, deceit and lies  
by Lasse Lundin

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**written:** 2006  
**form:** story game  
**players:** 4 or more  
**duration:** 45 minutes  
**need to play:** pencils and paper  
a bowl



# What the game is about

**I**N this game, every player is a murder suspect. The murder happened last night and each of you had an appointment with the victim. You are all in for questioning with the police.

## What you need

- 🎲 4 or more players
- 🎲 4 or more pens/pencils
- 🎲 Some paper
- 🎲 A bowl
- 🕒 45 minutes of free time
- 🎲 5 pounds of imagination

## Setup

The first thing you have to do is tear the paper into little pieces. You will need about forty pieces, just big enough to write a name on.

Now you must find out who died. Everyone writes the name of a famous person on a piece of paper, curls it into a ball and puts it in the bowl. Then one player draws a ball from the bowl. The person on that note is dead. Remove all the other notes in the bowl.

Then everyone writes their own name on a piece of paper, curls it into a ball and puts it in the bowl. The bowl represents the mind of the police, and who they think is the most probable murderer.

Finally, tear up some more paper into

bigger pieces and write «LIE» in big letters on them. Make one for each player.

## The structure of the game

The game is divided into 5 rounds. Each round reveals a little more about the murder and who seems most likely to have done it. In each round the players need to answer a question.

## The rounds and their questions are:

1. Where did the murder take place?
2. What was the murder weapon?
3. Why did you not meet the victim?
4. What was the motive?
5. Who killed the victim?

## Rounds

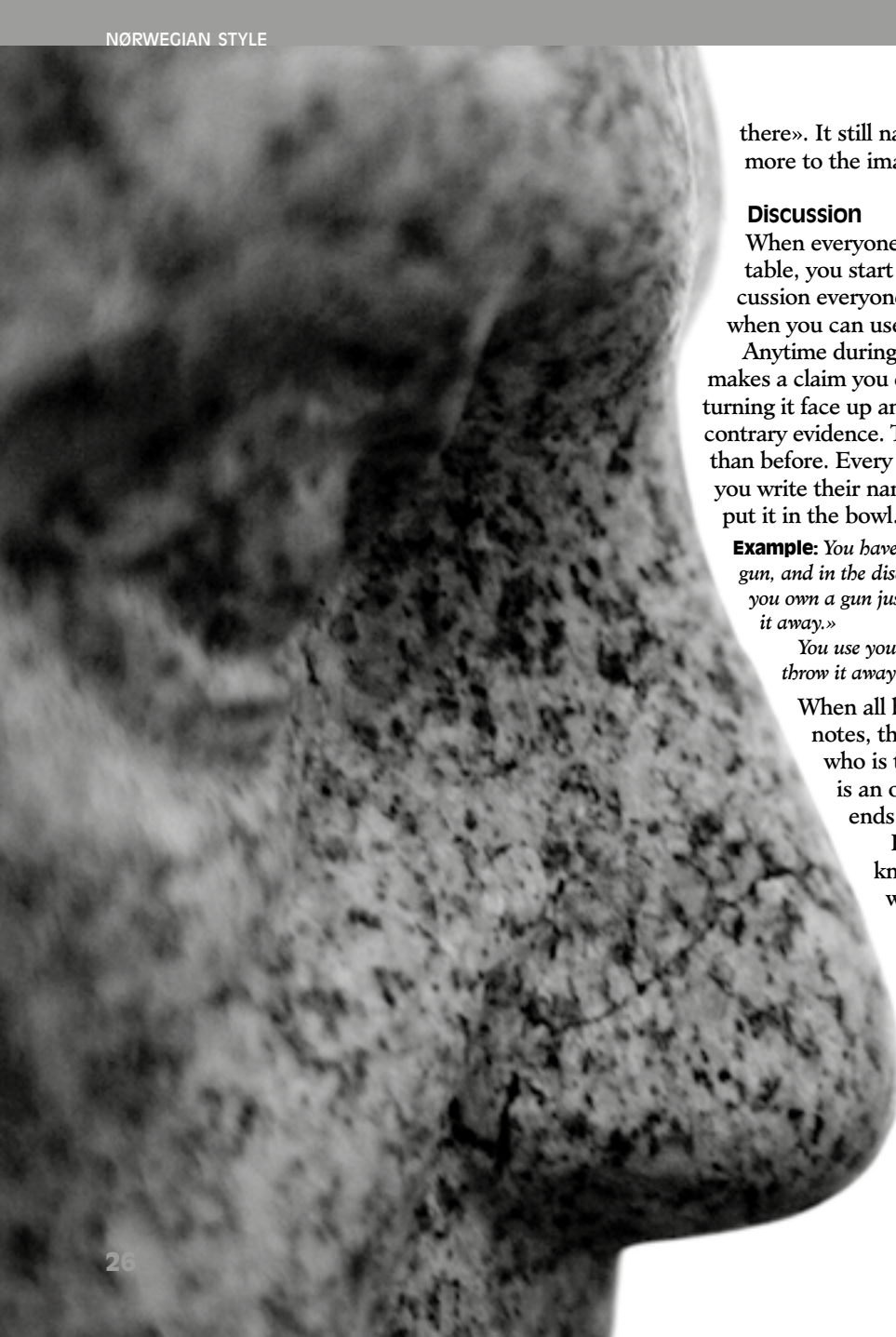
Each round is divided in two: *Facts* and *discussion*. The round always starts with facts.

When you start a round the first thing you do is to take a piece of paper from the bowl and read the name on it. That person starts the round by stating a fact about the topic you are about to discuss. These facts are now truths about the topic that all the characters know, and that serve as the starting point for the discussion.

## Stating facts

It is important that the facts are not very precise. Don't say «It was in a restaurant» or «It was in a red car». Instead, say «It was downtown» or «There were cars

**Lasse Lundin** (b. 1985) first started playing role-playing games at the age of ten when he got some older friends who played «Paranoia». After being friends with the computer for several years and playing through mainstream games, he wanted something new. Lasse has now written several games and role-playing poems. Most can be found on the *Norwegian Style* website.



there». It still narrows things down, but leaves more to the imagination.

### Discussion

When everyone has stated one fact around the table, you start the discussion. During the discussion everyone can talk when they want. This is when you can use your «LIE» notes.

Anytime during the discussion when someone makes a claim you can use your «LIE» note by turning it face up and confronting the liar with contrary evidence. The liar is obviously more suspect than before. Every time someone is caught in a lie you write their name down on a piece of paper and put it in the bowl.

**Example:** *You have found out that the murder weapon is a gun, and in the discussion round you ask a player: «Didn't you own a gun just like that?» He says «Yes, but i threw it away.»*

*You use your «LIE» note and state that he didn't throw it away at all – he still has it.*

When all but 2 people have used their «LIE» notes, the round ends, and you discuss who is the most probable murderer. This is an open discussion which usually ends in a vote.

Be realistic! If, for example, it's known that you owned the murder weapon, that makes you an likely suspect.

### Ending a round

When you've finished the discussion and chosen a person, write that person's name down on a note and put it in the bowl, and start the next round.

# The rounds

**Round one and two:** «Where did the murder take place?» and «What was the murder weapon?»

In the first two rounds, use the rules above with no modifications – that is, state facts, discuss them and choose a likely suspect.

**Examples of facts from round one:**

- ☞ «It was dark»
- ☞ «It was by the ocean»
- ☞ «It was in outer space»
- ☞ «There were many people there»
- ☞ «No blood was found on the crime scene»

**Round three:** «Why did you not meet the deceased?»

The third round is a bit different from the first two. In this round you tell a story instead of stating facts. The story should not be long, but should include an event that made you miss your meeting with the deceased.

**Examples of such events are:**

- ☞ «I was kidnapped»
- ☞ «I was stuck in cement on the street»
- ☞ «I won the lottery»
- ☞ «I missed the bus»

The discussion is the same as previous rounds, and you ask questions about the other players' alibis. Remember to discuss who is the most probable murderer at the end of the round.

**Round four:** «What was the motive?»

The fourth round is also a little different. In the facts round everyone comes up with a potential motive for the murder. It doesn't need to be something you've discussed before.

**Examples of motives are:**

- ☞ «Betrayal»
- ☞ «Revenge»
- ☞ «Money»
- ☞ «Honor»
- ☞ «Cover-up»

The discussion round is still the same, and you should try to pin a motive on the other players. Remember to discuss who is the most probable murderer at the end of the round.

**Round five:** «Who killed the deceased?»

The fifth and last round has no facts or discussion. Here everyone states their theory of the murder: Who, why, how, when and where. The theory should use facts that have been stated during previous rounds. In the last round there are no «LIE» notes.

When everyone has explained their theory, all players write down who they think killed the victim on a note and put it in the bowl along with all the other notes.

It is now time to find out who the killer actually is. This is done by choosing a random note from the bowl and reading out the name. That person is the killer!

After the killer has been found he/she should tell the story of how the murder really went down.

Now the game is over. If you like you can look at all the names in the bowl and see who got the most notes. Maybe someone was a more likely suspect than the real killer?

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# Until We Sink...

a role-playing game by **Magnus Jakobsson**

translated from Norwegian by **Anders Nygaard**

additional ideas by **Lasse Lundin** and **Håken Lid**

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**written:** 2006  
**form:** Role-playing game  
**players:** 4-5  
**duration:** 1-5 hours  
**need to play:** 6 tokens  
the included cards

# Introduction

THIS game draws a strong inspiration from the comic books *L'île Noyée* (The Drowned Island) by Benoit Sokal and *Trazo de Tiza* (Streak of Chalk) by Miguelanxo Prado. In order to play you will need the included cards and six tokens (pebbles, coins or similar) to use as explanation markers. Before playing gather all the players and read this entire text aloud.

## Concept

All the characters are either natives or holiday guests on a tiny resort island lost in some remote corner of the Pacific Ocean. The only people on the island are one or two natives, between two and four guests and a fishing enthusiast, who is found dead just before the game starts. The climate is warm and pleasant, but a little humid. People keep talking of a coming storm. And the island is slowly but surely sinking into the ocean.

The game is divided into five, six or seven days. Each day's gaming consists of the characters sitting on the hotel patio in the evening, talking. What happens outside of these evenings is not played out, but the players can make up things that have happened and mention them in their character's conversation.

A word of advice: Don't object too much. If another character states that he has seen you clean blood off your hands down by the tide mark it's better to

make up a plausible explanation than to claim that he is lying.

It is not possible to leave the island before the last day. Transportation is limited to a ferry that only arrives every fortnight. There is a boat on the island, and normally it is rented out to hotel guests who wants to go fishing, but the engine is broken. There is no cell phone reception but there is a radio.

Your story doesn't have to be a murder mystery, but creating explanations for mysterious and ominous events is a central part of the game. The game has no winner – the players cooperate to create an exciting experience.

## Event Cards

Before each evening (except the first), draw an event card and read the text out loud. Then place the card face up on the table. The card displays an event that has happened at some point since the previous evening. This event occurs in addition to events improvised by the players. The explanations for these events (both those on the cards and those you invent yourselves) are left to be established by the players through their character's conversations. Coming up with good, consistent explanations is even more important than making up new events.

Explanations can turn up the same evening as the event, or several evenings later. When you have found an explanation for an event card, put a marker on the card as a reminder. These

### Magnus Jakobsson

(b. 1980) fell in love with the idea of role-playing while watching a cool, older boy drawing a map on hex paper. After cutting their chops with games like Basic D&D and Shadowrun he and childhood friend Even Tømte began making their own stuff, starting with «Gold Dragon» in 1993 and then «Nuron», presented through an occasionally updated web page and a selfpublished book (Aylafeiring, 2000). Since then he has written a number of short role-playing games (two of which appear in this book), organised a one-week LARP set in Napoleonic France and coauthored a children's novel with Matthijs Holter (Landet bak landet, Damm, 2007).

explanations are always true! It's forbidden to have your character lie to submit a false explanation for an event card. Anyone can expand an explanation later, but you can never contradict an established truth.

### There are two special cards:

- ☞ The card «Sport fisher found dead» should be face-up on the table at the start of the game. It cannot be explained until the last day.
- ☞ The card «The island sinks» ends the game, and needs no explanation. It should not be shuffled into the deck before you have played through four days (to make the game last at least five days). See the paragraph «Last day».

### How to speak

A general rule: You say what your character says. Facial expressions, body movements and similar should usually be played out physically. You may describe your character's actions only when acting them out would be inconvenient or inappropriate (e.g. «I tip my drink over Mister Longbottom's head»).

Any topic is allowed. It is not necessary to speak only about the mysterious events on the island – as long as the other players are interested you can talk about music, religion, marital problems, events in your youth – anything. Try to immerse yourself in the situation.

Every evening conversation ends as soon as two characters have left the patio. You can declare that your character is leaving at any time (you yourself may remain in silence, listening to the others). Usually another character will leave at the same time or shortly after, so that no one has to wait for very long.

### The other characters

To imbue the game with some nerve you need tension between the characters. Two important things to consider:

- ☞ What is your character's opinion of each of the others? (Are they annoying, interesting, wise, dull, scary etc.) This could change during the course of the game.
- ☞ What is your character trying to accomplish? (Hiding dirty secrets, reveal the dirty secrets of others, provoke another character, make another character fall in love etc.) This could change during the course of the game.

The character card does not list motivation, secrets or much in the way of personality details. You must build your character during the course of the game. Maybe the end of the game will reveal you as a murderer – something which you had no idea about at the beginning? Even so, try to find a basic mood for your character from the start, and develop some nuances later.

You can establish a shared past with one or more of the other characters during the game. This is done through regular conversation. It is fine to drop hints and be mysterious, but you have to make things clear enough to give the other player a clue as to where you're going, so that he can improvise with you. (As an example, «I will never forgive what happened in Venice!» works great – the other player is left free to make up what happened in Venice, unless you do it first.)

## The course of the game

Before the game starts each player will choose a character card, read it, and make a short introduction of his character. You may add information that isn't on the card. You have to choose a gender and name for yourself. The game works better if both genders are represented. It's fine to pick characters randomly, but the cast has to include either one or two natives. No more, no less.

The cards «Sport fisher found dead» and «The island sinks» should be removed from the event deck and put aside to be used later. Then remove ten random event cards from the deck without looking at them. These will not be part of the game. Shuffle the last five event cards, and place them face down on the table.

### The first day

Before the first day, do not draw a random event card. Instead, read the card «Sport fisher found dead» out loud, and place it face up on the table. This event has occurred earlier in the day, and is a possible starting point for your conversation on the first evening – but the conversation can really turn to whatever the players prefer.

In addition to discussing the death of the sport fisher, you can get to know the other characters. None of the vacationers have been on the island for very long.

A third topic: The island is sinking. This has just become common knowledge – the geologist has mentioned it, if someone is playing him. The natives have known it for some time. It's supposedly not going to happen for several months, and therefore not dangerous at all, but even so it is an obvious (and somewhat gloomy) topic for conversation.

### Later days

Event cards are drawn and evening conversations played out as described above. After the fourth evening has been played out, the card «The island sinks» is shuffled into the deck.

### Last day

When the card «The island sinks» has been drawn, play out a final conversation. It does not take place on the hotel patio, but on the hotel owner's boat, which drifts around on the sea with no engine. This morning you woke to ankle-high water on the ground floor, and from the relative safety of the boat you saw the entire island disappear into the sea. The danger is past now: The sea is dead quiet, and the rescue crews will arrive in a few hours. But in the meantime, everything will be explained.

This last conversation can not end before all the event cards (except «The island sinks») has an explanation. It's also nice if you can find an explanation for as many as possible of the events the players invented themselves. This is the moment for drama, revelations and emotions. As soon as everything has been explained, the game can end – but there is time for a few final dramatic monologues if that seems fitting.







**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**



### Sport fisher found dead

He was the only other guest at the hotel.  
He was found on the beach, below a nine  
foot drop. His head had smashed on the  
rocks. Accident or murder?  
Did any of the characters know him?

### The island sinks

We are sitting in the hotel owner's boat,  
which is drifting on the ocean with no  
engine. This morning we woke to ankle-high  
water on the ground floor, and from the  
relative safety of the boat we saw the entire  
island disappear into the sea. The danger  
is over now: The sea is dead quiet, and the  
rescue crews will arrive in a few hours. But in  
the meantime, everything will be explained.

### Dead seagull on the beach

It has a needle through its head.

### Gloomy vandalism

On the newly erected cross on the sport  
fisher's grave, someone has written «swine»  
with black paint.

### A strange greeting

On a palm tree behind the hotel the name  
of one of the characters is carved, followed  
by the inscription «we meet again». Shuffle  
your character cards and draw one at  
random to determine whose name is carved  
on the palm tree.

### The hotel radio is wet

Accident or sabotage?  
No communication with the outside world  
is now possible. There is no cell phone  
reception on the island.



**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

### **Mysterious free tickets**

An envelope is found in the dead sport fisher's room. In it is his tickets to the hotel and the ferry. There is also a note, reading «Enjoy a well-deserved vacation, and write some good pieces on it afterwards. A fan.» Have any of the other characters received mysterious free tickets?

### **Poison?**

A seagull eats some food intended for one of the characters, and dies shortly afterwards. Was the food spoiled? Or poisoned? Shuffle your character cards and draw one at random to determine who was saved by the gull.

### **A theft of underwear**

One of the characters' underwear disappears. Shuffle your character cards and draw one at random to determine who is one change of underwear short

### **Ominous local history**

On the floor by the main entrance, one of the characters discovers a twenty year old newspaper clipping with an item on this island. It describes a murder which took place here at the time. Establish who found the clipping during the evening conversation.

### **A figure in the storm**

There was a storm this night. Several pieces of roofing were torn off, and the boat nearly drifted away. One of the characters thought he saw the shape of a person in the night at the height of the storm. Who could it have been, and what was he or she doing? Shuffle your character cards and draw one at random to determine who saw the figure.

### **Femur**

On a walk around the island, one of the characters trip over something sticking out of the ground. On closer inspection, it turns out to be a human bone! Establish who found it during the evening conversation.



**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

**Until We Sink...**  
**Event**

## Strangers

Two strangers arrived at the island this morning. They were bullying, rude and, as time passed, drunk. A few hours later, their boat was gone. They didn't announce their departure, and no one saw them leave. Who of us had something to do with them? What happened? Was this a coincidence, or did they come for something in particular?

## Private conversation

A character has witnessed a private scene, or heard a private conversation between two other characters, without catching the full context. Shuffle your character cards and draw one at random to determine who the witness was. The witness chooses who the other two characters are. What he has heard or seen must be established through this evening's conversation.

## A lie

By a coincidence, it is revealed that a character has been lying. Shuffle your character cards and draw one at random to determine who the liar is. The liar himself must choose what he has been lying about, and how it is revealed. He may make up a lie on the spot. This card has been explained when it is revealed why he lied.

## Blackout

Last night there was a power outage. The power is back now, but it was gone long enough that all the food was spoiled. Now you have to make do with crackers. There is no obvious reason for the blackout. Accident or sabotage?

## Lots of money

One of the characters have found a suitcase filled with money. The suitcase also held a picture of one of the characters. Shuffle your character cards and draw one at random to determine who is on the picture. This evening's conversation must establish who found the suitcase.

## A night of passion

Two of the characters spent the night together. Establish who the couple is during the evening conversation.



**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

## Manager

- ☞ You are cool, calm and distant – on the surface.
- ☞ You take care of the hotel administration.
- ☞ You are attractive.
- ☞ You are a native.

## Caretaker

- ☞ You are big, dirty and a little stupid.
- ☞ You take care of the practical tasks around the hotel.
- ☞ You are easily swayed by strong emotions.
- ☞ You are a native.

## Hotel owner

- ☞ You are old, and the hotel is your life.
- ☞ In years past you have seen the sea slowly swallow the island and the people leave.
- ☞ You are a native.

## Gossiping retiree

- ☞ You came here to meet people, but are disappointed by how few there are here.
- ☞ You are curious and fond of gossip.
- ☞ You are worldly-wise (or perhaps you just think you are).
- ☞ You are a guest.

## Alcoholic writer

- ☞ You travelled to this remote island to write – but you are not writing.
- ☞ You easily come to despise others.
- ☞ You are lecherous, and frequently drunk.
- ☞ You are a guest.

## Sun worshipper

- ☞ You like open sea fishing, sun tans and athletic activities.
- ☞ You appear streetwise and confident.
- ☞ You are attractive – and you know it.
- ☞ You are a guest.





**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

**Until We Sink...**

**Character**

## Geologist

- ☞ You have come here to investigate the sinking island.
- ☞ You are nerdy, and a little confrontational/rude.
- ☞ You are small, thin and a hypochondriac.
- ☞ You are a guest.

## Celebrity

- ☞ For some reason or other, you are familiar to readers of gossip magazines.
- ☞ You may be at the height of your popularity, or a fading star.
- ☞ It's important for you to be at the center of attention.
- ☞ You are a guest.

## Eternal backpacker

- ☞ You have circled the globe and ended up on this island.
- ☞ You are a free thinker, independent and a little shabby.
- ☞ You like to point out how square the other characters are.
- ☞ You are a guest.

## Pilot

- ☞ You got stuck on the island after your plane got engine trouble.
- ☞ The part you need to repair the engine has been ordered, and will arrive on the next boat.
- ☞ You are a rugged adventurer.
- ☞ You are a guest.

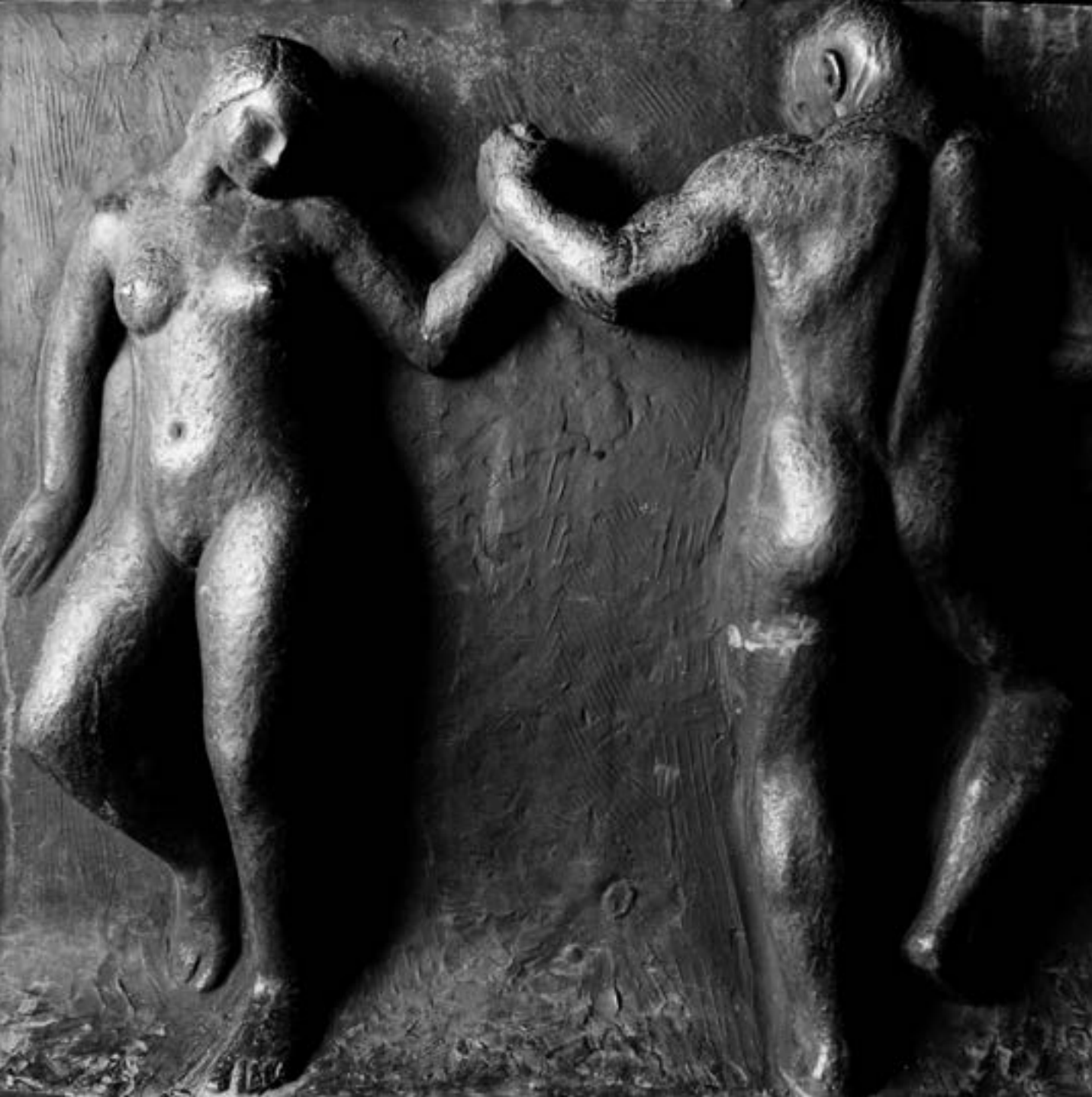
## Son or daughter

- ☞ You are the son or daughter of one of the other characters.
- ☞ You can be a teenager or a child.
- ☞ You are stubborn and rude.
- ☞ You are either a guest or a native.

## Former priest

- ☞ Your voice is calm and comforting (or perhaps you just think it is.)
- ☞ You consider yourself a shepherd.
- ☞ You act as though you still were a priest.
- ☞ You are a guest.





# **Stoke-Birmingham 0-0**

a role-playing poem by Tomas HV Mørkrid

written: 2007  
form: role-playing poem  
players: 4  
duration: 15 minutes  
need to play: beer (optional)

## A role-playing poem

THIS is a role-playing poem for four players. The game is meant to be played in 15 minutes. You take the role of Norwegian supporters of the English football team *Stoke City Football Club*. They've all been supporters of their team for a long time.

### Background

Once a year the characters travel to England to attend a match between Stoke and another team. This year they've seen Stoke holding Birmingham to a draw. It was a dull affair. No goals, next to no excitement, nothing much to talk about.

### The game

The whole game takes place at a pub after the match. You play out the talk around the table, commenting the match, reminiscing about legendary matches, talking about the weather, the hotel, domestic affairs and any details you may contrive to make part of the characters life. Try to engage in your character and his/her relations to the other characters, and to be a dull person with a dull life.

The relations between the characters are improvised. If someone implies that they are married to your character, then they are. If someone talks about a joint experience, then you have experienced it. Go along with the ideas of other players, but keep it down-to-earth.

Do not under any circumstances make

any strange or exciting remarks. Be ordinary. Let silence speak if you find nothing to say. 15 minutes can be a very long time in a dull life. Try to stay in it until the end.

### Set-up

Sit around a table. A pint of beer for each player would fit the setting. Choose a character name each. Place a sheet of paper in the middle of the table, and write the names of the characters on it in uppercase letters for everyone to see. Quiet down, and start the game.

### Ending

The game plays out in real time. You can use a timer to stop the game. It is to be stopped at 15 minutes sharp.

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#### Tomas HV Mørkrid

(b. 1962) is a Norwegian author and gamewright. His first book was the poem anthology «Munnfullmåne» (1996). Mørkrid was the first Norwegian designer to have a role-playing game published by a publishing house (*Fabula*, 1999). He has written several other role-playing games, such as *Muu*, *Pervo* and *Romanse*.

---

#### Names for characters

(play a character of your own sex)

- Jon-Bjarne Olsen (male)
- Trond Iver-sen (male)
- Helge Suldal (male)
- Anders Lien (male)
- Lise Olsen (female)
- Kari-Anne Iversen (female)
- Esther Helland (female)
- Turid Vetlesen (female)





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# **Zombie Porn**

a role-playing game by **Matthijs Holter**

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**written:** 2007  
**form:** crunchy story game  
**players:** 3 or more  
**duration:** 2–4 hours  
**need to play:** one die  
the included flowcharts  
pens and paper



*She wrapped the coat tightly around herself. The Lepra Strip wasn't her favorite place. All of them standing there, selling their bits... Who'd want to buy anything like that, disease-ridden crap that would fall off the moment after you sewed it on? She needed something fresh, something that still pulsed. A new vagina.*

*A few blocks away she saw Putrella, the tranny who'd been her friend for all these years. Through so many movie shoots, penetrations and limb changes. Her friend – and now her prey. In the world of Zombie porn there is only one law: Amputate or get amputated.*

*She drew the knife. Putrella always had her dick hanging out. The bragging bitch loved showing off her meat sausage. It would be harder to get to the other goodies she wanted. But she had to have them – had to stick to her image as a zombie teen. She'd had that image ever since «Schoolgirls From Beyond The Grave». Her breakthrough. So many years ago, so many body parts...*

*The blade gleamed in the glow from the streetlights. «Putrella?»*

*Putrella turned toward her with a stiffening smile.*

*«Is that a surgeon's scalpel in your pocket, or are you just happy to see me?»*

## Game concept

**Z**OMBIE Porn is a GM-less role-playing game that asks the question: «How far are you willing to go to survive in the undead entertainment industry?»

The characters are citizens of the Valley of Death, the capital of the underworld, the biggest collection of dead meat below the surface of the earth, and the centre of the necro porn industry.

During the game they'll record porn movies, increase their status in the industry, hunt for body parts in the cold dewy Necropolis morning, and try to protect their own body from other hunters – all the while looking for true love. For everyone.

You win by getting the highest *Image* score. But if you can't make your *Love* – love for everyone – balance your *Angst*, fame won't help you. Then you lose no matter what.

### Scenes and flow charts

The game is divided into scenes of different types: Movie shoots, hunts, love and navel-gazing. On the following pages you'll get an overview of what the scenes do.

Pick a player to start the game. Turns go clockwise.

### On your turn, do this:

- ☛ Pick the flow chart for the scene you want to play. The flow chart shows when different players should narrate, make choices, and roll dice.

#### Matthijs Holter's

*(b. 1972) first game, BeastWorld, was written during English class in 1987. Three xerox copies were sold to friends. It was, of course, awesome. In 1993, he started the fanzine Imagonem. In 2004, his game Draug was published by Spartacus. In 2008, he edited this book.*

- ☞ Start on the field marked «Start», and follow the arrows.
- ☞ In each field, follow the instructions given.
- ☞ Some fields require you to make a choice or to roll dice. Follow the arrow that corresponds to your choice or the result of the roll.
- ☞ Fields shaped like speech bubbles tells you to narrate something. You may describe the action in as much detail as you want. This is where the story happens. Use the other characters' attributes, gorge yourself in adjectives, speak with pathos. Entertain yourself and the others!
- ☞ When the flow chart says the scene ends, it's the next player's turn.

### Scene overview

Here's a brief overview of the scenes. These are not the rules for each scene – the actual rules are found in the flow charts.

**Movie shoot scenes** involve two or more characters. The aim of these scenes is to build up the characters' Image scores. The more intact a character's body is, the greater his/her chance of shooting a good film. Movie shoots with characters they have no Love for will increase a character's Angst. Prima Donnas will increase their Image fast, but their Love will cool off quickly.

Inside every player there's a porn director throbbing to get out! In the movie shoot scenes you show what you're good for. Give the other characters fitting costumes! Make an art film! Do your thing!

**Hunting scenes** involve two characters. The aim is to acquire body parts – either because the character lacks a few, because they want to stop a rival from getting famous, or just because they want to build up a selection for later use. During the hunting scene the character will use their own body parts as a stake – often several times in a row. These scenes increase a character's Angst.

The hunting scenes are the hardest conflict scenes in the game. Play hard. No mercy.

**Love scenes** involve two characters. The aim is to increase the characters' mutual Love. Characters who share a lot of Love will not want to steal each others' body parts (that only causes Angst), and will enjoy doing movie shoots with each other, which will increase their Image. Without Love, Image won't help, after all. Love scenes can also decrease a character's Angst.

Love doesn't have to be only for romantic lovers. Try some scenes with respect, family love, or the love between good colleagues.

**Navel gazing scenes** only involve one character. The aim is to show the character's fear, uncertainty and despair over the terrible choices of the porn death life. These scenes decrease a character's Angst. They can also increase the character's Love to another character, one-sidedly.

Navel gazing is for great melancholic solo scenes. Play with pathos. Solitude is beautiful.

## Characters

Take a few moments to think about what kind of character you want to play. Having a clear view of the character's image as a porn star will help you greatly. What kind of roles does he/she get typecast for?

A character consists of the following:

**Name.** All names should be related to death or disease. If you can combine that with something of a sexual nature, that's great. Be inspired by veneral

diseases, bad puns, pathological jargon and the porn industry.

**Image.** Image is both a description, which tells you how the masses see the character, and an attribute, which shows the star power of the character. Make up the description yourself. Image starts at zero.

**Angst.** Angst measures how bad the character feels. If the character's Angst gets to 5, the character will implode in a disgusting lump of horrible emotions. All body parts will be given to the general public, and the game is over – but the character can still win. Angst starts at 1.

**Love.** The characters have different Love scores for each of the other characters. Write down the names of each of the other characters. Divide 5 Love points between them (0 is the lowest). This should be done in secret; nobody knows before the start of the game who loves them the highest – or the least.

**Body parts.** Each character starts out with 6 active body parts. The player chooses what those parts are, but they all have to be different. Consider the character's Image when choosing body parts – make sure every part can be tied in with the image. It's good if some of them could easily be used in a porn film shoot.

Write down the body parts on six cards. Write in big, legible letters so that the other players can use your body parts in their narration. Feel free to draw.

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### Example Names:

*Cancer Genitalia.  
Sulthanatos. Syphilis  
Cockburn. Vagina  
Pectoris. Necro Stud.  
Staphylococck. Syphilissa  
von Tittenburg.*

---

### Example Images:

*The Motorcycle Man, the  
Acid Balls of Bethlehem,  
the Schoolgirl with  
no Insides, the Pig  
Farmer, Doll who can  
take Anything, the Pet  
Cemetery Gravedigger.*

---

### Example Body Parts:

*Vagina dentata, penis  
fingers, head with  
foreskin, vaginanus,  
expanding doll mouth,  
earthquake breasts,  
scythe-shaped penis.*

### Some suggested movie sets

- The schoolgirl's bedroom, with pictures of famous killers on the walls, and headless vibrating teddy bears
- The hotel room, with naked, sterile walls that someone's written on in blood – «redrum», «helter skelter», «amputee or amputator»
- The marvellous rococco palace where the king and queen are still lying in a majestic rigor mortis embrace
- In an office in the blood money scrapers, where the beautiful assistant has a job interview with the handsome hangman.
- In a hot air balloon made of human skin, high above the city
- In the barn, with a maid and a stable girl frolicking in the hay as the barn burns down

## Movie Shoot Scenes

On this spread you can find the flow chart for movie shoot scenes. The chart contains all the rules for those scenes. Below is an example of how such a scene might play out.

### Example:

*Sulthanatos invites Syphilip and Cancer to a movie shoot. Sulthanatos and Syphilip choose to cooperate; Cancer is going to play prima donna. Sulthanatos rolls a 9, Syphilip rolls a 7, and Cancer rolls 11. Syphilip starts narration, Sulthanatos follows up, and Cancer – the prima donna – finishes.*

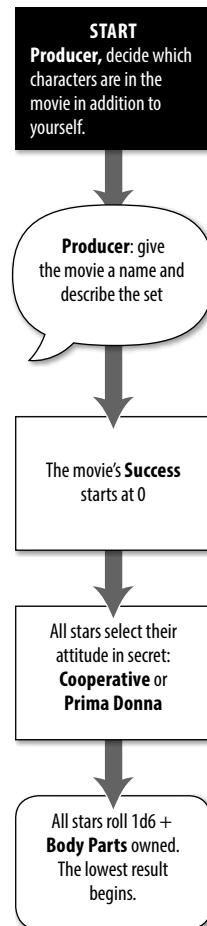
*The movie's Success is 9 + 7 (Sulthanatos + Syphilip), +4 because two characters are cooperating – sum 18. These points are split across all three characters – 6 points of Image each. In addition Cancer gets her roll of 11 points, for a total of 17 Image points.*

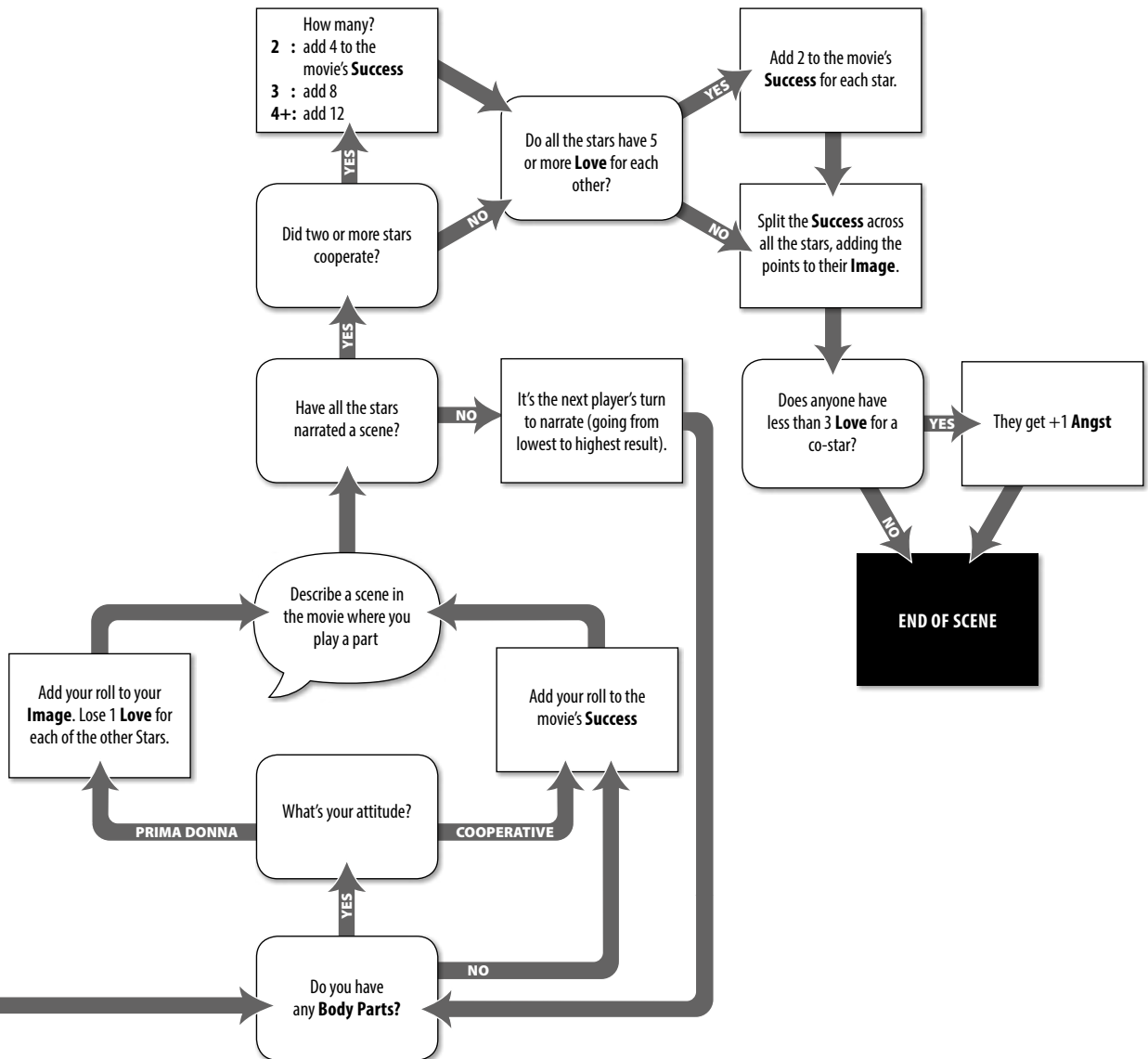
*Sulthanatos has Love 3 for Syphilip and 2 for Cancer. He gets 1 point of Angst for being in a movie with Cancer.*

*Syphilip has Love 4 for Sulthanatos and 5 for Cancer. No Angst.*

*Cancer has only 1 Love for each of the two others. She gets 2 points of Angst. In addition she loses 1 point of Love for each of them for being such a prima donna – and ends up with 0 Love for them both. A cold, cold woman.*

**Movie Shoot:** When you choose a movie shoot scene, your character is the «Producer», and all the characters in the scene – including the producer – are «Stars».





### Suggested hunt locations

- The Lepra Strip, where the undead hawk their fallen-off body parts
- Route 666, the freeway with no speed limit, taking you from home to hell in less than five minutes
- Bone Wood, where happy families eat home-made ham
- The Blood Money Scrapers, the city's business district, where lunch is a pile of cash soaked in sweat and blood
- Down Stinx, the pus river, in the uncooperative ferryman's boat
- On a tightrope of entrails across Hell Canyon, breathing evil hallucinogenic gases

## Hunt Scenes

On this page you can find the flow chart for hunt scenes. The chart contains all the rules for these scenes. Here is an example of how such a scene might play out.

### Example:

*Sulthanatos doesn't like Cancer, and hunts for her in the whore halls. He bets his left arm; she puts her head at stake. Sulthanatos rolls a 4. Cancer a 2.*

*Cancer wants a re-roll. She narrates how three whores get in Sulthanatos' way, demanding intercourse. She now adds her buttocks to the bet, and gets -1 to her next roll. She rolls a 5, -1*

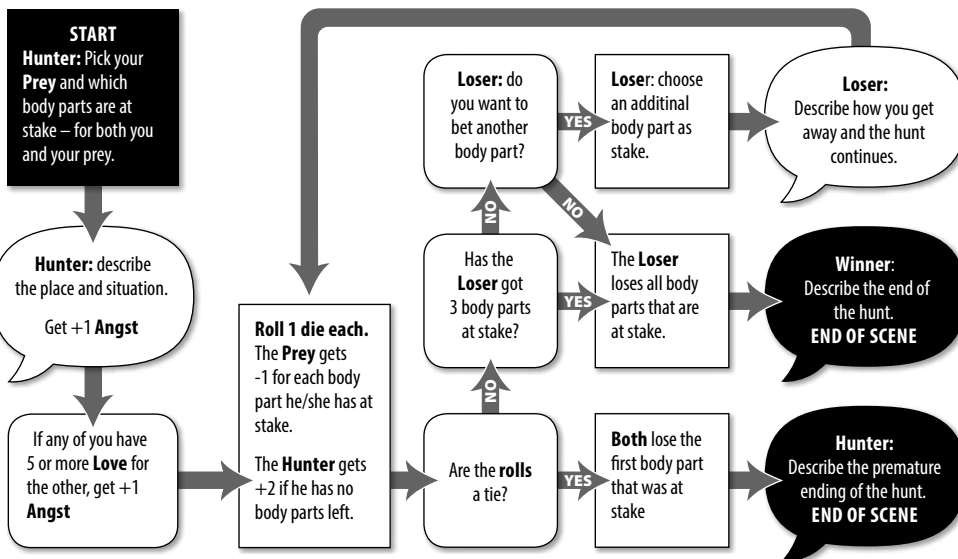
*for a sum of 4. Sulthanatos rolls a 5.*

*Cancer's in trouble! She asks for yet another re-roll, narrating how she slips in a pool of blood and is propelled downhill. She bets her right leg. Her roll is 5, -2 for a sum of 3. Sulthanatos rolls a 3 as well.*

*It's a tie! They both lose a body part. Sulthanatos loses his left arm; Cancer loses her head. Sulthanatos narrates how they both slide down onto the freeway and get run over, and the ambulance personnel aren't able to retrieve all the body parts in the heavy traffic.*

*Sulthanatos gets 1 point of Angst. None of them had 5 of more Love for each other, so they don't get more Angst than that.*

**Hunt:** When you choose a hunting scene, your character is the «Hunter» and the one you hunt is called the «Prey».



# Love Scenes

On this page you can find the flow chart for love scenes. The chart contains all the rules for these scenes. Here is an example of how such a scene might play out.

## Example:

*Sulthanatos and Cancer decide to make up. Cancer initiates a love scene on her turn. She invites Sulthanatos to a grave robbery. They both get +1 Love for each other.*

*Sulthanatos rolls a die and gets a 5! While digging, belly deep in earth, he tells Cancer how beautiful she is and how her grinding bones give*

*him the chills. They both get +1 Love for each other.*

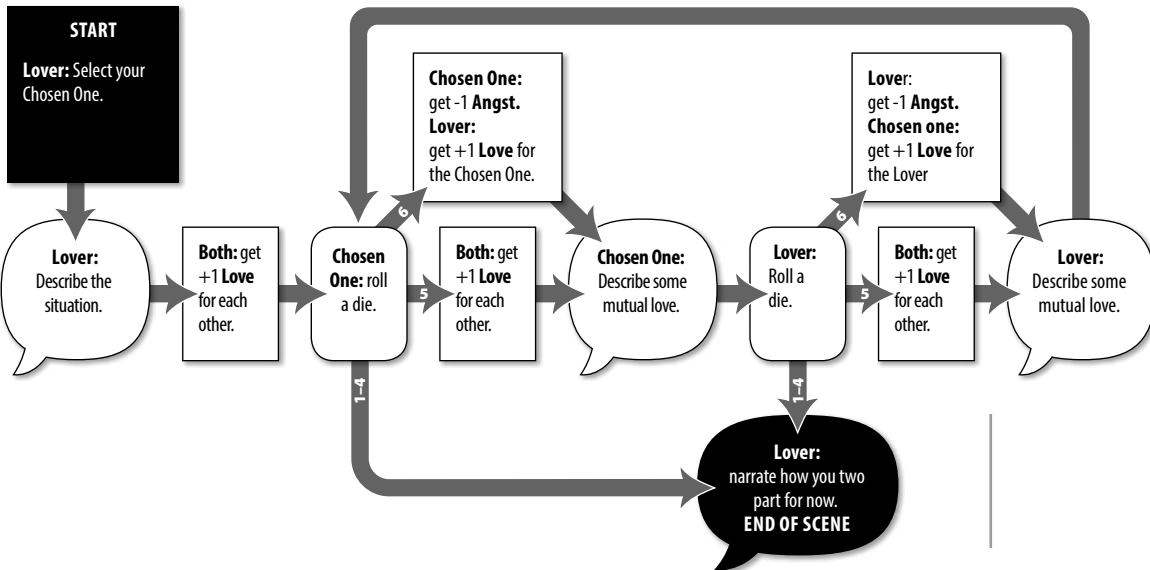
*Cancer rolls a 6. She loses 1 Angst, they both get +1 Love for each other, and Cancer takes Sulthanatos for a walk down the banks of Stinx while they gaze at the bleeding moon.*

*Sulthanatos rolls a 2. They part ways, and the scene ends.*

## Some locations where love might blossom

- At the popular lunch bar Cannibals
- Beneath the sparkling comet storm, while the children scream
- Walking along route 666, watching the wreckage
- In the acid rain
- By the mass grave crater west of town

**Love:** When you choose a love scene, your character is called the «Lover», and the one you involve in the scene is the «Chosen One».



### Some places to get emotional

- The desert, where the Temple of Skulls lies in solitude
- All alone in the masses that are eternally running out of the Torture Palace
- In the razorblade-filled bathtub at home
- Jogging around the dead lake
- Beneath the sky filled with spiralling stars

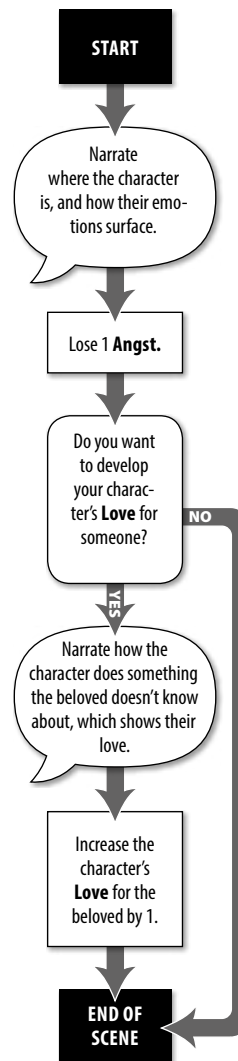
## Navel Gazing Scenes

To the right you can find the flow chart for navel gazing scenes. The chart contains all the rules for those scenes. Below is an example of how such a scene might play out.

### Example:

*Cancer walks along the beach of the dead lake, picking up the bleached bones of malformed sea creatures. She chokes on her tears. Blood runs out of her eye sockets, coloring the sand a brownish grey. She digs a hole in the sand. Slowly, she tears out a fingernail and puts it in the hole. «For you, Syphilip, although you never knew», she whispers. Cancer gets -1 Angst, and +1 Love for Syphilip.*

**Navel Gazing:** In these scenes there's only one character present.



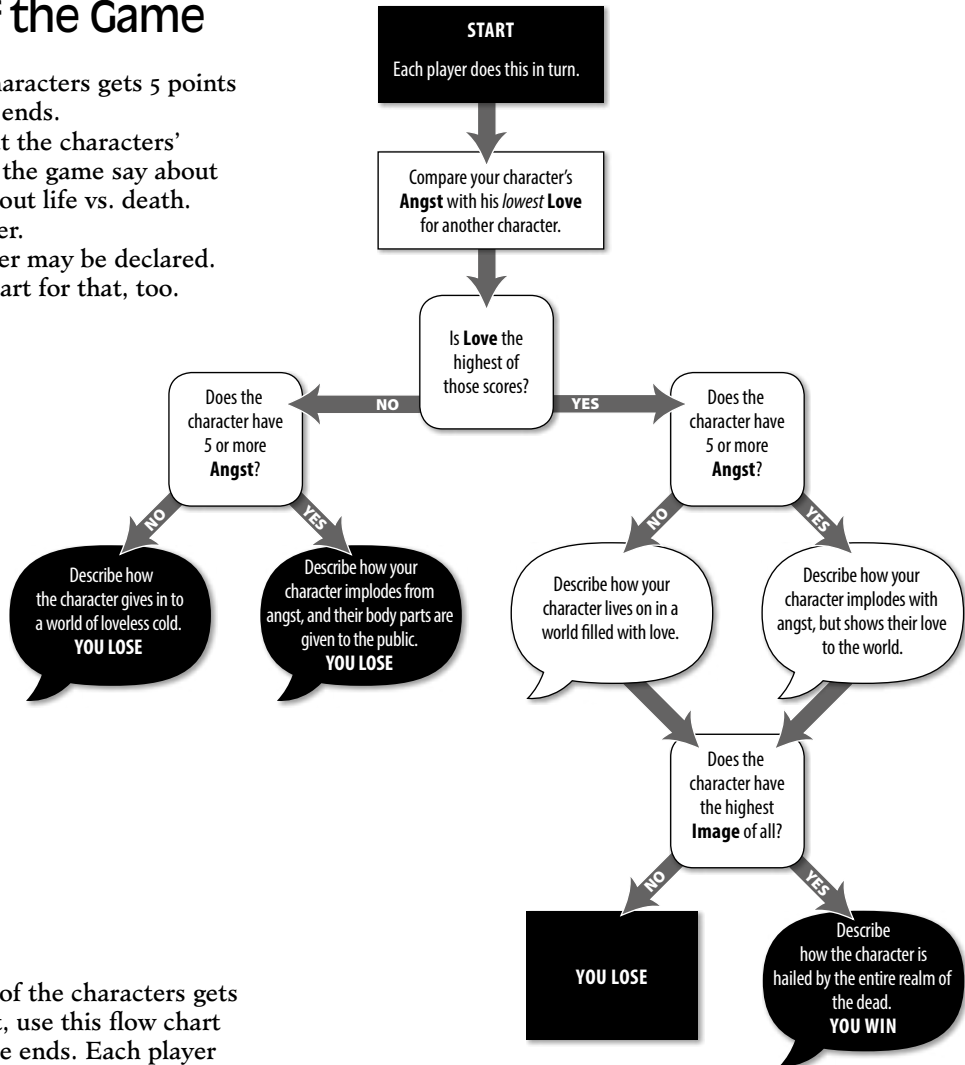


# The End of the Game

When one of the characters gets 5 points of Angst, the game ends.

Think about what the characters' actions throughout the game say about them as people. About life vs. death. About love vs. career.

And then a winner may be declared. There's a flow chart for that, too.



**The End:** When one of the characters gets to 5 points of Angst, use this flow chart to see how the game ends. Each player goes through the flow chart once. The game may end with no winner.

## Strategy

You don't have to read this guide before playing. In fact, it's probably best if you try the game once or twice first. Feel free to return to this section later!

### You only win at Zombie Porn if you:

- ☞ Have more Love than Angst, even to the character you love the least;
- ☞ And at the same time, you have the highest Image score of all the characters.

These are tough criteria, but nobody said it was easy to be an undead erotic artist. It's indescribably painful – and indescribably beautiful. Remember: You can win the game even if you implode from angst.

Here are a few situations you should take advantage of during the game:

**Asymmetric Love.** It's wonderful when you love someone else more than they love you – especially if they have less than 3 Love for you. Involve them in movie shoot scenes as often as you can. They get +1 Angst every time!

Asymmetric love is a result either of navel gazing scenes, where you increase your unrequited Love for someone; or by assigning a lot of Love to another character at the start of the game; or by someone rolling a 6 in a love scene.

Be aware of the danger that you might get Angst from being hunted – it's not always safe not to be loved by everyone.

**The Perfect prima donna.** If you can build up a good team spirit, so everyone has Love for each other and cooperates on the movie shoots, everyone will have fairly equal Image scores. That's the perfect environment for backstabbing your friends. The more characters cooperate, and the more Love they have for each other, the greater the total Success of the movie. If you choose to be prima donna in a situation like that, you'll score a huge amount of Image in an instant – and be a head above the rest!

You can also play the prima donna in small-scale productions, where you only involve someone you have 0 Love for. If they have low Love for you too, they'll get Angst while you get more Image without losing Love (it can't go below 0). For this strategy, make sure to have a lot of body parts.

### Are you close to winning? Go hunting!

If you have the highest Image score, and at least 6 Love for everyone – you should go for a hunt. You'll get Angst, and can reach 5 points so the game ends without the other players having a chance to change their scores. If you hunt for someone who really loves you, or who you really love, you get 2 points of Angst all at once!

### Involve characters with social phobias!

Big movie shoots with someone who doesn't have a lot of Love is a good idea. It can give them 1 Angst for each co-star – with some clever calculation you can arrange so they'll implode from Angst,

and make the game end. Since you're not the one imploding, you can probably make do with less than 6 Love – and therefore more Image.

**Go hunting together.** If you see that one of the other characters has a lot of Image early on, you can arrange with the other players to run several hunt scenes in a row against the leading character. That way you get to divide the leader's body parts among you, so he/she'll do worse in later movie shoots while the rest of you catch up. Note, though, that this sort of cooperation can turn around and bite you.

**Stop a bad trend.** If you see you're heading for way too much Angst, and don't have a lot of Image – take a break from the rat race. Choose a navel gazing scene. You'll lower your Angst, and can build up some asymmetric Love as well (see above). Then you'll be ready for a new movie shoot.

Also consider initiating love scenes with other players in order to slow down the pace and inspire others to control tendencies toward movie shooting hysteria. The game encourages movie shoots with all characters involved, which will make you rack up Angst very quickly.

**Metagaming.** Another ruthless tactic is to play on people's need for character portrayal and sensible dramaturgy. You can initiate love scenes with others so they'll feel bad about hunting you later, which lets you keep body parts and increase Image. (Of course it's a good

tactic to hunt people who initiate love scenes with you, but a lot of players will be inclined to follow the story, without reflecting on the fact that the chill of the Valley of the Shadow of Death is merciless and that you can't be concerned with immersionist ideas in a gamist industry of necrotic porn).

You can also count on how people, completely in line with the conventions of the industry, will repeat successes and make sequels so that you won't have to spend your turn initiating movie shoots. And if two players are cooperating too well with each other, make sure to narrate things that can split their characters apart, by playing on jealousy and envy, for example.

But when all is said and done, the most important tactic is this one:

**Make sure to entertain.** Play for fun, tongue firmly in cheek. Get into your narration, and play it like a game. Make sure to involve the other players in your colorful descriptions, knowing that everyone loves to be noticed, and certainly use humor. That makes the game fun for everyone – and that's also to your tactical advantage. Because no matter how much you hunt for other characters' body parts, play the prima donna or cheat them of Image points, they'll invite you to love scenes and movie shoots again and again... as long as you're a good prima donna.

## Design Notes

My plan was to make the most horrible entry for the R.I.S.K. 2007 competition. I tried a few concepts; some were horrible in content, others in execution. Then this thing appeared one Thursday morning after a night of wine, illness and crying children.

The game has many influences. I've heard of a few Danish scenarios that might be similar in concept: «Tropical Zombies» and «Helt i bund» (though I've never played them). But the game's structure is based on things I've heard about the boxing game «Contenders» and – importantly – on playing Skjalg Kreutzers «Downtown» and Paul Czeges «My Life with Master».

In many ways, this is a friendly parody of the Forge trend: Narrativistic role-playing games with strong rule mechanics, especially if you consider the focus on resource management and using points as a «carrot» to lead the players. I think these games are fun, and some are very good; most have some huge, gaping holes in them that I can never quite get around. The ones I think are possibly the most promising, but incomplete or incomprehensible, are «Under the Bed» and «Nicotine Girls». With both of these I've had good, sometimes excellent games, which at the same time were marked with great uncertainty as to how they're actually supposed to be played.

At the same time, we're obviously deep inside White Wolf country. Not

only is there an attribute for Angst, it's a dreadfully pretentious game about love and death and all that.

The game was originally written to be a fun read – but it provided unexpectedly fun play. After the initial scene, which can often be pretty uncomfortable, you quickly get into a mode where competition drives the story forward – until it ends with a scream. And applause.

Appearance-wise I've chosen not to use illustrations, except for the flow charts. I think the game is better served with letting people picture blood, gore and interacting genitals in their own heads.

It's strange to put down so much work in something so thoroughly rotten. But it's a blast to play, and gives people a good laugh – so why not?

Amputee or amputator. Yeah, why not?

### Thanks to my play testers:

Magnus, Jo, Ole Peder,  
Michael and Tor Kjetil



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# Wanderer

a role playing game

by Øivind Stengrundet

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**written:** 2007  
**form:** role-playing game  
**players:** 3 or more  
**duration:** 2+ hours  
can be played as  
a campaign game  
**need to play:** pencils and paper  
2 dice

## Introduction

*The wind swept sharply across the ship's deck, and Gregar was forced to hold on to the railing to avoid falling. The green cloak billowed out behind him as the ship cut slowly through the white waves.*

*He stared intensely towards the little island growing closer out on the ocean, still unable to see anything but the twin mountain peaks rising above the waves. He turned to the dark-skinned sailor who stood, stone-faced, in the middle of the deck.*

*«Are you sure this is Shinarvon?» The sailor directed his gaze towards Gregar, and without emotion he answered «I'm sure, Wanderer. But are you sure you want to go there?» Gregar faced the island again, and swallowed cautiously. Everything had seemed very safe and simple as he left the Library, but now he felt doubt stirring in his guts.*

*Did he really want to go there? He thrust his right hand into his pocket, and felt the cool touch of the stone hidden there. Yes, he was sure. This was what he was trained for, and he wouldn't fail. He was a Wanderer, and a Wanderer never fails.*

**I**T is now time to put the person you thought you were aside. Wanderer is a role-playing game, sort of an interactive book, where the players are the book's protagonists, whereas the game master controls the surroundings and the antagonists. It's time to assume an alternative identity, and try to manoeuvre the many challenges of the planet Terrustor.

## The wanderers

*I'm a Wanderer.*

*When the first magical storm swept across Terrustor, dividing the islands and changing them, our fellowship was formed. To preserve the knowledge of everything that was.*

*Each storm creates a new picture of reality. We are the memory of the world. Adventurers, sailors, warriors, wizards and librarians. We watch, travel and write down. Intervene with the history of the planet, and form it in line with our ideals;*

*Each conscience holds immeasurable value. Words, thoughts and language are valuable – in themselves.*

*A safe future is built on an illuminated past.*

*A Wanderer always helps another. We know each other by the green cloaks we bear, our thoughtful eyes, our common tongue.*

*I'm a Wanderer, and I have no home. This is my name, my calling, my life.*

*And the storm is building.*

The planet of Terrustor is a planet in constant change. Islands sprout from the ocean while others sink and disappear. Species and races are born and die, and the present changes into forgotten history. Luckily, there are those among us who work to counter history being forgotten. They call themselves the Wanderers.

### History

Some 800 years ago, the first magical storm swept across Terrustor. It took the planet's inhabitants by surprise, and the destruction was massive. People reacted

*In the deep, dark woods of Eastern Norway, a semi-intelligent creature lurks in the shadows. It walks upright, and acts, as far as people can tell, like a normal human being.*

*However, this book is certainly not to be judged by its cover. Beneath its less than glossy surface hides an even less glossy character. His name is **Øivind Stengrundet**, and his mere 33 years of life are belied by the streaks of grey in his hair and beard. When confronted by this fact, he laughs it off and explains it's just his brain cells leaking through his skull, colouring the hair, although popular belief pins it on a fatherly heritage.*

*Øivind started playing RPGs in 1991, and began designing games in 1992. Despite the years, «Wanderer» is his first project ever to reach a level this close to completion. This probably goes to show that simplicity rules, as he managed to do in a week what he couldn't do in 15 years.*

*When not eagerly flipping through his RPG notes, Øivind makes a living as a teacher, and in his spare time spends the days playing and coaching soccer, reading, writing airy poetry, fishing, hiking, drawing, and dabbling in computers. When he grows up, he'll retire.*

### What do you need?

In order to enter the world of Terrustor, you first and foremost need someone with whom to play, in addition to this compilation. You will also require 2 ordinary, six-sided dice, in addition to something to write on. Last, but far from least, you'll need your imagination.

Once you have all of this, one of you needs to assume the role of game master (GM), while the rest become players. Since you're reading this, one can suspect you to be the GM, and so you will be addressed as such. The players need only read pages 3–5, and perhaps the chapter on the planet towards the end, whereas you, the GM, needs to read it all through. The adventure at the end is for the GMs eyes ONLY, and must not be read by the players.

All that remains now is to wish you good luck, and enjoy your trip into the world of Terrustor.

in many ways: some thought it was punishment from a higher power, and started praying to gods they thought existed. Some thought it to be a very powerful, yet ordinary, storm, and continued their lives unperturbed. Some thought the end had come, and took their own lives in frustration and despair. And some saw the storm for what it was – colliding streams of energy that got out of control.

Some of the latter tried to find out exactly what had happened, and why. And so it came to pass that four people simultaneously reached the island Cnāwan, which seemed to be the only island unaffected by the magical storm. There, they formed a fellowship, promising to travel the planet to preserve the knowledge of how the world looked, so that the past would not be lost to coming generations. They named themselves the Wanderers.

One of their first tasks was to build a library on Cnāwan, as a place to store this knowledge. Thereafter they created, through methods kept secret from all but the inner circle of Wanderers, the Tears Of Luna, small gems with the ability to store anything spoken to them. These stones would help them remember everything they learned on their travels.

Of the four original Wanderers, only one was a woman: Thelmara Sunbreeze. To avoid the Wanderers becoming too dominated by males, the founders decreed that the Wanderers' highest leader always should be a woman. In addition, Thelmara stayed behind

on Cnāwan to teach new wanderers, while the three others went travelling. Since then, only women have lead the Wanderers, and the present leader, Ilmare Nightwatcher, is the 37. in the line. All the leaders have been carved in stone and placed in the Hall of Memories, the very heart of the Library. Here can also be found statues of the three male founders: Mattinor Thoughtweaver, Gundar Silverleaf and Olegievo Windcatcher.

### The Library

All the knowledge collected by the Wanderers are stored in their headquarters, situated on the island of Cnāwan. This head quarter is simply known as the Library, and consists of a large number of greater and smaller structures. Here all the teaching of new Wanderers takes place, here the collected knowledge is stored, and here they foresee the planet's future so as to guide evolution towards it. The Library was built nearly 800 years ago, and has since been expanded to cover most of the relatively small island. What little of the island is not covered by buildings, is used to grow some of the food needed by the inhabiting Wanderers. The rest of their food-supply comes through fishing and trade with nearby islands.

The first buildings raised on Cnāwan, were erected through the use of magic, but most of the newer buildings are built by manual labour. Cnāwan is, to the Wanderers' knowledge, the only



island on Terrustor protected from the feared magical storms, and as such it's brilliantly suited to store their knowledge. Why this particular island seems unaffected by the storms remains unknown, but the most popular theory says that the high energy levels in the island's foundations works as a repellent towards the storms' energy, causing these to bend off and avoid the island.

### Who are the Wanderers?

The Wanderers are a collection of people working towards a common vision: to preserve knowledge of the past, and to guide the planet into a future built on what has passed. The wanderers travel between the islands to observe the world as it stands today, but also to give its inhabitants a friendly push in the «right» direction. However, only a select few know the big picture of the Wanderers' plan; that knowledge is reserved for the high council. Most Wanderers never get to know more than small pieces of this plan, usually during an assignment, although everyone has an inkling as to what it entails: To preserve as much of today's multitude as possible, to ensure nothing is lost to the future. What every Wanderer knows, however, as well as most people around Terrustor, are the Wanderers' creed: «Each conscience holds immeasurable value. Words, thoughts and language are valuable – in themselves. A safe future is built on an illuminated past.»

If the Wanderers believe their actions

to be in line with their beliefs, there are virtually no limits to what they will do. They'll intervene to stop wars if they believe the war will extinguish a people. At the same time they could just as well start a war, if they thought it would save a people or a species. The Wanderers have also assassinated individuals in order to save many others, so they are known to take quite drastic measures. However, they are mainly peaceful in intent, helping people with more mundane matters, such as: Agricultural advice to hunters who have lost their prey, teaching shipmaking to islands who have no contact with the outside world, and removing monsters who threaten villages and island societies. A Wanderer will avoid killing, unless he deems it absolutely unavoidable.

Most Wanderers are selected as very young, although some join as adult, and they get their training at the Library (see above). When they are considered ready, they are given their Wanderer's cloak. This night green cloak is the real symbol of the Wanderers, and they are recognised all over the planet because of it. In addition, each Wanderer is presented with a Tear Of Luna, a small black gem possessing the power to store everything spoken to it. These stones are the Wanderers' tool in storing what knowledge they gain on their journeys. The gems are then brought back to the Library, where all the knowledge is gathered and sorted. Each gem is bonded to one Wanderer, and can only

be used by the owner, so that theft will render the stone useless. If the gem is crushed, all its stored knowledge will be lost, and so the Wanderers are trained to destroy the gems rather than have them fall into the wrong hands.

### **Wanderer squads**

A Wanderer is very rarely sent out alone, they usually operate in squads. The members of these squads are selected according to their mission; where they're going, who they'll meet, and what they're supposed to do or discover. Squad members are selected in accordance with both skills, knowledge, experience and personality. A squad will usually consist of between 3 and 6 Wanderers.

Regardless of the size of the squad, a leader will always be appointed at the start of the mission, in addition to at least one referrer. The referrers are responsible for recording everything the squad discovers into their Tears Of Luna, and although all members of the group are trained to do this, the referrers have the main responsibility to do so. The leader of the squad will at all times be responsible for decisions that involve the entire squad, such as where to go, who to talk to, whether the squad should split up to cover more ground, and so on. Even though the leaders will always discuss matters with the others, they hold the last word should disagreements occur.

### **Dhralls among the Wanderers**

Ever since its foundation, discussions have emerged as to whether other species than humans should be allowed within the Wanderers. There have been votes several times, but it was only after the dhralls first emerged some 200 years ago that the requirements were loosened. Dhralls were created from humans after a magical storm, and the Wanderers realised that their close kinship with humans demanded that they be given access to the organisation. The rules were altered 140 years ago, making dhralls the only species, apart from humans, allowed into the Wanderers.

Although dhralls have a very low status out among the common humans, they have from the outset been equal among the Wanderers. One of the Wanderers' principles is after all equality, and dhralls now hold positions in all levels among the Wanderers. And although no dhrall has yet been appointed leader of the Wanderers, this remains but a question of time. Wanderer squads are often comprised of both humans and dhralls, quite consciously, to show the world that humans and dhralls are equals.

## Your character

It is now time for you to create a role, a sort of alter ego, if you like. This character will represent you in the game world, and is the person you will act to be during play. To help you know and understand this person, we will now look at some steps to help you create your role. As you decide the details around your persona, you should take a note of these on a character sheet. Either you make one yourself, or you can use the one presented a little further out in the rules.

So, you're a Wanderer, member of an ancient brotherhood that travels the width and length of the planet Terrustor in order to collect knowledge about the world as it is today. As a Wanderer you may choose to be either a human or a dhrall. If you want to know more about the differences between the two, you should take look at the section on the planet as a whole.

When you're creating your role, you start off with this decision; human or dhrall. Then it's time to come up with a name, so you can present yourself to people you meet along the way. Once you have a fitting name, it's time to move on.

### Personality and motivation

Who is your role, really? How does he behave, what's his attitude towards life? These are issues you have to consider carefully when creating a role. This must be a person you can get under the skin

of, making choices as he would, say things like he would, and behave like he would. On the character sheet a space is reserved for you to put down a few short words about «your» personality, in order to make it easier for you to remember who you are at the moment. Perhaps you're afraid of something? Maybe you have an expression you utter frequently? Is there anything you like particularly well? Make a note of it.

Another thing to consider is why your character ended up a Wanderer. What's your motivation, what make you join this brotherhood? Did your parents abandon you to the Wanderers? Was it a wish to influence the future that made you join? Or was it perhaps a tragedy, leaving you without family, possessions or hope, that drove you into the Wanderers' ranks? Or something else entirely?

These are matters you should think through, and use it to write a short background story on your role: who he is, where he comes from, and what made him a Wanderer.

### Skills

The most important thing about your character is now done, insofar as you have decided «your» personality. That is what's visible about your role, and the thing people on the streets and roads of Terrustor notices. However, your character also possesses skills he is more or less adept at. We have divided these into three categories, and it's time to have a look at them:

<b>Physique</b>	Covers strength, dexterity and endurance.
<b>Psyche</b>	In addition to intelligence, also controls magic and willpower.
<b>Technique</b>	A measure of skills with tools and weapons.

As you start out, you get 20 points to distribute freely between these three skills, albeit with two restrictions: Neither skill can have less than 2 points, and neither skill can have more than 10 points. Apart from this, you are free to assign the 20 points as you see fit, but a good idea might be to glance again at your role's personality, in order to know which skill(s) to favour. The assigned points must then be written into your character sheet, where the abbreviations [PH], [PS] and [TE] are used. These abbreviations will also be used during play, as well as throughout the rules.

### Life and Death

On the character sheet there is a field called [LP]. This is an abbreviation of **Life points**, and is a measure of how much damage your character can take before he dies. These points are not assigned, but are calculated like this:

**Life points** = Physique x 3

Should your [LP] reach 0, you will be rendered unconscious, and if it should fall to -3, either as a result of bleeding or direct damage, your character dies. It

might therefore be a good idea to keep an eye on your [LP] total, to avoid going headless into life-threatening situations.

### Possesions

Apart from the clothes he's wearing, including his Wanderer's cloak, your character starts out with only two items: a woollen blanket and his Tear Of Luna. In addition to this, however, he is given 10 trylls, the monetary currency on Terrustor.

This means your character is all done, and you're ready to play. Good luck!



# Challenges

All inhabitants on Terrustor sooner or later bump into tasks that must be overcome, either personal and individual obstacles, against an opponent, or involving their environment. Some of these are dramatic, others involve stretching one's limits according to physical or mental abilities. All of these tasks and conflicts are collectively called challenges.

## Resolution

To decide the outcome of these challenges, we use what is called a **test-roll**. In order to perform a test-roll, you first need to determine which of your three skills ([PH], [PS] or [TE]) can be used to overcome the challenge. Once this is done, you throw two dice, add them up, and compare them to your relevant skill score. If your roll is equal to or below your skill score, you succeed. Should you roll above your skill score, you fail. The consequences of success or failure will depend on the challenge, as will be discussed later.

## Difficulty

Some challenges are more difficult to resolve than others. Depending on the difficulty on the challenge, the GM can give a modification to your skill score before you make the test-roll. This modification will vary with the degree of difficulty and the type of challenge, but a rough guide is given below.

Remember: this modification is applied

to the skill score *before* the test-roll is made.

## Different types

Challenges can, as already mentioned, be divided into several categories. Most types follow the three skills, but some might border between two of them. We will now try to list some common challenges, sorted by skill:

**Physique:** This does not include more mundane physical tasks, such as riding a horse, lifting a bucket of water, or climbing a ladder. Rather, these challenges include tasks such as doing acrobatics, lifting heavy objects, jumping chasms, squeezing through narrow openings, pulling yourself onto outcroppings, scaling a wall, holding your breath for a prolonged period of time, and so on. In short; manoeuvres that stretch the limits of your body, in regards to both strength, dexterity and endurance. But: please note that wrestling is considered a contest, and is covered by the rules for contests (see below).

**Psyche:** The most common mental challenge is that of magic, but this is covered by separate rules a little later. But, other challenges are also considered mental: photographic memory (the ability to remember a document or a map after skimming through), perception (seeing details in a picture or a situation that no one else recognises), discovering hidden doors and traps, and so on. But: please note that resisting mental attacks

### Challenge modifiers

Difficulty	Modification
Routine	+1
Easy	0
Medium	-1
Hard	-2 to -3
Very hard	-4 to -5
Extremely hard	-6 to -7

is considered a contest, and is covered by the rules for contests (see below).

**Technique:** These challenges do not include armed combat, as this is covered by the combat rules (see below). Technical challenges do however include the ability to use tools, such as: whittling advanced forms, using (relatively) unknown technology, building things from known materials, performing simple surgical procedures (amputation et al), arming and disarming traps, and so on.

As mentioned above, some challenges may turn out to require a combination of two skills. You will then have to perform a test-roll against an average of these two skills (rounding up). As an example, an attempt to build a stone hut (building, heavy lifting) would trigger a test-roll against an average between [PH] and [TE].

## Contests

Some challenges might take the form of a contest, with two opponents competing for the same outcome. If this is the case, both opponents make a test-roll against the relevant skill. Whoever makes his roll by the largest margin wins the contest.

**Example:** *Arti and Borom are wrestling, and both make a test-roll against their [PH]. Arti rolls a 6, and with a [PH] of 9, this gives him a margin of 3. Borom rolls a 9, and with a [PH] of 8, this gives him a margin of -1. Arti had the largest margin by 4 (3 against -1) and wins the wrestling-match.*

Some conditions (surprise, special situations) might give one of the opponents in a contest modifications to his skill before

the roll is made, but this is something the GM must decide prior to each contest.

## Combat

Every now and then, some challenges can not be resolved by peaceful means, and so combat ensues. Magic has made much of the violence on Terrustor superfluous, but has unfortunately not eliminated it. And so it is still a fairly common sight to see people armed, both lightly and heavily, around the planet.

If you wish to attack someone, you must make a test-roll against [TECHNIQUE]. If you succeed, you hit, and you throw one die to determine how much damage is done to your opponent. The opponent must then detract this amount from his [LP] total. In a battle the opponents make alternate attacks (the initiator attacks first) until one of them is dead or unconscious, or until they agree to stop.

Please note that unarmed combat only does half the damage, so you have to divide your damage roll by 2 (rounding up) to find the damage inflicted.

# Magic

## What

The planet of Terrustor is swept, day and night, by large magical waves. These waves cannot be seen, but they can be felt by all who make contact with them. It's these waves that emit the energy that people may channel to create «magical» effects. Unfortunately, the nature of these waves makes magic somewhat unstable, and so only a few dare to try advanced magic.

Every person on Terrustor is born with the ability to perform magic. To a lesser or greater degree everyone will sooner or later attempt it, and this has to a large extent contributed to the slow evolution of technology on the planet. Magic is frequently used in all aspects of life; housekeeping, agriculture, transport, bureaucracy, and so on. Magic has become an integrated part of people's everyday life.

## How

Most anything can be done by magic, and there are no set formulas or spells. Anyone wishing to perform magic need only concentrate on the desired effect, and release the energy through a single word (e.g.: «burn», «dig», «sweep» etc.).

In order to use magic, one needs to make a test-roll against [PSYCHE]. If one succeeds, the desired effect occurs. If one should fail, one loses one [LP] as a result of the magical energy backfiring. However, if one is in direct contact with

a wave as one performs the magic, one is guaranteed an automatic success.

As with challenges, different types of magic have different levels of difficulty. Depending on the magic attempted, a modification may be given to the magic-user's [PS] before the test-roll is made. These modifications must be considered by the GM. In each case, but to give an indication of such modifications, some examples of magic are given in the table below.

Even though one should fail, either through modifications or through unlucky rolls, there is still a small ace up the magic-user's sleeve; if the situation is desperate, one can choose to spend up to 2 [LIFE POINTS] in order to boost one's [PS]. Each [LP] spent in this matter gives the magic-user +1 to his [PS], and this may be done after one has made the test-roll.

Although magic is nearly limitless, some restrictions apply. Magic can never take away more than 6 (one die) [LP] in direct damage (and so not heal more than 6 (one die) [LP] either). Neither can magic instantly kill a person (unless the victim has less than 6 [LP]), and it can not bring a dead person back to life. In addition, magic cannot lift more weight than 100 times the magic-user's [PS] kg. (in other words, a person with a [PS] of 6 can lift up to 600 kg using magic).

### Examples of magic

#### Routine (+1)

Dusting, melting snow, opening regular locks, making beds

#### Easy (0)

Digging earth, lighting wood, boiling water

#### Medium (-1)

Befriend an animal, cause direct damage, finding water

#### Hard (-2 to -3)

Changing appearance temporarily, lifting heavy objects

#### Very hard (-4 to -5)

Burrow through rock, shaping metal, healing injuries

#### Extremely hard (-6 to -7)

Gradually change weather, controlling other persons



# Terrustor

## The Planet

Terrustor is a planet without any large bodies of land. Instead, it is a water planet, covered in myriads of smaller and larger islands. This has led to a widespread use of boats and ships, and these come in all sizes and shapes. But, despite this, there have never been made a lot of accurate maps charting the oceans. The reasons for this are the unpredictable currents that run through the deeper parts of the ocean. The only ones who brave the vast open seas, are the mysterious Sailors, mute humans who communicate through telepathy. No one knows where they come from, or who they are, but they traverse the oceans in large crewless ships obviously driven by magic. They charge reasonable prices for transport, and they never get caught by the deceptive currents. They also seem to hold the Wanderers in high esteem, as they never charge the Wanderers more than one tryll apiece to transport them.

Terrustor is circled by two moons; the red Luna and the white Seolfor, but of which follow similar orbits. Luna rises first, giving the planet a «Red hour» before Seolfor rises. Then, after Luna sets, Seolfor provides a «White hour» before the sun rises.

The thing which sets Terrustor apart, are the forceful waves of energy sweeping the planet. These waves emit the energy that its inhabitants are able to channel into «magic». These waves are normally

quite slow and stable, but around every 100th year, a magical storm brews. These storms cause violent eruptions of energy, capable of altering or destroying both life and landscapes. The last such storm took place 96 years ago, and people have started preparing for the next storm, which could come at literally any time now.

## The People

Terrustor is mainly home to two civilized species: Humans and dhralls. Humans are the elder of these species, having lived on the planet for thousands of years, while the dhralls were created by a magical storm just short of 200 years ago. In addition to these two, some islands sport other sentient species, but these islands are quite rare. We will now examine humans and dhralls, to compare similarities and differences.

**Humans:** Humans come in all sizes and shapes: light and dark, tall and short, stocky and skinny. Their ability to adapt has ensured that they have created homes for themselves on most of the planet, and they continue to evolve every year.

**Dhralls:** The dhralls first appeared after a magical storm on the Island Gherennor nearly 200 years ago. Humans first thought them to be a subspecies of trolls, and so named them dhralls. However, it soon became evident that they were created by a human town by the foot of the mountains in the north of the island, but that their minds had been wiped clean of any previous consciousnesses.

Humans taught the dhrall language, and used them as servants. The dhralls turned out to reproduce at a very large scale, and have now spread to large portions of the planet. Most dhralls still live as servants to humans, but a growing consciousness and a wish for equality have started rising among the young race. More and more dhralls have begun dreaming of a life in freedom, and the few living outside of servitude have taken to speak up for their brethren's right as equals. Change is on the wind, but there is still a long way to go before humans will accept dhralls as equals.

The dhralls resemble humans, but have a lesser degree of diversity when it comes to appearance. They have greyish brown skin, lack any body hair, and are recognized by a slightly stooped stance and long arms. In addition, they don't have the marked noses of humans, but rather a broad, more snout-like face.

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### Price of Goods

#### 1 tryll:

Vegetables, messenger inside a city

#### 2 trylls:

Small pieces of meat, housing for one night, rope, canvas

#### 3 trylls:

Larger pieces of meat, tools, a meal, renting a horse, clothes

#### 5 trylls:

Small weapons (knives, staffs etc.), renting a wagon, messenger between cities

#### 10 trylls:

Larger weapons, party dress, one week's housing

## Trade and goods

### Money

Money has never played a major part in life on Terrustor, but the need for a currency in trade has forced itself on the people. The Terrustorians have but one currency: Trylls. A tryll is made from a bright red metal alloy, and sports a wave on one side, with a mountain depicted on the other. The trylls are about the size of a thumbnail, and quite light.

Considering that money never has had much status on Terrustor, then neither has *having* money been a cause of much status. Very much of life on Terrustor is based on the swapping of goods and services, as well as tending to one's own needs, and so it's only in the larger towns and cities that the trylls have become important.

### Prices

The Terrustorians earn trylls by performing services and work for which it is considered unsuitable to be repaid in labour or goods. Examples of such work and services include housing, guards, renting horses and wagons, and so on. In addition, trylls are used to purchase food and sundries in the markets in towns. Out in the countryside, trylls are less commonly used, although their use is slowly spreading.

In order to indicate the level of prices on Terrustor, some examples of goods and services are given here. These prices may vary from place to place, so this list

should only be treated as a rough guide:

### Availability

Most Terrustorians have what they need, and if you want something, you might have to work for it. Should you for instance implore a farmer for some vegetables, he might require you to put in an hour or two's worth of labour in his fields. This swapping of goods and services has worked on Terrustor for a long time, and most people, especially outside of the towns and cities, stick to it.

In addition, not all goods are easily accessible anywhere. The further you go from the coast, for example, you might find it harder and harder to get fish or sailcloth, while coastal towns may have a shorter supply of beef and herbs.


## An Island: Gembalianna

Gembalianna is an island in turmoil. Not the largest of islands (one could easily walk across it in little over a week), it still seems to have developed more trouble than it can take. It all started 15 years ago...

The island is a lush place, filled with deep green forests. It doesn't hold any real mountains, but six rather steep hills run in quite straight lines from north to south. The valleys between them sport small rivers running both north and south, filled with water from the hills and the frequent rainfalls blessing the island. The outlets thereby provide excellent conditions for population, a fact the inhabitants have exploited. On the south coast, towns have sprung up by the three western outlets, called Westria, Orianna and Calonia, ranged from west to east. On the northern shore, only one town currently exists, Mordenia, by the westernmost outlet.

The island is mostly populated by humans, although some dhralls inhabit the towns as well. However, 15 years ago, about 400 dhralls set out from the southern cities, determined to leave the humans behind and start a new life further east and north, in the uncharted parts of the island. They never came back.

Several human expeditions were sent out some years back, to try and discover what happened to the dhrall settlers. They all came back empty-handed. The only thing they ever discovered, were some ruins that seemed to be



hundreds of years old.  
The human leaders  
shrugged it off, saying  
the dhralls probably  
starved to death, or left  
the island in home-made  
boats. However, among the  
general population, rumours of  
the settlers living in hiding out in  
the forest never died, and many still  
believe they made a hidden home to  
the east. And then the dying began.

About a year ago, seven women turned  
up dead in a stream outside Mordenia. The  
same day, two boys were found, skinned and  
hanged in a tree east of Calonia. The rumours  
about the settlers immediately sprang up  
again, but the four mayors all dismissed  
them, and set about searching for the killers  
inside the four cities. No murderers were  
found, until a lumberjack was found nailed  
to his front door in Orianna, with the word  
«murderer» written in blood over his head.  
People might have thought it a vigilante  
response to a discovered murderer, had it  
not been for the forest. It had claimed his  
house. Where the day before were spotless

windows and white walls, could now be found  
vines, moss and shrubs growing through the wall. No one  
could explain it, and although the lumberjack was killed by  
repeated stabs with a knife, murmurs of «evil trees» arose.

People began fearing the forest, not daring to enter it, and  
some even talked of leaving the island behind. Two weeks  
ago, however, that plan was cut short. That morning, people on  
Gembianna awoke to find their boats gone. Every ship, fishing boat  
and raft – gone, like they never existed. Now, people take shifts guarding  
their shipyards day and night as they try to construct new vessels to take them  
away from the island. And the forest is alive with screams and voices at night.

## Sample adventure

### What

The mayor of Calonia, the easternmost of the cities on the south coast of Gembianna, was once very adept at magic, although he's not used it for years. Now was however the time for desperate measures, and so he's used it to call for help.

The mayor, Andar Greenleaf, has a brother who joined the Wanderers at age six, and so he sent a magical message to their headquarters at Cnāwan to ask for help. The Wanderer council were intrigued by the request and Gembianna's predicament, and so has dispatched a squad of Wanderers, the players, to help the people there, and to record all they can learn from the island.

### Who

The mayor of Calonia will meet them at the harbour when they arrive. The Sailor who transports them there, will use magic to shield his ship from entrance, so as to keep the people of Gembianna storming onto his ship. The Sailor will not stay, but will leave as soon as he has delivered the squad. The mayor will be overjoyed to see them, and will promise to help them in any way he can.

If they want to explore the forest, he will provide them with a team of guides, led by the hunter Oidon Swifteye. The guides will not be happy, but have enough faith in the Wanderers to go with them.

### How

The dhrall settlers who set out some 15 years ago, didn't enjoy their freedom for long. They found ruins of a settlement in the north-eastern corner of the island, and built themselves homes there. However, within 3 months, they all fell ill to a strange disease.

In fact, they were poisoned, by a race of semi-sentient trees, who also were responsible for wrecking the last settlement. Tapping into the dying dhralls, the trees kept them alive in earthy caves, sustained by the trees' roots. The trees then slowly absorbed the minds and memories of the dhralls, leaving them as empty, barely living shells. Now, finally, the process is complete, and the trees have started attacking the human towns, using some of the remaining dhrall shells as unthinking agents.

In order to save the island, the Wanderers will have to discover the real culprits, either through exploring the forest in daylight, or through hazardous spying in the dark. The sentient trees are only afraid of three things: fire, sunlight and salty seawater. The Wanderers need to make use of this if they are to save the inhabitants of the island. In order to fully destroy the trees, however, they need to make their way to the ruined settlement and destroy the ruins through fire and/or magic, as the ruins are linked with the trees' life energy.

The only question remaining is this: will the Wanderers eliminate the race of sentient trees to save the humans of Gembianna, or will they deem the trees worthy of their own existence, and so only help the humans escape?





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# The Father

a role-playing game by Erlend Bruer

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**written:** 2006  
**form:** role-playing game  
(patricide)  
**players:** 3  
**duration:** 2-4 hours  
**need to play:** the included cards  
a table with four chairs



# Introduction

THIS is a set of instructions for gaining access to the unconscious thoughts and feelings one has towards one's father.

Psychologically speaking, this game has much in common with projective tests like the Rorschach test or the Thematic Apperception Test developed by Henry A. Murray. The main difference in method is the utilization of a group, rather than an individual, as the entity doing the projection. In this game, three persons use their unconscious and conscious minds to create a tragic story about one of the most important things in a person's life; the relation to a husband or a father.

I'm mostly inspired by other games such as Magnus Jakobsson's «Until We Sink» and Lasse Lundin's «It wasn't me!», in addition to the wonderful style in all games by Tomas H.V. Mørkrid.

I have deliberately given this game a somewhat vague structure. In order to lure out hidden conceptions, the game gives the participants a large amount of leeway in deciding what happens. As Freud once said: The ultimate psychological test is to give someone a blank sheet of paper and ask them what they see.

## The course of the game

The game is made for three people and takes place around a table with four chairs. One of the chairs is empty, and here one imagines that *the Father* would sit. The three participants take on the roles of

Mother, Son and Daughter. The game should take about an hour to play and is about killing the father, and thus inevitably ends with a murder.

The game has five parts. In each part, the participants do something to push the story of a father's death forward. The first part is introduction and selection of roles. The second part is the introduction scene. The third part consists of flashback scenes. The fourth part is the prelude and the fifth and final part is the aftermath. Each part of the game has its own instructions. It is not necessary to prepare anything before starting the game, and the game can be played straight from the instructions. However, there are some tips on playing this kind of game at the end of these instructions – tips that are useful if one has never played this kind of game before.

## Playing the game

Most of the game will be spent playing out one's role, saying what the role says and describing what he or she does. It is important that all participants understand that the game is a collaborative effort and not a competition. When a participant says something as a role, the other participants should build on what was said instead of trying to negate it or coming up with something completely different. See the tips at the end of the instructions for more on this.

There are no strict rules to establish what happens in the game; in the very unlikely event that two participants argue about the story instead of building on

### Erlend Sand Bruer

(b. 1984) is interested in what happens when one gives the players very little room for new ideas, and keep the role-playing within strict structures. *The Father* is only one of the games where this has been explored, and he is working on several other projects. Erlend happens to be the leader of the Norwegian association for gaming and fandom, and fights to make the government more receptive to new forms of culture. Erlend is also doing a masters in social psychology. He is not a Freudian.

each other's inputs, something has gone wrong in the dynamics of the group. Most groups quickly accustom to building on and respecting each others ideas and get a very smooth game.

### **Part one: the characters**

First, all participants skim the rules and try to get familiar with what kind of a game they're about to play. Those who have played similar games before may explain a bit, but all participants should try not to have too many expectations for the game.

Then, one chooses roles. There are three roles in this game: The Son, The Daughter and The Mother. One chooses randomly who plays what. When the participants have received their roles, spend a little time in silence to reflect on the role and on this role's many possible relationships with the Father. The roles are all assumed to be old enough to make a difference, with the exact age being up to the participants.

Then, a murderer is randomly chosen. One of the participants will play a role who will murder a father; the father of her children in the case of the Mother, and one's own father in the case of the Son and the Daughter.

The two participants who are not the murderer get two different tasks. The one sitting to the right of the murderer has the task of trying to make the father's actions seem reasonable and fair. The one sitting to the left of the murderer has the task of trying to make the father's

actions seem rash, unfair or even evil. This task is given to the participant, and not the role he or she plays. This is very important, as a role may very well be hostile to the father while the participant playing the role is trying to make the father seem reasonable. The participants given the tasks of making the father look good or bad should try and drive the scenes towards their respective goals and build on and give attention to ideas that support their goals. An interesting part of the game is to find out whether the Father really deserves to be killed and to find out whether the murderer is a deranged killer or a hero.

### **Part two: The introduction scene.**

In the introduction scene and all later scenes, the participants act out their roles. Much like actors on a stage or on film, they say what the role says. However, since the game takes place around a table, one does not physically act out, but rather describe what the roles do.

The introduction scene takes place in twilight. The light fades, and all three roles are gathered. The Father is not present in this scene, or in any other scene in the game. The introduction scene can be thought of as «the present», the point from which the flashback scenes are past and the prelude scenes are future.

The Father can be played in all kinds of settings, and the introduction scene decides what this setting will be. Some groups like to briefly discuss the setting before play begins, and others like to just

improvise and let the setting grow from the interaction in the first scene. However, the game is not about setting but about the relations between family members. Don't make elaborate statements about fantastic worlds. The simplest way to play is to play an average family in your home country, present day.

### Part three: The flashbacks

In this part of the game, the two participants who do not play the murderer take turns drawing a card from the deck of flashback cards, and describe a scene inspired by the word on the card. Then, the participants play out their roles. The scene ends when the participants feel like ending it, and it doesn't have to last more than a few minutes. It's supposed to be a brief flashback to an important moment in the family's history.

When describing a scene, give a general description of what the roles are doing. All three roles are present in all scenes, and the Father is never present. The scene must focus on the roles; try to avoid scenes where other persons than the roles might play an important role. Create scenes where the three roles have just experienced or are about to experience something. It's not necessary to play out the scenes in chronological order; a scene taking place when the Son and the Daughter are young children can be played after a scene where they are adolescents.

It's good to build on previous flashback scenes when creating and

playing the scenes. Try not to create too many separate story lines that need resolving.

Play flashback scenes until you have a good idea of the family's previous history. Four to eight scenes are probably enough.

**Example:** *Erlend, playing the Son and sitting to the left of the murderer (thus trying to cast the father in a bad light), draws the card «The House». He thinks for a moment, and then briefly describes the scene: «We are outside of the old house, and we have moved all our stuff out. The house is about to be sold. Dad has left to spend the money on starting a new business. My sister and I are young, but not too young to resent leaving the house we've spent all our lives in.»*

*Andrea, playing the Daughter and the murderer, says «I guess that's it. That was the last of my toys.» Liv, playing the Mother and sitting to the right of the murderer (thus trying to cast the father in a good light) says «Don't worry. It's gonna be all right. In just a few years we'll be living in another house much nicer than this, it's just gonna be a little time in a small apartment while your father and I get things together.»*

*The participants play out the scene until they feel like they've explored the situation.*

### Part four: the Prelude

After the flashbacks, the story continues from the introduction scene. The two participants who are not the murderer again take turns drawing cards and setting scenes. The prelude scenes are different in three ways: First, the scenes must be played in chronological order. Second, the scene cards are much stricter, and allow for less variation in the scenes. Third, not all three roles have to be present at the scenes. These scenes

push mercilessly towards the killing of the Father. Make sure that each scene leads directly up to the murder.

The scenes should be fast and emotional. Don't be afraid to push the other participants. Each scene is over when the participants feel that the card the scene was based on has been resolved.

There are five cards with prelude scenes. Draw and play four of these. The last prelude scene ends just before the murder.

### **Part five: the Aftermath**

The last prelude scene ended with the killer going off to perform his or her dark deed. The murder itself is not played out, but left to be discussed.

The Aftermath is the last scene in the game, and it should be brief and painful. The scene is played out much like the introduction scene, but instead of twilight, it is dark – maybe night or in a room with no windows.

### **After the game**

Every story told using these instructions will be unique, a product of the group's ideas about the Father and about the roles they play. Some games will be humorous, filled with bad jokes and seemingly going no deeper than the average sitcom, while others will be quiet and intense. It's impossible to end the game without having made a story, and it might be interesting to spend a few minutes discussing the way people interacted and how the story turned out.

### **Tips on playing this game**

If you haven't played role-playing games before: This game is played by taking on a role and acting it out, and that's really all there is to it. If you can imagine being someone's son, daughter or mother then you know how to play this game. If you've just picked up these instructions on the Web or from a book and don't know how to play, just sit down and play. You'll find that taking on a role and improvising a story comes naturally and easily. Just keep in mind the tips below, and you'll have about an hour of good, low-key, human tragedy.

**Accept and build on ideas:** This is the most important thing to keep in mind when playing. If another participant comes up with an idea, build on it and go with it, and don't always try to come up with your own ideas and push them. Some people seem to think that the more new ideas they come up with, the better they are at role-playing. That's not the case, this isn't a competition, relax and build on what the other two participants say.

**Stay focused:** This game only takes an hour. Get in the game, stay in the game for an hour, get out. Don't start to do something other than playing. If all participants are focused, you'll have a great game. If one participant loses focus, the game suffers.

**Keep it real:** The game is about a family and their tragedy. While it may be fun to spin wild ideas and create a crazy story, the game really works best when it's down-to-earth. Don't try to be creative or entertaining. Just play the role.

**The Father:  
Prelude Scene**

**The Father:  
Prelude Scene**

**The Father:  
Prelude Scene**

**The Father:  
Prelude Scene**

**The Father:  
Prelude Scene**

**The Father:  
Prelude Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**



**Prelude:**

The murderer tells someone about the coming murder.

**Prelude:**

The murder weapon is introduced. The roles don't necessarily know that it will become a murder weapon.

**Prelude:**

The murderer experiences something bad.

**Prelude:**

Two of the roles have an argument that has to do with the murderer

**Prelude:**

There is an attempt at healing something that's hurt.

**Love**

**Happiness**

**Hatred**

**Secret**



**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

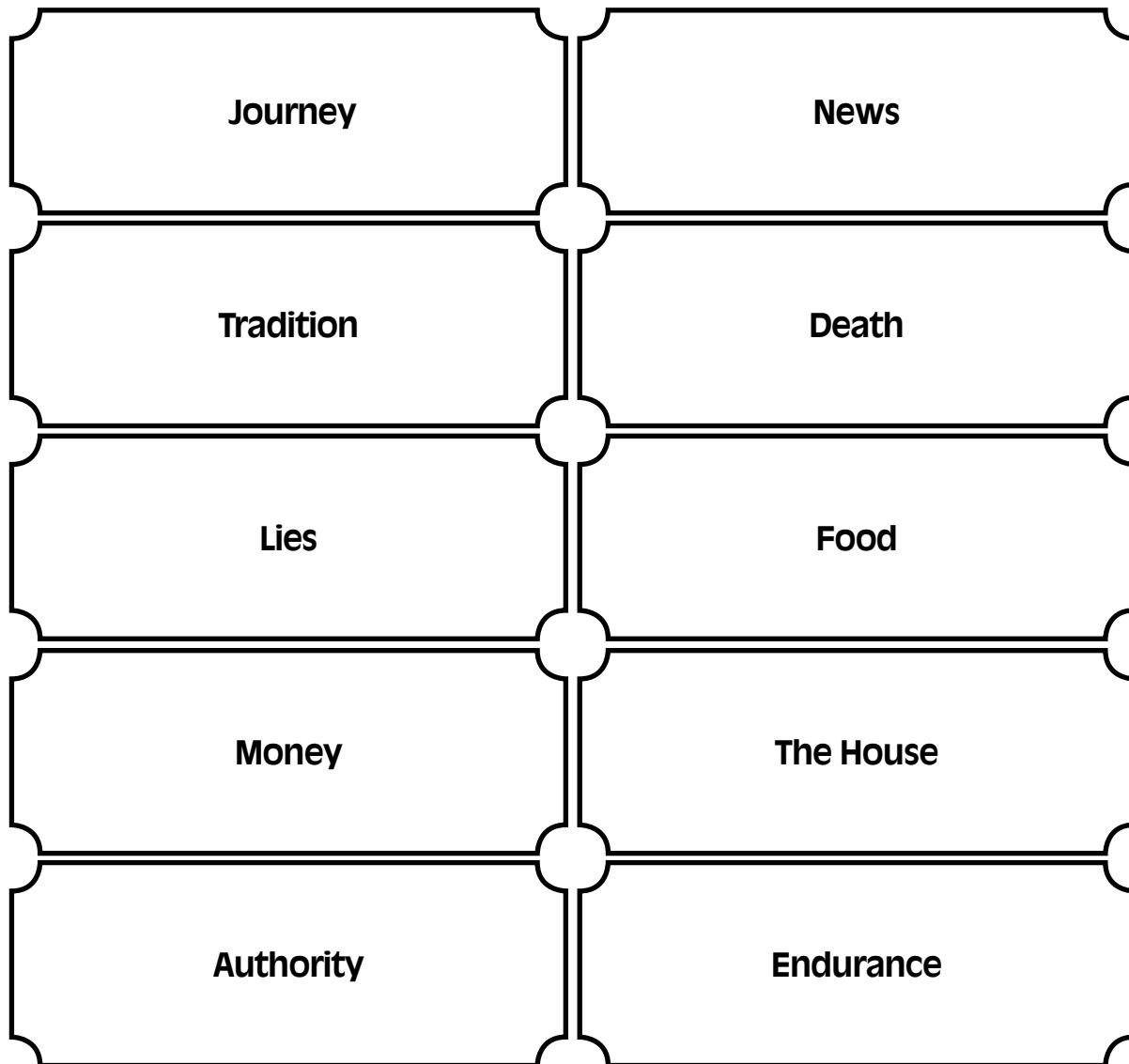
**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**

**The Father:  
Flashback Scene**







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# Retrospect

a role-playing poem by Even Tømte

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written: 2007  
form: role-playing poem  
players: 3 or more  
duration: 15 minutes  
need to play: the rules

## The debrief

**T**HIS is a role-playing poem, designed to be played in fifteen minutes with no preparation. The players assume the role of larpers having just completed a game. After a round of hugs and kisses, they have gathered for a short debriefing session.

A game of Retrospect is played out by the players relating their experiences at the imaginary larp. During this process, they collectively arrive at some degree of consensus of what the larp was about.

Pick one player to start the debriefing session. The players each talk for about a minute about their individual experience of the larp, going clockwise. You may mention one or more of the other players as well, but the starting point should always be your own experience.

- ☞ The last one to speak is the organiser. If there are many players (eight or more), you might consider having two organisers. The organiser(s) should, in addition to relating their own experiences, address any complaints or grievances made by the other players.
- ☞ When everyone has finished speaking, there is an open discussion.
- ☞ Everything that's said is true. You cannot directly contradict a statement by another player, although you can, of course, have a different experience of the event in question.

- ☞ Keep the discussion going until fifteen minutes have passed or you feel that the discussion has reached its natural conclusion.

### Kickers (optional)

If you want something to kick-start the game and give the players differing starting points for the discussion, give one of the kickers below to each of the players. Players can select their own kicker, or you can hand out kickers at random.

- ☞ I came out of the larp as a totally different person.
- ☞ There were some major dysfunctions in the game.
- ☞ I didn't get to finish!
- ☞ Something happened to me during the larp, out of character.
- ☞ I have some serious issues to sort out right now.
- ☞ I'm still in character.
- ☞ I wish it had never stopped.
- ☞ I'm glad it's over.
- ☞ I'm very emotional right now.
- ☞ I missed much of the action.
- ☞ I expected something entirely different.
- ☞ I feel a sense of loss quitting the game.
- ☞ Someone got it wrong.
- ☞ I got involved in a big conflict during the game.
- ☞ I never want to larp again

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**Even Tømte** (b. 1980) lives in Oslo and works as a political journalist. He enjoys developing and participating in larps and tabletop role-playing games, family life, reading, engaging sporadically in activism, political discussions and doomsaying.





# Itra's City

by Ole Peder Giæver, Martin Bull Gudmundsen,  
Matthijs Holter and Håken Lid

**written:** 2002–2008  
**form:** generic supplement  
**need to play:** the included cards  
(this is a supplement to  
be used in a role-playing  
game of your choice)

## Two decks of cards

**I**TRA'S City is a surrealistic role-playing game published in Norwegian in 2008. The setting is a city somewhere in Limbo, a place of dreams with a 1920's feel. The Machine God fights the Futurists, the spider queen Nindra sits atop the Moon Tower and controls everything. One of the richest men in the city has the head of a muskox, is unhappily in love, and is laughed at by his peers.

The system utilizes two decks of cards, which will be presented here. The resolution cards are the resolution mechanic and conflict system for the game. The chance cards give the players more control over the flow of the narrative, although in a somewhat unpredictable manner.

Here, some of the less setting-specific cards will be presented. You can implement them in any game, whether as a one-time experiment or permanent fixture.

### Rules for the resolution Cards

These cards are used to determine the outcome of an action the character attempts. They not only tell you whether or not the character succeeded, but also address unexpected changes in the situation. The exact results of the cards are up to one of the players to describe. It's inadvisable to let the whole plot hinge on one card. Think through the consequences before you draw! If you draw

a card to «find out who the mysterious enemy is» and get a yes-card, suddenly half the adventure is over.

It's appropriate to ask for a resolution card when:

1. You have decided that your character wants to achieve something.
2. There's a risk of failure.
3. The result of the action is important for the character or the story.

When you ask for a card, one of the other players draws the card, reads it and describes what happens. This player may overrule both you and the game master. Both things in the setting and things affecting your character may be part of the description.

Other players and the game master may suggest that a resolution card should be drawn, but in the end it's up to the affected player.

This is important, so I'll repeat it: If you're trying to do something, someone else will draw the card and tell you how it works out.

### Rules for the chance cards

Each session every player, including the GM, may draw one chance card from the deck. They are meant to increase potential player input to the story and support the game's surreal motif. When a card is drawn from the deck, it's read aloud. A card must be used once it's drawn. The player who draws the card interprets it, unless something else is specified.

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#### **Ole Peder Giæver**

(b. 1980) is a journalist with the Norwegian Internet Newspaper ABC Nyheter. He has co-authored Itra's City with **Martin Bull Gudmundsen** (b. 1979), psychology student, former television star and aspiring author.

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#### **The resolution cards**

were created by  
Matthijs Holter.

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#### **The chance cards**

were created by Ole  
Peder Giæver, Martin  
Bull Gudmundsen  
and Håken Lid.





**Itra's City**  
**Resolution**  
**card**

**Itra's City**  
**Resolution**  
**card**

**Itra's City**  
**Resolution**  
**card**

**Itra's City**  
**Resolution**  
**card**

**Itra's City**  
**Resolution**  
**card**

**Itra's City**  
**Resolution**  
**card**

**Itra's City**  
**Resolution**  
**card**

**Itra's City**  
**Resolution**  
**card**



**Yes, but...**

The character succeeds, but something completely unrelated goes wrong, for the character or someone she cares about.

**Yes, and...**

The character succeeds, and achieves more than she expected. Perhaps even a bit too much...

**No, but...**

The character fails, but another positive thing happens instead, unrelated to what she was aiming for.

**Help is needed.**

The character ends up understanding that she needs the help of someone not currently in the scene to achieve this aim.

**Yes, but only if...**

The character can get what she wants – but only if she chooses to make a certain sacrifice.

**Yes, but...**

The character succeeds, but the consequences of the success are completely different from what was expected.

**Yes, but...**

The character succeeds, but there's a tiny detail that doesn't go quite as planned.

**No, and...**

The character fails, and something unrelated also goes wrong.



**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Amor Victor**

The power of love triumphs in this situation. Exactly how this happens is for you to describe.

**Cut Scene**

Jump forward three hours. Describe what condition the characters find themselves in. You're not allowed to describe what has happened in the meantime.

**Flashback**

Play a scene that has occurred in the past, in the same place where your character is right now. The player who draws the card sets the scene and tells the other players what characters (NPCs or their own characters) to control.

**Haunted by the Past!**

Something the character has done previously has consequences in the present. Tell the game master what you think this card means.

**Nemesis!**

This card awakens the character's Nemesis. In some way, their arch enemy affects the situation. Exactly how is up to you. Doesn't the character have an arch enemy? Well, now she does.

**The Character Flaw.**

The last NPC the character met has a dark secret, a weak spot or a negative trait. The character doesn't necessarily know what it is, but it's up to you as the player to invent and describe it.



**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

### Do not gaze into the Abyss...

The character feels an irresistible urge to do something she will regret. Do it!

### Masquerade!

For the rest of this scene, all players swap characters. This includes the game master. Give your character sheet to the player at your right.

### Mood Change

Everyone present suddenly change mood to the exact opposite of what they had. The new moods last for the rest of the scene.

### Inner Monologue

Throughout this scene you can at any time point your finger at someone (PC or NPC). That character's player must stand up and utter a short, inner monologue (say whatever's on the characters mind at that time).

### Meanwhile...

The scene is cut, and you may establish a new scene somewhere else. You choose who is present. Players may be given NPCs to play in this cut scene.

### Reality Split

Things are turned inside out and you experience several timelines simultaneously. Each other player may in turn describe a different course of events. When the laws of reality catch up, there's a loud noise and only one of your co-player's descriptions will have happened. You decide which one.



**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

**Itro's City**  
**Chance**  
**card**

## Conscience

Two advisors appear, one on each shoulder of one of the characters (PC or NPC) present in the scene. Time stops while they try to convince the character of their (opposing) sides to some dilemma. Choose who will be given advice and which two players will control the advisors.

## Interview

Stand up. Your character is interviewed about what happened during this scene. You may describe freely what happened from your point of view, and your characters thoughts. The other players ask questions, as in a press conference. When the interview is over, you sit down and continue playing the scene where you left off.

## Prosopopeia

Animals, objects or abstract concepts start to talk. Who are talking and what do they have to say?

## The Shadow

Time stops as you have a conversation with you own shadow. The shadow has the same skills and attributes as you, but in addition it may enter places you can't reach. Will you ask your shadow for help or advice? The player that looks most like you plays your shadow.

## Rumour Mill

Gossip spreads fast. Tell a rumour about the scene in progress to the person on your left. The rumour is retold from player to player and each time something is changed and exaggerated. By the time the gossip reaches back to you, it has become true.

## Good Advice

You may ask someone for an advice. It may be anyone (PC or NPC) and it could be someone who's dead or otherwise normally impossible to consult. Choose one of the other players to be the advisor and decide how you are communicating. If you follow the advice given to you, you will succeed. But if you don't follow the advice you will fail, no matter what.







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# Pervo

a role-playing game

by **Tomas HV Mørkrid**

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written: 1992  
form: role-playing game  
players: 10–20 and one DM  
duration: 1–3 hours  
need to play: pencils and paper

# Pervo Pervo Pervo

*Pervo is a simple role-playing game, written by Tomas HV Mørkrød, who is a Norwegian games designer. This is the English version. It's all about violence!*

**P**ERVO caters to the DM's need to avenge himself on all and every player he ever has been forced to entertain. No player will ever be worth anything in this game, nor will their characters. Players and characters are the scum of role-playing games. In Pervo they will be driven away and exterminated!

When leading a game of Pervo you may call yourself a DM, meaning «Deus ex Machina» (God in the machine). You might prefer to call yourself a GM, meaning «God-Man». You may call yourself an ET, meaning «Egotistical» or «Emotional Top man» or «Elevated Terran» or whatever. You may call yourself anything. You may even choose to elevate your own name, making it into the most glorious title ever given to a man. You are the leader of the game, and none shall ever question your position. Your name is grace to the players!

Pervo is best played with a lot of players (to make them last a while).

Between ten and twenty is best. Cramp them around the table, each and every one. They must all have a small space at the edge of the table, where they can place their character-sheet

(just a blank piece of paper before the game starts) and rest their elbows (at least one of them).

When the game has commenced Pervo has three rules. These rules are absolute. The DM interprets them at his will, and no player will ever stray from them, nor dispute them or the DM's rulings on them.

## The start

Start the game by stating that the characters have been at school for their entire life. They have learned how to cope in the world. Some of them have been good students, but most of them have been lousy. That's the reality, and Pervo is a very realistic world!

All the students have learned their name, though. The players must write down their name on top of the character sheet now, in uppercase letters. They must not try to use anything but capital letters. That is for advanced students. The character is called the same as the player. If the player happens to write another name than his own on the sheet, he will have to be corrected: Not to have learned your name at school is a disgrace! If a player happens to be named the same as the DM, he is considered very clever from the start of the game! That's a very realistic simulation of the real world: There is always someone born with the benefits! There's nothing fair about it!

Arnold is the great teacher that has told them this. They all love Arnold!

Now he states that they are as ready as

## Tomas HV Mørkrød

(b. 1962) is a Norwegian author and gamewright. His first book was the poem anthology «Munnfullmâne» (1996). Mørkrød was the first Norwegian designer to have a role-playing game published by a publishing house (Fabula, 1999). He has written several other role-playing games, such as Muu, Pervo and Romanse.

they ever will be, to enter the world. The great Arnold wishes them good luck, and offers them a last word of advice:

*Stick together! There is no telling what perils you will face in the real world! You must face them together!*

The school gate opens...

*You are now entering the enticing world of Pervo! Outside the gate you are standing at a crossroads. The gate is clanging shut behind you. There is a road going straight ahead, climbing to the high mountains. The road to the right runs to the deep forest. The road to the left falls away through the hills towards the coast of the great ocean.*

*There is no reason to linger. School is over. This is the real world! Which way will you walk?*

### Rule One

**The first encounter is deadly.** One character must die in the first encounter, whatever it is, and the player of this character must be driven from the gaming table with coarse language. Insult him! Players loosing their characters are worthless! Scum! Deadhead! Go away!

An encounter is of course anything. The characters enter the world, and it is a pretty complicated place, full of unknown peril. Let's say they meet a small kitten outside the school gates, unsteady on its legs, very feline, soft-furred... and with very sharp teeth.

Kitty-teeth are sharper than anything else, and serrated. Serrated! Those teeth will puncture your skin using no force at all, and make blood gush out...

The rest is pure imagination, and blood, and gore, and grotesqueries!

### Rule Two

There is only one thing that helps your character perform in the world of Pervo, the same thing that makes it for you in the real world: **Cleverness!** If your character is clever he will make it happen. If he is dumb he will fail, of course.

The character must be given a cleverness of 1–20. The DM may decide this. The DM may also let the player propose a cleverness score for his character, and he may be kind enough to leave it at that (at his whim). However, the DM may also decide that the player is too greedy, and portion his cleverness out to the other characters (as «gifts» from the nice player), or he may give him zero cleverness.

A character with zero cleverness is dead! The player of a dead character must be driven from the gaming table with coarse language. Insult him! Players losing their characters are worthless! Scum! Go away!

The cleverness is written in the middle of the character sheet, with large numbers. By doing this the player concludes his character generation. In the world of Pervo there is no depth to the character. As in the real world our characters are shallow! And Pervo is a

really realistic game!

The cleverness of a character is tested every time the DM finds it necessary to test it, basically when the character tries to perform some sort of task. It is tested with a D20. If the die is lower than or equal to the cleverness rating, the character succeeds in doing his task. If it is higher, he fails! The DM describes the dire consequences whatever the die shows, or he spurs the player to describe them garishly. Consequences are best with knife slashes and whiplashes, blood and pain, strong domination and humble submission. The DM should always be overly enthusiastic about the gore, to make the players understand that this is the true path, and start walking upon it.

Characters in tune with the cosmic forces of the gods, are of course more likely to gain more cleverness than any infidels. The DM may decide that the character is a true follower of the almighty Zader, or a slave to the serving principles of the humble Mazorg, or both. There is only salvation for the characters in true Zader-Mazorgism! Only religious zeal will make their death a memorable sacrifice!

### Rule Three

**Every character in a game of Pervo shall die.**

They must all die in the most horrendous and bloody way possible. The player must be driven from the table when his character has died. When all characters are dead, and only the DM is left by the

table, the game is over. The DM may then howl about his great power, his godlikeness, and his sole rule over the game table! Hah-hah-hah!

Characters are expected to understand some of this game, at least enough of it to make the DM task a bit easier. All players hate other players, with their attention-stealing characters of mediocre quality, so it is fairly easy to make the players go for each others' throats. It's when the characters start picking on each other, making gore gush out from spectacular wounds, and loving it, that the DM may lean back and watch his creation.

When the players left are into pure violence, their characters raving mad with blood lust, and pain is their only salvation, that's the moment the DM will savor. Feed the sexual perversions and violent tendencies of the players, and let them loose on each other. There is no evil in it, only a deep and cleansing satisfaction.

### The end

The DM may now congratulate himself with the fine vengeance he has inflicted on the players stupid enough to play Pervo. Players are really stupid! They think DMs must cater for their feeble needs, taking their feeble feelings and worthless thoughts into consideration when leading the game. That is so not true!

***This is Pervo!  
Let it Loose!***

## Perverted philosophy

### Only to be read by Game Masters

The players of Pervo are ordinary players in all respects. Players only come in one model; the one trying to keep their character alive as long as possible. Many players perceive initiative to be very dangerous in this game, and tend to develop a passive «wait and see» attitude. This perceived danger is indeed true, but only in the initial stages of the game. As the game develops, the passive characters are much more likely to take the brunt of the GM (God-Man), and the other characters.

When correctly applied, Pervo caters for very sharp and direct competition between players when the initial stages are over with. In an environment laden with doom such competition is very easily pushed towards the bloody and violent mode, and then pushed some more, into a gory paradise of sado-masochism. The GM stops his wanton killings, and leaves the players to kill off each others' characters in spectacular ways, preferably dying with grace.

*Pervo may be characterized as a «joyful carnival of death».*

A GM may slaughter characters very quickly, and the game would end almost immediately, if not for the fact that you start with so many players. When the initial killings are done with, the leftover players tend to get the idea. They usually take the cues given by the DM, going on about Zader and Mazorg at each death.

So many players try to start their own killing spree, perceiving that the one murdering the others will be the one surviving to the end. This is true in many ways, but not when it comes to «surviving». But the game gets its energy from this insight. It makes it easy for the DM to push the game in the right direction. And the insight thus won by the players will soon be replaced by deeper insights.

*The truth will eventually sink in; there is no «surviving» this game.*

There are only «ways to go», so it's not necessarily the killing of other characters that makes the day. What really makes the day, the thing that makes your character immortal, is dying with grace. In dying with grace and jubilation, you will deliver your character from sin, and into the salvation of Zader-Mazorgism. This is the ultimate goal of any player: to make his character immortal.

Soon the players will understand that it is essential to enjoy their own pain, lick their wounds, and meet their death with jubilation! This is the one true way. To kill others is only one step on the way to this insight. To beg for your own killing is the true goal. Immortality is only secured by a death so spectacular everyone will remember it. That is the only way to «survive» a game of Pervo. It's when this insight enters the game that it gets really interesting...

When your character is remembered it has gained immortality.

I've seen players of Pervo praying for

their characters death, by the hands of other characters, in very creative and convincing ways. This may happen in other games also, of course, but the fervor by which such prayers are delivered is unique for Pervo. The reason is that the prize of immortality hangs so high.

And I've seen players banging their heads against the window, very hard, repeatedly, in a hilarious celebration of the pain inflicted upon their characters. It's all about violence, enthusiasm, and fervor!

### **The principles**

How do you do this? How do you, as a leader of the game, make it grow into some obscene celebration of blood and gore? How do you make religion out of pain and sacrifice, and death? There is in fact nothing much to it. It is easy. You do it by introducing a specific set of ruling principles in the world of Pervo. By simple means you will entice players to adopt these principles, and make them the crux of the game.

***The ruling principles are these:***

***Blood is beautiful!***

***Pain is cleansing!***

***Violence is happiness!***

***Death is the final orgasm!***

Introduce these principles during play, whenever someone is hurt or killed, and make it more and more enthusiastic as game goes on. Be really enthusiastic about it if players take up on it. Give the charac-

ters of the most enthusiastic players lots of opportunities to be hurt by, or to hurt, the other characters. Any death by a character that has «seen the light», must be played out as a celebration of pain and violence! A violent death is the highest goal of all!

***Don't be shy!***

***Don't be timid!***

***Be bloodthirsty, pain-loving  
and violently happy!***

***Scream a lot!***

### **A deep lesson**

I think Pervo is popular amongst role players, being mostly young men, because it delivers them from their throes of deeply rooted anxiety. All con games or improvised RPGs of the violent persuasion are popular for the same reason, but Pervo does this in a so much more efficient and true way.

It has the same effect on game masters, and that is the reason I use it as a tool in my seminars on game mastery. Pervo is a tool used to release them from the anxiety of disgruntled players. It delivers into their hands the power to be real masters of chaos. I tell all game masters you have to be brutal and ruthless in the face of your players, and when facing your own anxiety of failure.

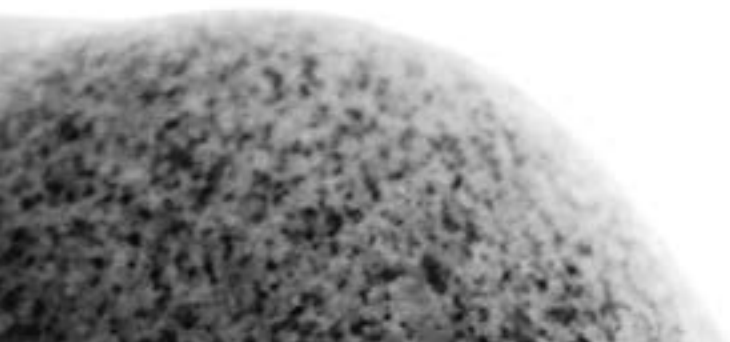
All GMS confront chaos when leading a game, and will do this the better if not hampered by neurotic second thoughts.

***That's the lesson to be had from Pervo!***

***Let it loose!***







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# Storyboard

a story game by Rune Valle

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written: 2006  
form: story game  
players: 3-10  
duration: 2-5 hours  
need to play: pencils and paper

*Ben pressed against the wall, listening to the low sounds of people whispering in the basement below. With one hand held tightly around the experimental flame-thrower he reached for the splint grenade he had risked his life for getting from the embassy.*

*In his head, he went through everything he'd gone through to get here. Was the old man at the market right about the Ying-poh monster being vulnerable to blue flames? Would the captain of the black hand mercenaries keep his word and burst in from the other entrance once the sound of the grenade was heard? And would his mother's charms really offer protection against the dark, magical defences sure to be found around the entire place? There were so many things that could go wrong; so many persons he just had to trust. And was he prepared? Skilled monster-hunter or not – this beast gave him a bad feeling.*

*But there was no returning now. Ben took a deep breath and bit off the security pin...*

## Introduction

**T**HIS is a game where you and your friends are going to make a story together. What kind of story? It will become a story about a hero that in some way or another has to go through different challenges.. But then, what story isn't like that in one way or another?

Apart from that, this game sets little limitations on your creative freedom. At first glance the players of this game are just taking turns reciting some unwritten text. But now and again some keywords may be heard, invoking some of the inner mechanics of the game. All players have their own special responsibilities in the story, there is a point system for motivation and «game control», and there's a storyboard system to give the game a direction and sense of purpose. All these combine to make the story telling as pleasant an experience as possible for a broad audience.

And as one should expect from most games, at the end of the it there will be a winner. But beware of thinking too much of your personal victory! If you aren't careful you could get into the terrible situation that everyone loses, and the story ends without any conclusion!

### How this text is organized

Below you will find the main text. This will guide you through how this game is played step by step. In addition to this there are several appendices.

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**Rune Valle** (b. 1984) is currently studying for a master's degree in physics. He has been fond of games since pre-school. His first experience with role-playing games was before he reached the age of 10, and he immediately fell in love. During most of his youth he played chess and AD&D weekly. While he left the chess society when done with high-school, his interest in role-playing games stayed strong. He has designed several games over the course of the years, both role-playing and other. Storyboard was his first entry in a design competition.

The first one is an overview of the different responsibilities a player can have in this game. After having read the main text and this appendix you should be able to play the game.

The second is a set of rules that probably won't be needed, but are there to handle problem situations that might arise using only the main text. You can play the game without reading this section, only referring to it if you feel there's something missing in the main text. But it will allow for a more complete game experience if everyone involved is familiar with these rules as well.

The third appendix contains hints and tips on how get the most out of the game, and on how to win. This section is purely optional, but has been included by popular demand.

Finally there are optional rules so that after one or more games you can fine-tune the system to the needs of your group.

## Initial preparations

There are a few things you have to prepare in advance before you can really start the game.

First, make sure you have all the necessary things at hand.

- ☞ Some cards or pieces of paper to write on (two for each player)
- ☞ Paper and pencils
- ☞ Some way to keep track of points
- ☞ 3–10 players

Once you have gathered these there are three things you have to decide before you can start with playing the game properly. I assume that anyone getting as far as coming together to play this game will be able to agree on these some way or another.

☞ What is the overall setting?

**Examples:** *Forgotten valley, the dark streets of Moscow, aboard the Titanic*

☞ Who will the hero be?

**Examples:** *A sole adventurer, a secret agent, a ghost hunter, a king, an infantry soldier*

☞ What kind of challenges will the hero have to overcome?

**Examples:** *Monsters, traps, unfortunate events*

You should talk a bit about each of these to establish some guidelines for the story. Before proceeding to the next stage you should all have a feeling of the mood, and quite a few ideas of what directions things could develop.

ps: Don't let yourself be restricted by the use of the word «hero» in this text. If you prefer to let the story focus on an anti-hero, a villain or even a perfectly ordinary person, feel free to do so! I have had several entertaining games with such «heroes».

### Example:

*Andy, Bart, Celine and Didric have decided to play Storyboard. They're sitting around a table with the necessary equipment. For cards they've chosen to use post-it notes. Andy has brought a notebook and some pencils, and they are using a set of poker-chips as score-markers.*

They quickly decide that they want to make a sci-fi story, set in a spaceship travelling through outer space. They argue a bit about whether the hero should be the captain alone, or the entire crew. They finally agree on the captain, as this will make room for complications related to the rest of the crew. Celine puts forth the idea that the challenges should be missions given by base command. No one objects, and so it is decided. While chatting a little about these choices they soon begin to get ideas about a space-opera focused around personal

conflicts inside the ship.

Before you begin the game loop, make sure everyone starts out with twice as many points as there are players

## Starting the game

Now you are ready to get the ball rolling for real. Hand out a card to each player. On this the player secretly writes a short description of a challenge of the kind previously agreed on, and their own name.

There are a few guidelines for how these challenges should be made in order to fit in this game. The challenges should be set up so that there is never any doubt about whether the challenge has been successful met or not. «Getting much money from the stock market» wouldn't be okay; «Earning one million dollars» is, however, precise enough. Furthermore challenges should take the hero some time overcome. «A hole suddenly opening under the hero» probably isn't a good idea, for example.

Apart from these guidelines you are free to make up what you want. An example of a challenge description could be «A big green slime monster named Argoth, with a breath that could make even cockroaches squeal in disgust» - suitable for instance if the hero is a evil overlord, and the challenges are creatures he needs to recruit.

Once everyone has written down a challenge the cards are collected, shuffled and put face down in a pile. This pile is called the storyboard.

**Example:** (continued from above):

*The players now take one post-it each. Andy writes down: «An emergency signal is received from another ship. The ship surgeon's brother is on that ship. It must be found and saved. Andy»*

*Bart is more concise: «New life form found, bring back specimen alive. Bart»*

*Celine's reads: «Space pirates are ravaging the galaxy; find*

*their base! Celine»*

*Didric is in a more romantic mood, and writes: «Transport Diane to her wedding. The captain has a romantic interest for Diane. Didric»*

## Game sequence

The game now enters the main game sequence. This is a loop that continues until the game is over. The steps you take are:

1. Draw a new challenge from the storyboard
2. Distribute responsibilities among the players
3. Tell tale
4. Guess the number of scenes
5. Record scores

Details about these steps follow, but this list is nice to have as a reference.

## Starting a new act

Now the players draw the first card from the storyboard and read it. This card shows what challenge the hero will face in this act of the story.

The player who created the challenge is the boss for this act. He'll need a piece of writing paper. Each of the other players will get at least one field of responsibility. These players are from now on referred to as the storytellers. Descriptions of the fields of responsibility and how these are distributed along the players are detailed in Appendix 1. These responsibilities represent what part of the story you are expected to keep control of. They aren't set in stone, however, and you are advised to allow storytellers some slack.

**Example:** *Our friends pick a post-it at random. It turns out to be Bart's challenge. This makes Bart the boss. Consulting the table in Appendix 1 they find that Celine has the*

responsibility for talking about the captain, Didric controls all other characters in the story, and Andy is the master of the inanimate parts of the environment.

## Telling the story

This is the main part of the game. The goal is for the storytellers to make a story with at least as many scenes as there have been acts (including the current act).

In case this seems a daunting task, here are some ideas: In the first act start out with each storyteller giving a short description on the current situation, for the field he or she is responsible for. In the other acts the boss from the previous act should start by giving a short description of how the last challenge was handled. From this, go on to narrate how the hero starts approaching a solution to the challenge at hand. You'll pretty soon find that the tale moves on much like a normal conversation.

**Example:** *Everything is ready, and the story begins.*

*Celine: The captain smiles excitedly, thinking about his message. A new life form! That's a rare event these days - and he'll have the honour of orchestrating its reception.*

*Didric: Most of the crew are now assembled in the briefing room of the ship. The rest are at posts that are too important to leave.*

*Andy: The briefing room has a certain classroom feeling. The captain stands at a slightly raised «stage» overlooking rows of seats with small desks before them.*

*Celine: The captain clears his throat addressing the audience: «Ladies and gentlemen, we have been given a most honourable task!»*

## The story has started.

This conversation should carry on without interruption until you have come to the point where you're describing how the hero is making the final steps before actually confronting the challenge. At this point it should still be uncertain whether the hero actually manages to overcome the challenge or not.

There are only two keywords that should be uttered that aren't part of the story: scene and bonus. Each of these gives the boss a bit of paperwork, while the rest of the storytellers should just go on as if nothing had happened. These keywords shouldn't disturb play. Each keyword is described in detail below.

## Bonus:

At any time the boss can say «bonus». Then he writes down a short (one-sentence) description of why he handed out a bonus, and mark it by writing a + sign in front. The boss should do this whenever he feels the storytellers have done something remarkable. This shouldn't be done much less than once per storyteller each act. This will be taken into account when points are computed later, in the paperwork step.

**Example:** *The story has developed, and the captain with his lead scientist and two «bodyguards» have just landed in a capsule on the destination planet. Andy has just given a fabulous description of the landing site that really put some pictures in Bart's imagination. Bart declares «bonus!» and writes down «+ landing site description» in his notebook. Meanwhile another player continues to describe how the expedition carefully moves into the crystal jungle.*

## Scene:

At any time any storyteller can say «scene». Continue the storytelling as before. In the meantime the boss has some work to do: He should write a short one-sentence description of what has happened in the story since the last time someone declared scene (or in the case of this being the first time someone says «scene», since the game began).

He should then try to decide whether what has happened in the story is important enough for it to be considered a true scene. The exact criteria

for this is up to the boss' subjective taste. But one thing he should consider is whether the hero has come closer to being able to overcome the challenge at hand. Other factors could be whether he feels the story has had significant development, or whether he is generally pleased with the content of the suggested scene. If the boss concludes that he agrees that this is a good place to mark a scene, he underlines the written description of the scene. Otherwise he draws a single line crossing out the sentence. This should be hidden from the storytellers!

**Example:** *The expedition has just made first contact with the new life form, which turns out to be extremely sticky. Didric has just described how the creature has totally engulfed one of the body-guards when he declares «scene». Bart writes down «Finding life-form» in his notebook and underlines it. He considers this to be an important step toward completing the mission. In the meantime, the captain has found a good way of trying to save his crew member.*

### Confronting and scoring

At any time any storyteller can declare that the hero is ready for confronting the challenge. At this point the standard phasing of the game ends. It's time for some paperwork, and to determine whether the hero is able to successfully overcome the challenge.

First all storytellers should make a guess at how many scenes the boss has accepted as true scenes. This should be done simultaneously. There are several ways to arrange this; one is that each storyteller writes down his guess on a piece of paper, which he then hands over to the boss.

Then the boss reveals the number of scenes he has accepted. Each storyteller that hasn't guessed right loses a number of points equal to the number of storytellers multiplied with the difference between the guessed value and the actual value.

At the same time the boss loses as many points as the difference (not multiplied with the number of storytellers).

This is the most critical part of the game; if you're losing, it will be during this stage. See the last section of the main text for details on losing.

Finally, check if the number of scenes is equal or more than the target number of scenes. If this is the case, the hero manages to overcome the challenge. Every storyteller then gains as many points as the boss has declared bonuses during the act. In addition, if there were more scenes than necessary, every player gets one point for each excess scene (and remember that, as always, the boss is a player too).

In the case that there aren't enough scenes, every player loses as many points as scenes they were missing, and the hero will have had to give up the challenge. This should then be included in some way in the narration of the player who opens the next act. (This will usually be the current boss, as described in the start of «Telling the story». But in the case that this was the last act, this will actually be the winner - see below).

Now the act is finished, and it's time to start a new act. Continue this way until the storyboard is empty. Then the game is finished.

**Example:** *The expedition has managed to trap a specimen of the life form in a container, and has returned to the capsule. Andy has just declared «scene», and immediately Celine declares that she wants confrontation. It is time to find out if they have done enough to be able to complete the mission successfully, or whether something goes terribly wrong on the way home.*

Only 2 scenes have been declared in this act. The storytellers decide to mark their guess on how many scenes have been accepted by simultaneously showing a number of fingers. Andy and Celine both hold

up 2 fingers, while Didric is more pessimistic and only shows 1. Bart reveals his notebook, where both scene descriptions have been underlined. As Andy and Celine guessed right, none of them lose any points. But since Didric was 1 off, he loses 3 points, while Bart loses 1.

Then, as they had enough scenes (they had to have at least 1), the challenge has been successfully completed, and all the storytellers get their bonus. Bart has only declared one bonus. Andy, Celine and Didric each get one point. And finally, as they had 1 scene more than necessary all players get one point.

### Finishing the game

After the last paperwork phase, compare your scores. The player with the highest score is the winner! In the case of a tie, the player who was boss first wins. The winner gets the privilege of ending the story. In this part the winner concludes the story, while the rest of the players are simply listening politely. No rules apply any more, except for normal social considerations. Those who didn't win should remember that the winner really deserves this, and act accordingly, while the winner should of course show consideration to the others. Well done! You managed to get through the game without losing.

### Losing!

If, at any time, any player gets less than 0 points the game is over. Everyone lost! The fact that *everyone* loses, and not just the player that lost his last points, can't be stressed enough.

To avoid losing this way is rather simple, and if the game actually reaches such a state that means several players have made grave mistakes. This defeat will also be felt as the game ends at once, and the story will end suddenly and without conclusion. Avoid this at all cost. Even if you are far from having

any possibility to win, to finish last is still much better than having everyone suffer the pain of the game coming to such an unsatisfactory end.

The only exception to this rule is in the final scoring phase. Even if someone has a negative score during this phase, the game isn't necessarily lost. But if there still is such a situation at the end of the phase, the game is lost.



## Appendix 1: Extra Rules

This section includes rules that could be invoked on special occasions. These aren't in the main text, as they should ideally never be invoked, but they still have to be in the game to avoid some unfortunate situations that might occur if the rules hadn't been there.

**Rule 1:** If a majority of the players votes for it, a challenge can be changed right after having been drawn. This rule is mainly there to prevent challenges from dictating things that don't fit with the rest of the story, or if challenges contain things some of the players find totally unacceptable.

It could also be used in the event of a challenge somehow seeming boring due to former events, for instance if two people have written very similar challenges, but the author would recommend solving this situation by coming up with a new twist to the challenge.


**Rule 2: Protesting.** During storytelling, any storyteller may protest against anything that happens in the story, and against someone wanting to go to confrontation. In this case the player protested against may choose to give in immediately. If he doesn't, it's up to the boss to decide whether the protest goes through or not. The player who doesn't get the boss' favour immediately loses a point. This might result in losing the game!

## Appendix 2: Responsibilities

Below is a description of each of the fields of responsibilities in the game, followed by a table that describes how these are distributed among the players for each act. Remember that these fields are mainly meant as a guideline and inspiration for the players to use, and a way of giving everyone something to contribute with in the story. The only exception is the boss, who has a very defined role.

For most descriptions there are also some side tasks. These are examples of things that the player can take care of; but that fall outside the main responsibility for that player.

The table should be read like this: Find the column that matches the number of players. Then find your player number. Assuming you are sitting around a table, the player to the left of the boss is player 1, the player to the left of player 1 is player 2 and so on. If you are not sitting around a table find some equivalent way to determine player order. Then check the row that corresponds with your player number. Cross-referencing the number of players with your player number, you will find a set of numbers in the table. These numbers represent the responsibilities you have this act, and correspond to the numbering in the responsibility description.

 **Boss:** The boss is the person who seemingly does nothing, but still is essential for the game to run smoothly. In a way all the other players are there to entertain the boss. The boss does have a very limited set of things he can do. These are: To declare bonus at any time, to decide what scenes are accepted, and – in the case of the use of Rule 2 – to decide the outcome of this. Apart from this the boss is just to sit and let himself be entertained by the story the storytellers are

making. In addition he can log the events of the story if he wants.

1. **Hero actions:** This player has the responsibility of describing all actions performed by the hero. Side tasks might include describing the hero's appearance.
2. **Hero communication:** This player has the responsibility of recounting everything the hero says. Side tasks might include describing body language.
3. **Hero thoughts:** This player has the responsibility of narrating what the hero thinks and feels.
4. **Character actions:** As 1, but for all characters except the hero.
5. **Character communication:** As 2, but for all characters except the hero.
6. **Character thoughts:** As 3, but for all characters except the hero.
7. **Character introducer:** This player is responsible for the introduction of new characters into the story. Side tasks might include deciding what characters are present in a given situation, possibly including the hero.
8. **Geographer:** This player is responsible for the inanimate environment, like houses, hills and locations. Exactly what can be considered «inanimate environment» depends a bit on the story, but is usually rather intuitive.
9. **Object responsible:** This player is responsible for every non-living object that doesn't fall under the responsibility of the geographer. This includes tools, furniture, trinkets etc.

**Example:** Going deeper into the example under «Starting a new act» in the main text: The example group has found that Bart is the boss for the first round. They then focus their attention on the column of the above table marked 4, as they are 4 players, and ignore the rest of the table.

To the left of Bart sits Celine, so the first row in that column shows what her responsibilities are. It shows the numbers «1, 2, 3». These are the responsibilities for hero actions, communications and thoughts - all responsibilities that concern the hero. So, for simplicity, they simply state that Celine has control over the hero, who in this case is the captain. They also decide to write «captain» on a piece of paper and put in front of Celine. This piece can then simply be sent to the player directly to the left of the new boss in

the next act without having to consult the table again (if they had been many they would probably do this by rotating the responsibility descriptions until the boss sat without responsibility).

Didric is sitting directly to the left of Celine, so he consults the row below and finds «4, 5, 6, 7». These are all responsibilities that affect the non-hero characters, so he writes down «Characters» as his responsibility.

Finally Andy finds the last row of the column, showing «8, 9». After a second of consideration he finds that «lifeless» seems to be a fitting collective term of these two responsibilities, and puts that down on paper.

Players Function	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1	1	1	1
2	4,5,6,7,8,9	4,5,6,7	4,7	4,7	2,3	2,3	2	2
3		8,9	5,6	5,6	4,7	4	4	4
4			8,9	8	5,6	5,6	3	3
5				9	8	8	5,6	5
6					9	7	7	6
7						9	8	8
8							9	9
9								7

## Appendix 3: Hints and tips

For myself, I think that the very best way to enjoy any game is to really dig deep into it and uncover its deep planted secrets and smart strategies. To try to work out for myself what makes this game tick. But in the case of this game, this will require playing several times, or spending some time on analysis. And I am aware that not everybody has this much time to devote to a game, or shares my interest in digging for the cores of games. So if you're not like me, this section could be invaluable. It's also highly recommended if you're playing to find out whether this game is something for you to keep playing, as it describes some pitfalls that might ruin the gaming experience if you make a few mistakes. Be warned that this is written with the specially interested in mind, so part of it can become rather technical. So feel free to skip any part – each hint can mostly be understood without having read any of the previous ones.

**Hint #1:** The most critical pitfall in this game is probably underestimating the importance of giving bonuses. Giving bonuses might be considered bad from a point-tactical viewpoint. The advice in the main text (to give at least close to as many bonuses as there are storytellers) is due to the game being designed to make something like this the point-strategic optimal use of bonuses. Playtesting confirms that this seems to work as intended. The main reason to give bonuses is, of course, to avoid losing. And to make the prospect of losing more probable, I'll give you an example:

**Example:** Assume Andy, Bart, Celine, and Didric are playing another game. Let's follow Andy. As they are four players, he start with 8 points (twice the number of players). In the first act Bart becomes boss. During the act there's a protest that ends in Bart's favor, and where Andy loses. He is thereby reduced to 7

points.

*At the end of the act there have been 2 «scene» declarations, including one just before the confrontation. Andy is optimistic and guesses that both were accepted. The sad truth is that Bart found the last part to be a bit too much of a rush to the confrontation after the first scene, and hasn't accepted it as a true scene (this is a far from uncommon situation). So Andy then loses 3 points, one for each storyteller. Bart also never said «bonus», so at the end of the act Andy has 4 points.*

*Next act Andy is boss. This time there are 3 declared scenes – but the middle one was a bit too much fooling around for Andy's taste. However, only Celine understood that he wouldn't accept it. That way both Bart and Didric get one wrong, and Andy loses another 2 points, which leaves him with 2. Andy was wise enough to hand out some bonuses. But that doesn't help him. So our group is in the terrible situation that Andy has to guess right at the number of scenes in the third act, or they are all going to lose!*

One of the fundamental mindsets that this game kind of builds upon is that the penalty of losing is so much worse than the benefit of winning. This means that, from Bart's perspective, the small odds gained for winning by not handing out any bonus is now hugely outweighed by the very real possibility that they will never get as far as the fourth act.

**Hint #2:** So now that I have hopefully exorcised any idea that giving bonuses is meaningless, I can get to discussing when to give bonuses. The short answer is, again, to follow the guidelines in the main text. They aren't just some kind of wishes from the game designer – they really are advice on how to get the most out of the game. As a boss, bonuses are the only way you are allowed to use to convey messages to the storytellers about the ongoing story. The power of this tool shouldn't be underestimated. You should give bonuses when you experience something in the game that you enjoy.

The storytellers will then hopefully give you more of similar things. For instance, if the story starts down a sidetrack you see great possibilities in, you can give a bonus and hope that the storytellers will take the hint and elaborate further down that path.

**Hint #3:** Play out a few small stories before starting any great plot projects, just to get a feeling for the game and each other. This game generally becomes more interesting after having played it with the same people a few times. This is because you'll get a feeling what criteria the different players will set on accepted scenes; so you can streamline the story for that purpose. The effect described at the end of hint 3 will be enhanced by players having a better idea of how to gain bonuses from the boss (and hence he will be better entertained).

As a side note: It can be said that there's a conflict between the notion of a best point-strategy of number of bonuses and the opportunity given in the system for the boss to direct the story through bonuses. The conflict would arise in the case that the boss has found his own optimal system for how many bonuses he should give, *and* the storytellers are able to recognise this system. In this case, the boss would have to either have to compromise his own system (by playing «wrong») in order to keep the storytellers interested in fighting for them, or forfeit this method of story control in benefit for points. But this is just one example that the game has been designed for correspondence between good, point-focused play and the creation of a quality story. As the rules stand I almost cannot imagine this conflict ever arising. The reason for this is that the psychological fuzziness between the value of losing versus that of winning makes even the existence of a best strategy philosophically difficult. I then consider it pretty much impossible that anyone should actually find such a strategy. And even if anyone should find

it, the dynamical and complex nature of the game ensures that it would be complex enough for the storytellers not to be able to figure it out.

So the best one can hope for is to find a range one wants the number of bonuses one want to give be in, and then exploit the story direction benefits within this range.

**Hint #4:** Keep the protest rule (rule 2 in appendix 2) in the back of your head. This rule could be of tremendous help for increasing the quality of the story, even if it is never invoked! Because of the possibility for the other storytellers to protest against you, you should make some effort to keep the story on a track you think they will enjoy. But, as always, the most important person to please is the boss, as he will be the judge if a protest arises. On the other hand, it also paradoxically gives you to more narrative freedom, as you don't have to focus *that* much on the other players – if you say something dubious, they will certainly point it out for you. All in all, this should encourage a sound balance between free creativity and sound social antennas.

So a point that I'd like to make perfectly clear: While, as stated in the main text, the penalty rule hopefully won't be used, and certainly shouldn't hold any focus in the game, you shouldn't be afraid to use it in the unfortunate case where it is appropriate. This could be in the case where the story takes a sudden turn you dislike, or you feel someone breaks the intention of the responsibilities by stealing too much of the show.

If you are protested against, you can limit the damage to the flow of the story by quickly just accepting the protest and carrying on. But as the damage is already done, in most cases it can be just as well to consider what you think the boss would prefer. If you think you have a strong case with the

boss, feel free to stick to your story and let him decide. This is obviously the best point-tactical way of doing it. But from a story-quality point of view, it also gives a few benefits. The boss has a stronger word in how the story should develop than he could have had otherwise. It also helps ensuring that the protest that comes is honest, and not used in some way to exploit for increased story control.

**Hint #5:** The game revolves around the boss. Even though he has almost no direct influence over the story, he is the one that drives it. You should always strive to please the current boss. He is, after all, the one who hands out bonuses, judges if your effort to make a scene was worthwhile, and decides the outcome of any protests. And keep in mind that it's he who created the current challenge, so he'll probably want to hear about things concerning that challenge. So when you narrate, always have this in the the back of your mind. Then the story won't stray too far from it's path, but stay focused.

**Hint #6:** Make trouble for the hero! This is a very effective way to produce the increasing number of scenes you need in order to get the necessary relevant scenes for each act. This is also the key that gives this game a proper dramatic development. The first act should just be a walk in the park for the hero, even if the challenge sound truly vicious. Make it trivial. The main point of this act is just to get to know the character and the setting. As the acts pass, the challenges get tougher. The setting and plot elements explored in past acts can resurface and add to the tension and the complexity of the whole situation. But when the challenge was written for the storyboard, nobody could know what act it would be for. This means that it's up to the storytellers to make it as difficult as they feel necessary in order to fill the required number of scenes. So if the last act's challenge turns out to

actually literally be a walk in the park, make sure to fill the park with insane environmental activists or something. Make the hero's life difficult from scene one, and increase difficulty every act.

**Hint #7:** Finally I just want to point out that a high number of scenes drastically increases the expected number of points that can be lost due to incorrectly guessing the number of scenes. This thus makes going for many scenes in order to get the extra points a dubious strategy to avoid losing.



## Appendix 4: Optional rules

Here are a collection of optional rules that show you how, with a few simple changes, you can tailor this game to your group's needs. You should play without these the first time, as the basic game has been designed for the broadest possible audience. The only exception to this is the first one, which in some cases is a pretty obvious addition.

**Optional rule #1:** It is very simple to add a time limit to the game. The reasons you might want to do this are many. Examples are that you feel the game is too slow, you want more tension in the game, or your games tend to lose focus (despite the mechanisms already in the game to avoid just that). But the most important reason is probably if you have a natural time limit - like being at a convention, or having to finish the game before the last bus home.

The time limit is set in the Tell-Tale phase. This limit could be different from act to act. It will probably be most natural to let it increase a bit for each act, in order to account for the increasing number of required scenes. But having a lower or even non-existing increase can have the interesting effect of making the game more tense as the acts pass, helping to set a good dramatical development of the mood.

The boss keeps track of the time. The timer starts when the storytellers begin the introduction. If the time runs out, the story is cut immediately by the boss (he might allow them to finish a sentence if he feels nice). The only thing the storytellers are allowed to do before the confrontation is forced upon them is then to declare a new scene if they

want to. The next player to continue the story (the introducer of the next act, or the winner) must then fill in the blanks between the hero's current situation and his confronting the challenge. Apart from this, the game plays just as otherwise.

**Optional rule #2:** Multiply the number of scenes the player missed by the number of players instead of the number of storytellers when calculating how many points he loses when guessing wrong on the number of scenes. This should only be introduced if your group has a problem with bosses that accept any scene as relevant. (The effect that makes such over-acceptance a poor idea is a bit weak in the main game; this strengthens it). If you play with this rule, you should also increase the initial points by 2.

**Optional rule #3:** You can get a more competitive game by removing the option of simply accepting the protest, and agreeing that that all protests lead to the boss deciding, and somebody losing points.

**Optional rule #4:** Some things that can be changed without too much disruption of the inner balance of the game are the number of points lost for losing protests, the number of required scenes in each act, the number of challenges made by each player, and the number of points granted by each bonus. In addition, the number of starting points can be tweaked a little. (You can remove the point gotten for each extra relevant scene, but this is not recommended unless you experience trouble that seems directly related to it.







# New Voices in Art

a chamber larp by Edland, Falch & Rognli

**written:** 2006  
**form:** chamber-larp  
**players:** 10-25  
**duration:** 2 hours  
**need to play:** a good location  
preferably a white walled  
room with no windows.  
at least as many pieces of  
art as there are players  
wineglasses and pens  
wine or other beverages  
music  
copies of the folder  
(page 137-138)

## Introduction

**N**EW Voices in Art is a chamber larp concept for 10–25 players. It is set in the world of contemporary art, but art in itself is not the actual theme of the game. Rather, art and the social scene that accompanies it is used to explore themes of ambition, social pre-tence, our desire to be creative individuals, and of everyone being alone with their innermost thoughts.

The game plays out like a party where people mostly don't know each other beforehand, chatting, flirting, discussing art, networking and mostly having a good time. The players will be playing a version of themselves in an alternate reality, in which they all are artists on the verge of a major breakthrough.

When designing this game, we had some very clear priorities. We wanted to make a larp where players simply could show up and participate, and which also took little effort to organise. We wanted to make a game that could be written down and published, and then picked up and played by someone who haven't attended a prior run of the game.

New Voices in Art has certain features designed to accomplish these goals. A handout sheet is provided for a highly structured briefing phase, and this text will cover most of the preparations you are required to make.

In the following pages you will find a section on preparations, this lists the practical stuff you will need to organise

before the game. After this you will find a section on the pre game briefing you will need to hold. Following this comes a section on playing the game, which also includes certain optional concepts which may be included. Lastly, you will find materials for the briefing phase of the game.

We wish you the best of luck with the game! Should you have feedback, questions, praise or criticism, we will be happy to hear from you at [newvoicesinart@gmail.com](mailto:newvoicesinart@gmail.com).

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*New Voices in Art is created by **Chambergames**, an initiative by **Tor Kjetil Edland, Arvid Falch and Erling Rognli**. A chamber game is a short larp (live action role-playing game) which last for no longer than a few hours and which takes place in a compact area, maybe just one room. The purpose of the Chambergames blog ( <http://chambergames.wordpress.com/> ) is to publish such scenarios on the net for others to use. Apart from being larp organizers Tor Kjetil Edland is a human rights worker, Arvid Falch is a musician and a student of Chinese and Erling Rognli is a psychology student.*

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### Preparations checklist:

- ☐ Location.
- ☐ Recruiting players.
- ☐ Art, with titles and numbers, set up as for an exhibition.
- ☐ Music.
- ☐ Drinks.
- ☐ Glasses and pens.
- ☐ Printing folders and notes.
- ☐ Deciding on an appropriate signal for game end.

**A chamber larp**

is a short live action role-playing game which last for no longer than a few hours and which takes place in a compact area, maybe just one room. Compared to larger larps a chamber larp is a type of game which easily can be produced in different cities by other groups than the original organisers.

## Preparations

As the game is set in a gallery, the organizers need to find a location which can look the part. A room with white walls and no or few windows will probably work best. The works of arts in the exhibition is the most essential part of the scenography. You need as many or more pieces of art as there are participants playing artists. The game was originally designed for 11 participants but this can be changed as you see fit. The important thing is that there cannot be more artists than there are works of art (See page 134 for a version with more players than works of art). Don't be overly concerned about whether these pieces of art are «real art» or not. The important thing is that they fulfil their function as scenography during the game. Try picking objects that are different both in size, content and format. Remember forms of art like videos, performances and installations. Make up a title for each piece, and assign it a number. If you're lucky you can cooperate with an actual art gallery, which might save you the trouble of setting up an exhibition yourself. Another possibility is having the players bring a piece each, and setting up the exhibition together just before playing the game.

The recommended duration for this larp is approximately two hours. The organizers should also schedule some time for creating the characters and briefing the participants before the game starts and for debriefing and discussion

after the end of the game. There needs to be a signal for when the game is ending. In the original runs of the game, one of the pieces was an installation that projected random, imperative sentences on the wall. To signal the end of the game, we had it project the words «Quit Larp». It's a good idea to make the signal unobtrusive, blending into the game reality, but at the same time very unambiguous to avoid misunderstandings. Another option is to agree on a specific time to stop playing.

You also need to provide each participant with a glass and a pen. There should be wine available. Some or all of the wine can be substituted with beverages which doesn't contain alcohol. Since it's a party there should also be some music which fits the setting. This could be a playlist on a MP3-player or a bunch of cds that the participants are free to play as they like during the game.

## Starting the game

On pages 137–138 you will find a sheet to copy and hand to your players. You will need to be familiar with the contents, so that you can help sort out any misunderstandings. The sheet contains most of the information needed for the pre game briefing phase. In it the players are given specific instructions to follow through a process of making a character and relating to their piece of art. When the game area is ready, and the players have arrived, you welcome them and hand out pens and handout sheets.

Your role in the briefing will be to hand out notes during the process, be at hand to answer questions, and to make sure that there are no lingering misunderstandings once the briefing is completed.

Reading the sheet, the players will be instructed to fill out a questionnaire as themselves, and then raise their hand. Whenever someone raises their hand, give them a randomly drawn artist card with a statement on how their character feels about their piece. Which piece that actually is will be decided later. Here are the statements used for the original production (Ready-to-cut-out versions can be found on page 140):

- ☞ *«I'm satisfied, but a lot of the other pieces here are very good...»*
- ☞ *«My piece might not be extraordinary, but compared to many of the other works, I'm happy with it.»*
- ☞ *«Of all the pieces I sent to the committee,*

*why did they choose this one?»*

- ☞ *«I really deserve this.»*
- ☞ *«Finally my work was accepted. I don't know if I could have handled another rejection.»*
- ☞ *«I knew this was special from the day I had the idea.»*
- ☞ *«I feel a bit uncomfortable showing something this personal to strangers.»*
- ☞ *«I thought it was good when I handed it in, but now I'm not so sure any more.»*
- ☞ *«This is the best I've ever done.»*
- ☞ *«Is it a bit cliché?»*
- ☞ *«Working on this piece has been very rewarding, but is it really art?»*

Having received a statement, the players will have another go at filling out the questionnaire. Nobody should feel obliged to show their answers to anyone else. After a while, they will start to stand up. At this point, you should make sure everyone understands the rules of the game, answering any questions that the participants might have. Also make sure that everyone remembers the signal for game end. The artist card and instruction sheet are only used in the pre-game phase, and may be discarded at this point if the players wish.

The organizers should in advance have given each work of art a number and a title. Each participants should now be randomly assigned to one of the pieces of art. This is the work of art which the character has made. The participants walk over to their work of art to get a chance to study and get a feel for it. The game will then be ready to begin.

### The role of the organizers during the game

There should be little or no reason for the participants to have to consult the organizers as such during the course of the game. There are several things you could do, and if you are more than one organizer you could also do different things:

- Play the game like a regular participant.
- Play an employee in the gallery. The work could be things like serving beverages or making sure that a work of art is running smoothly.
- Be part of a work of art.

**Game start checklist:**

- ☐ Welcome, introduction, hand out folders.
- ☐ Watch for raised hands, hand out notes.
- ☐ Go through the rules, make sure everyone is on the same page.
- ☐ Randomly assign art pieces.

## Playing the game

The game starts for each participant when he/she feels ready. When a person picks up a glass he is in the game and can be interacted with by the other participants. Everyone should carry their glass at all times. During the game everyone can tap someone else's glass with a pen or similar object at any time. The player whose glass has been tapped will then have to speak their mind. This means they have to express their character's thoughts aloud as an in-character monologue. The monologues are part of the game but not heard by the characters. You might think of it as voice-over. The speaking player signals the end of the speech by drinking from the glass, and then returns to normal play. It is not permitted to tap one's own glass.

The game ends with a signal agreed on before the start of the game. Everyone doesn't have to stop playing at once, but within the next few minutes the participants should finish off their last scene. A participant leaves the game by putting their glass down. This player should then no longer be interacted with. When everyone has put down their glasses the larp is over.

## Other options

### 1) Hangarounds

You can increase the number of participants by adding «hangarounds». Hangarounds are characters who do not have a piece of art in the exhibition. They are part of «the art crowd» and happen to be present at this party. The character creation process for hangarounds are as follows: Just like the participants playing artists the participants playing hangarounds start by reading through the sheet answering the questions as themselves. They then draw a piece of paper containing a statement about what their motivation is for being at the party. Here are some examples of what these could be (also on page 142):

- ☞ «I plan to buy the piece of art I like the best.»
- ☞ «I wasn't invited to the party I really wanted to go to, so I ended up here instead.»
- ☞ «I'm going to write an article about this exhibition.»
- ☞ «I really want to become a part of this crowd.»
- ☞ «I recently moved to this city – I'm here to get to know some interesting people.»
- ☞ «I want to have sex with someone tonight.»
- ☞ «I simply couldn't wait for the exhibition to open, so I showed up for this party.»
- ☞ «I want to party hard tonight, because there's something else I want to forget.»
- ☞ «I'm here to get inspiration for my own work.»
- ☞ «I really need something exciting to happen in my life.»
- ☞ «I want to get up to date on what's happening

*in the art scene right now.»*

☞ «I'm just here to flirt and have fun.»

Finally the participants should look at the sheet once again and fill out the questionnaire as the character they want to play.

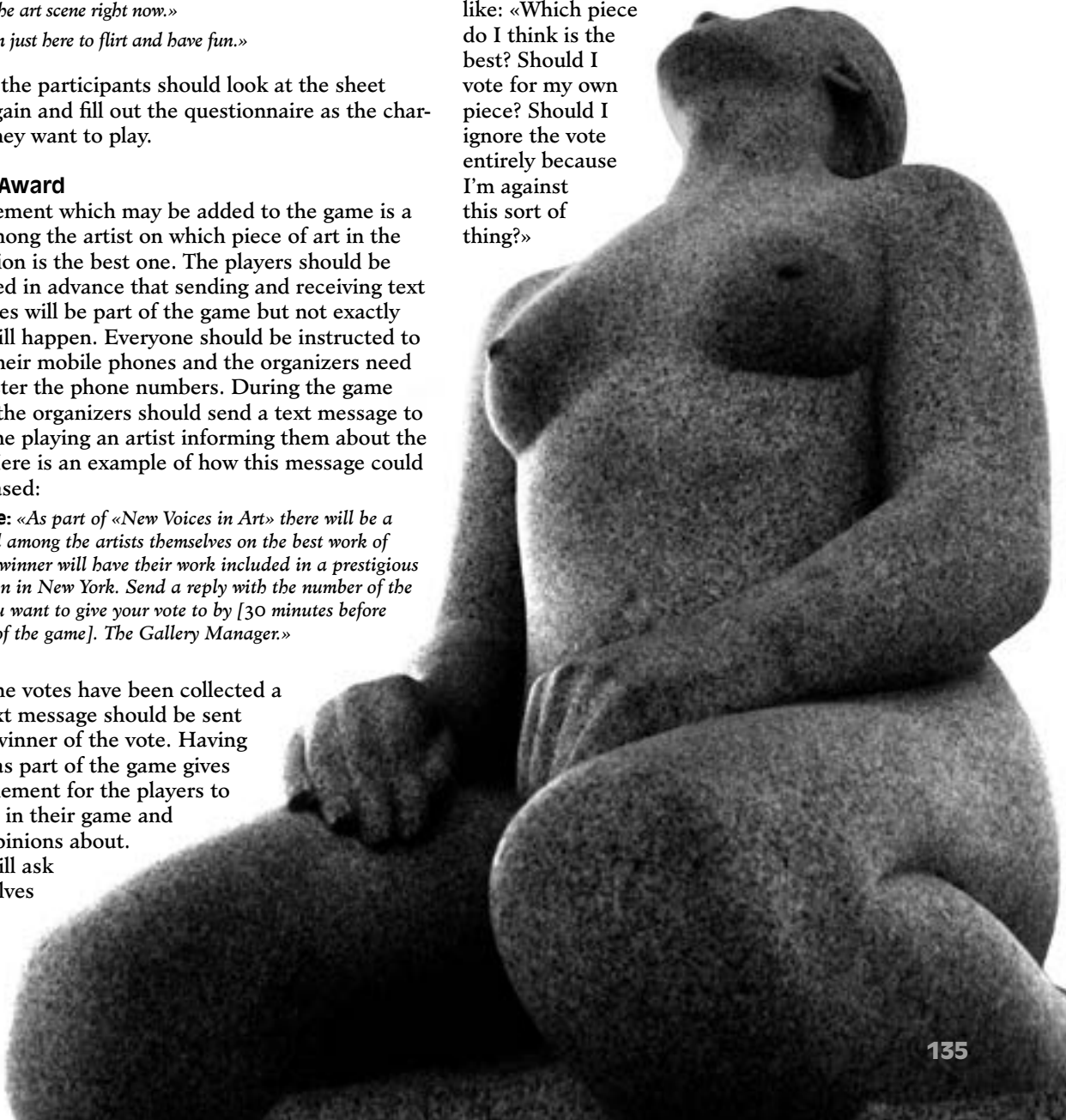
## 2) The Award

One element which may be added to the game is a vote among the artist on which piece of art in the exhibition is the best one. The players should be informed in advance that sending and receiving text messages will be part of the game but not exactly what will happen. Everyone should be instructed to bring their mobile phones and the organizers need to register the phone numbers. During the game one of the organizers should send a text message to everyone playing an artist informing them about the vote. Here is an example of how this message could be phrased:

**Example:** *«As part of «New Voices in Art» there will be a vote held among the artists themselves on the best work of art. The winner will have their work included in a prestigious exhibition in New York. Send a reply with the number of the piece you want to give your vote to by [30 minutes before the end of the game]. The Gallery Manager.»*

After the votes have been collected a new text message should be sent to the winner of the vote. Having a vote as part of the game gives extra element for the players to include in their game and form opinions about. They will ask themselves questions

like: «Which piece do I think is the best? Should I vote for my own piece? Should I ignore the vote entirely because I'm against this sort of thing?»









# You are the New Voices in Art!

**T**his is a larp about ambition, ambivalence and about feeling alone in the world. We will be using contemporary art to symbolise our yearning for success and fulfilment as creative individuals, and explore themes related to that through play.

## Your character

You will be playing an alternate version of yourself. The extent of the differences between your regular self and the larp version is largely up to you, but there are certain rules: You are an aspiring contemporary artist. You are not personally familiar with any of the other participants, as you may be in real life. You have never even heard of larp. Apart from that, you are free to make this version of yourself as alike or different from your everyday self as you see fit.

## Scene and scenography

The scene of the larp is an informal party for the participating artists in the prestigious exhibition «New Voices in Art», on the evening before the opening day. The scenography consists of eleven pieces of art, and one of these will be assigned randomly to each participant. You will also be given a random sentence describing your feelings about your piece. Before play begins you will be given time to look at your piece, so that you might figure out why you have made it, and why you feel the way you do about it.

## Speaking your mind

During the larp, everyone will carry glasses for drinks at all times. If you wish to you may tap someone else's glass lightly, with a pen or , similar object and they will then have to speak their mind.

This means they have to express their characters thoughts aloud for a time, as an in-character monologue. The length of it is mainly up to the speaking player, but short and to the point is to be preferred over long and winding. These speeches are a part of the game, but are not heard by the characters. The speaking player signals the end of the speech by drinking from the glass, and then returns to normal play. As a player you may use what you learn when someone speaks their mind to guide further interaction with that character, but you must keep it within plausible coincidences. However, you are not obliged to act upon what you learn, nor to listening all the way through the speech. It is not permitted to tap your own glass, no matter how interesting a monologue you have in mind.

## The other rules

This larp employs the common safe words *brake* and *cut*. Should you find yourself in a play situation you feel is headed in a direction you are not comfortable with, you simply say «brake» clearly to those you are playing with. This tells them that play shouldn't be taken any further in that direction. If play for some reason has become so uncomfortable or offensive that you wish it to stop you can say «cut» loudly and clearly, and walk away. If someone calls a «cut», everyone will stop playing at once – no exceptions.

As an aid to developing your larp persona, we would like you to consider the statements on the next page, and rate how well you feel they apply to your everyday self. Go through them one at a time, and put marks in the appropriate black boxes. Don't worry about anyone reading it afterwards. This is merely a tool for you to use in developing a persona, and has no other purpose.



# Questionnaire

First check the appropriate black boxes, then read the text at the bottom of the page.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am happy with my life.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am a creative person.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I experience mood swings.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am a complex person.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I like being on my own.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am who I wish to be.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am highly ambitious.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am often misunderstood.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am a loving and warm person.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I contribute to society.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I need to express myself.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I care a lot about what others think of me.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

# Making yourself different

After having answered as yourself, please raise your hand. The organisers will give you a card with a sentence describing your feelings about the piece you have made. Read this sentence to yourself, and keep it in mind when you go through the questionnaire once more.

On this second time through, try to use the statements as a tool for developing areas of difference and resemblance between your everyday self and your persona for the evening, placing marks

in the grey boxes. Having finished this, please stand up. Keep quiet. You will each be assigned one of the pieces of art in the exhibition.

Find your piece and get to know it. When you feel ready to start playing, go get a drink. All players who are carrying drinks are in-game. After the signal for game end is given, you leave play when you feel ready for it by putting your glass back where you found it. Until then you should be carrying a glass at all times.

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**

**New Voices in Art**  
**Artist**



“ I’m satisfied, but a lot of the other pieces here are very good...”

“ My piece might not be extraordinary, but compared to many of the other works, I’m happy with it. ”

“ Of all the pieces I sent to the committee, why did they choose this one? ”

“ I really deserve this. ”

“ Finally my work was accepted. I don’t know if I could have handled another rejection. ”

“ I knew this was special from the day I had the idea. ”

“ I feel a bit uncomfortable showing something this personal to strangers. ”

“ I thought it was good when I handed it in, but now I’m not so sure any more. ”

“ This is the best I’ve ever done. ”

“ Is it a bit cliché? ”

“ Working on this piece has been very rewarding, but is it really art? ”

“ ”

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**

**New Voices in Art**

**Hangaround**



“ “ I wasn't invited to the party  
I really wanted to go to, so I  
ended up here instead. ” ”

“ “ I'm going to write an article  
about this exhibition. ” ”

“ “ I plan to buy the piece of art I  
like the best. ” ”

“ “ I really want to become a part  
of this crowd. ” ”

“ “ I recently moved to this city –  
I'm here to get to know some  
interesting people. I want ” ”

“ “ to have sex with someone  
tonight. ” ”

“ “ I simply couldn't wait for  
the exhibition to open, so I  
showed up for this party. ” ”

“ “ I want to party hard tonight,  
because there's something  
else I want to forget. ” ”

“ “ I'm here to get inspiration for  
my own work. ” ”

“ “ I really need something exit-  
ing to happen in my life. ” ”

“ “ I'm just here to flirt and have  
fun. ” ”

“ “ I want to get up to date on  
what's happening in the art  
scene right now. ” ”



# **In the Belly of the Whale**

**a story game by Magnus Jakobsson**

**Translated by Even Tømte and Magnus Jakobsson**

**Additional ideas by Håken Lid and Michael Beck Esperum**

**Illustrations by Magnus Jakobsson and Håken Lid**

**written:** 2007  
**form:** story game  
**players:** 3-5  
**duration:** 1-2 hours  
**need to play:** the included cards



## Read aloud!

THE year is 1641. A group of people are sitting in the light of an oil lamp, trying to pass time. Some of them are enemies, others are perhaps allies, but none of them know much about each other. A few hours ago they were swallowed. Deep below the surface of the sea swims the gigantic whale which is now their home.

How did they end up here? What brought them together? Each of them knows only his or her own tale. Having nothing better to do, they start telling their stories.

Each of the players plays the part of one of the swallowed people. It is up to you to find out what led you to the belly of the whale.

### Concept

*In the Belly of the Whale* is a role-playing game for three to five players. All you need to play is provided in this book:

- 🐳 The guidebook you are now reading
- 🐳 10 character signs
- 🐳 11 motivation cards
- 🐳 25 action cards
- 🐳 1 epilogue card

Begin the game by choosing one character sign each and placing it in front of you. Draw two random motivation cards each and read them without showing them to each other. Take four action

cards for each player, shuffle them and place the pile on the table. Place the epilogue card at the bottom of the pile of action cards. The rest of the signs and action cards will not be used in the game.

The game consists of the characters taking turns to recount their experiences. The story of each character begins as an unconnected thread, but soon it begins to intertwine with the other characters' stories. All the story threads end at a ship, the Santa Anna, where several conflicts and quests were coming to a climax. But then the whale appeared, and all the characters were swallowed.

Now they are sitting together inside the whale. Some of them might be bitter enemies, but down here they have entered a truce. As far as they know there is no way of getting out. All they can do is to wait – and to talk.

### Motivation

Each of the characters has one main motivation that has brought him where he is today. Often the motivation is connected with love, hate, or duty. None of the characters are so shallow that they are driven simply by thirst for wealth or power, but many of them might need money or power in order to reach a higher goal. Most of the things your character does will be inspired by his or her motivation.

You choose one of your two motivation cards to determine your character's motivation. The other card is put away and is not used in the game.

### Magnus Jakobsson

(b. 1980) fell in love with the idea of role-playing while watching a cool, older boy drawing a map on hex paper. After cutting their chops with games like Basic D&D and Shadowrun he and childhood friend Even Tømte began making their own stuff, starting with Gold Dragon in 1993 and then Nuron, presented through an occasionally updated web page and a self published book (Aylafeiring, 2000). Since then he has written a number of short role-playing games (two of which appear in this book), arranged a one-week LARP set in Napoleonic France and co-authored a children's novel with Matthijs Holter (Landet bak landet, Damm, 2007).

You do not have to choose a motivation before you start telling your story.

### 1641

Do whatever you like with the year 1641. Do not feel constricted by history. Use your imagination. *The Three Musketeers* is a good inspiration. Any pirate movie you might have seen will also do.

Europe is a powder keg, with wars constantly being fought. Often, wars are triggered by conflict between Catholics and different types of Protestants. Huge ships plough the oceans, filled with slaves, gold, sugar and all other kinds of riches. Nobles arm themselves with rapiers and flintlock pistols and dress in baggy clothes with frills and broad-brimmed feathered hats.

All the characters speak many different languages, and they understand each other perfectly.

### Your story

What you are saying is what your character is saying. No more, no less. Facial expressions, movement and so on is played out physically. Only if it is impractical or inappropriate to show physically what the character does is it permitted instead to describe it (e.g., «I attempt to strike Chesterfield»). For the most part, the characters will be sitting still.

Only one character is narrating at a time. The others might add comments, outbursts and small talk, but not so much that the narrator loses track of the story – he gets the most time to speak. The first character to speak up is the first narrator in the game.

You will each narrate four times in total. Every time, you draw an action card and place it on your character sign with the text facing up. You may freely improvise your story, but you have to somehow include both the action card you just drew

and and one of the action cards already lying on the table (as soon as any have been played). Action cards mean the same thing every time they are invoked – the card «Evil uncle», for example, will never refer to different evil uncles. Whenever you invoke an action card you should point at it, to make the reference obvious.

The first time you narrate, the character will introduce himself and narrate how his motivation led him to this adventure. At the same time, you choose your motivation card and place it next to your character sign, face up.

The fourth and last time you narrate you must let your character enter the Santa Anna (if he is not there already). This is the climax of your character's story, so you should attempt to gather as many loose threads as possible. If you have a nemesis, he will be on the boat. If you are hunting for a treasure, it will be standing on the main deck.

Everything being told is true. Before the epilogues, however, is is not permitted to narrate the death of a character or remove his motivation.

Feel free to race through a large number of events in a short time. Five minutes is plenty of time for riding to Venice, bidding your father farewell on his deathbed and receiving an old family heirloom, being captured by bandits who steal the heirloom, toiling as a galley slave for three months and finally being rescued by another character.

### Changing narrator

You can let another player take over narrating whenever you feel like it – three or four minutes of narration will usually be fitting. Remember to include at least two action cards before ending your story (or one action card if you are the first narrator).

You pass the telling on to another player by introducing his character in your story. («...and that

was where I found you, tied up in the cargo hold! How on earth did you end up there?»)

The new narrator will now draw a new action card and begin his own story. During his telling he must explain how he ended up in your tale, and what happened after that. Often the tales of the two characters will separate again after such a meeting.

If any players have drawn fewer action cards than others you have to pass the telling to one of them.

### Endgame

The last narrator must always end his tale describing how all the characters are swallowed by the whale. After a moment's silence it is time for epilogues. The player sitting to the left of the last narrator draws the Epilogue Card and reads it aloud:

*«As soon as [character name] had finished his tale the belly of the whale began to shake and rumble, and amongst wreckage and seawater the prisoners of the whale were vomited out in the ocean. As if by a miracle they were close by land, and with their last strength they managed to reach the unknown shore.»*

Then every player tell a short epilogue for the character of the player on his left side. Always involve the character's motivation. Begin with the player who read the epilogue card. If it seems fitting you can choose to involve one extra character (but never more than one). In the epilogues you can end motivations and even kill characters.

#### Example:

*Narrator 1 (tells the epilogue of Fernando, and chooses to involve Chesterfield): «On that beach Fernando finally got to finish his duel with Chesterfield. The death of his enemy did not, however, give him the peace of mind he had hoped for. For some years he drifted without any purpose until he died of a fever deep within the primeval forests of the New World.»*

*Narrator 2 (tells the epilogue of Chesterfield, who was killed by narrator 1, and chooses to involve Emin Rais): «In London Jane waited in vain for her lover. On her wedding day*

*people said they had never seen a sadder bride, but she had a good, long life and a big family. Six months after the wedding she was visited by eyepatch-wearing Turk dressed in black, who gave her Chesterfields ring. For the rest of her life she always carried it with her.*

*Narrator 3 (tells the epilogue of Emin Rais): «After having paid his dues to Chesterfield in this way, Emin Rais left for the West Indies to save his love from the gallows. For years thereafter tales were told of the pirate couple making the oceans unsafe, but everything has an end, and one cold spring day they were hanged side by side in London.»*

Lots of thanks and apologies to Jonah, Carlo Collodi, Umberto Eco, Alexandre Dumas, Patrick Cothias, André Juillard and everyone else from whom I have stolen, and an especially grand thank you to Alain Ayroles and Jean-Luc Masbou for the fantastic comic *De Cape et de Crocs*.





**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

## *Peter Løvensøn*

☛ Danish privateer

☛ Young and redhaired

1

2

3

4

## *Emin Rais*

☛ Turkish pirate

☛ Muslim

1

2

3

4



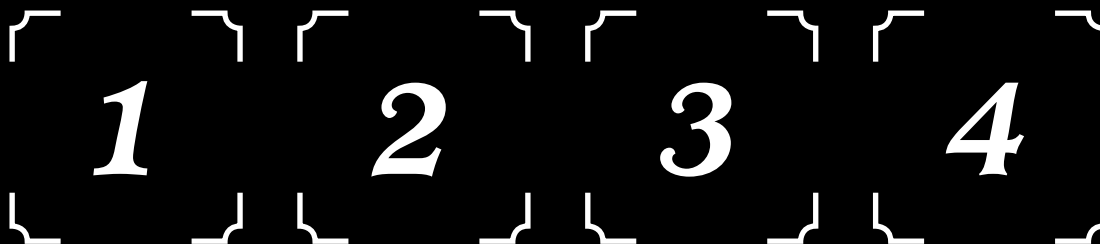
**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

## *Don Alvaro Rodriguez de Vaca*

♣ Spanish hidalgo (knight)

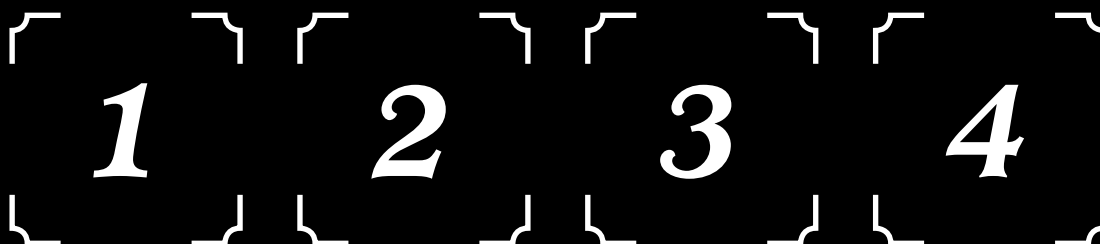
♣ Pious Catholic



## *Emile Chevalier de Bois Marcel*

♣ French knight

♣ Cartesian, rationalist





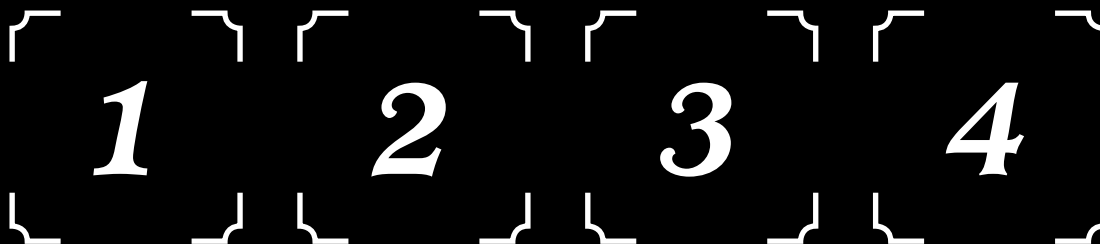
**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

## *Fernando*

♣ Portuguese pirate

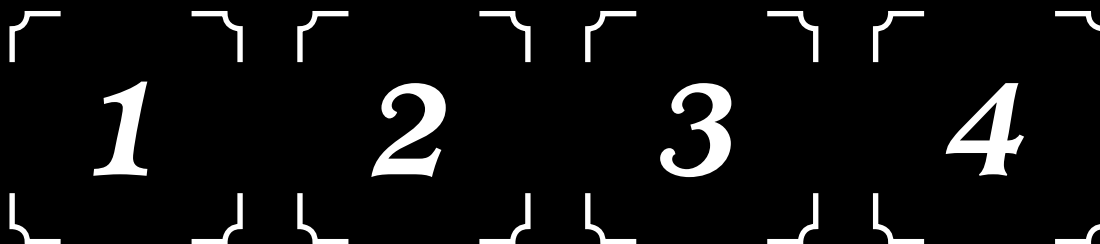
♣ One-eyed, dressed in black, charming



## *Esmeralda*

♣ Gipsy girl

♣ Actress



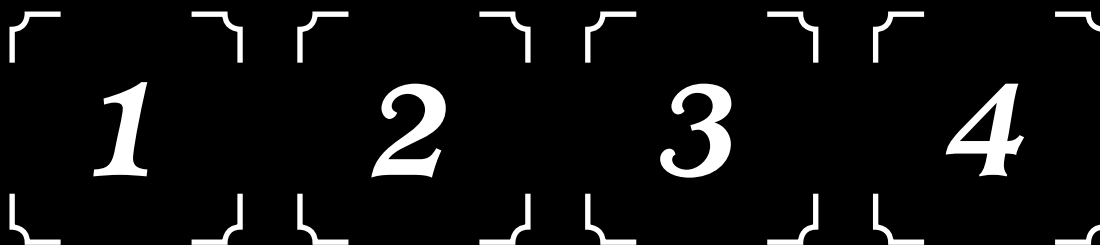
**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

## *Lady Agnes Winter*

🕒 English noblewoman

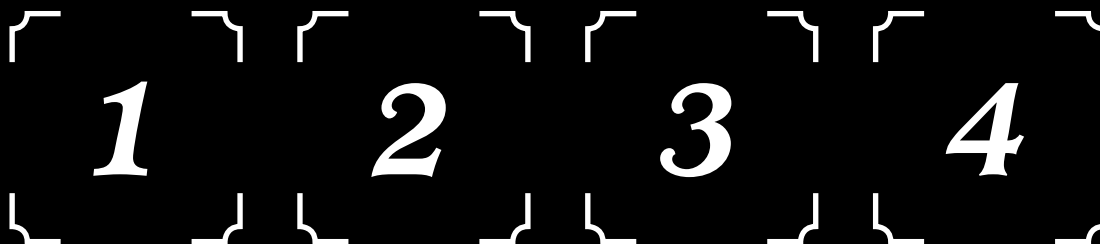
🕒 Skilled murderer



## *Adele «Albert» von Schuppler*

🕒 Austrian noblewoman

🕒 Disguised as a man



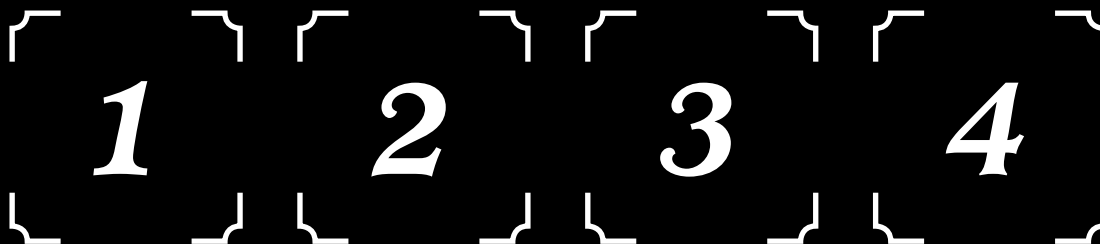
**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Character**

## *Augusto di Scapelli*

☛ Roman Inquisitor

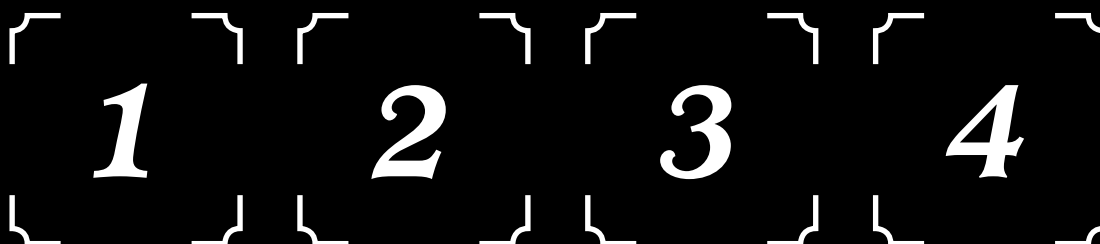
☛ Questioning his faith



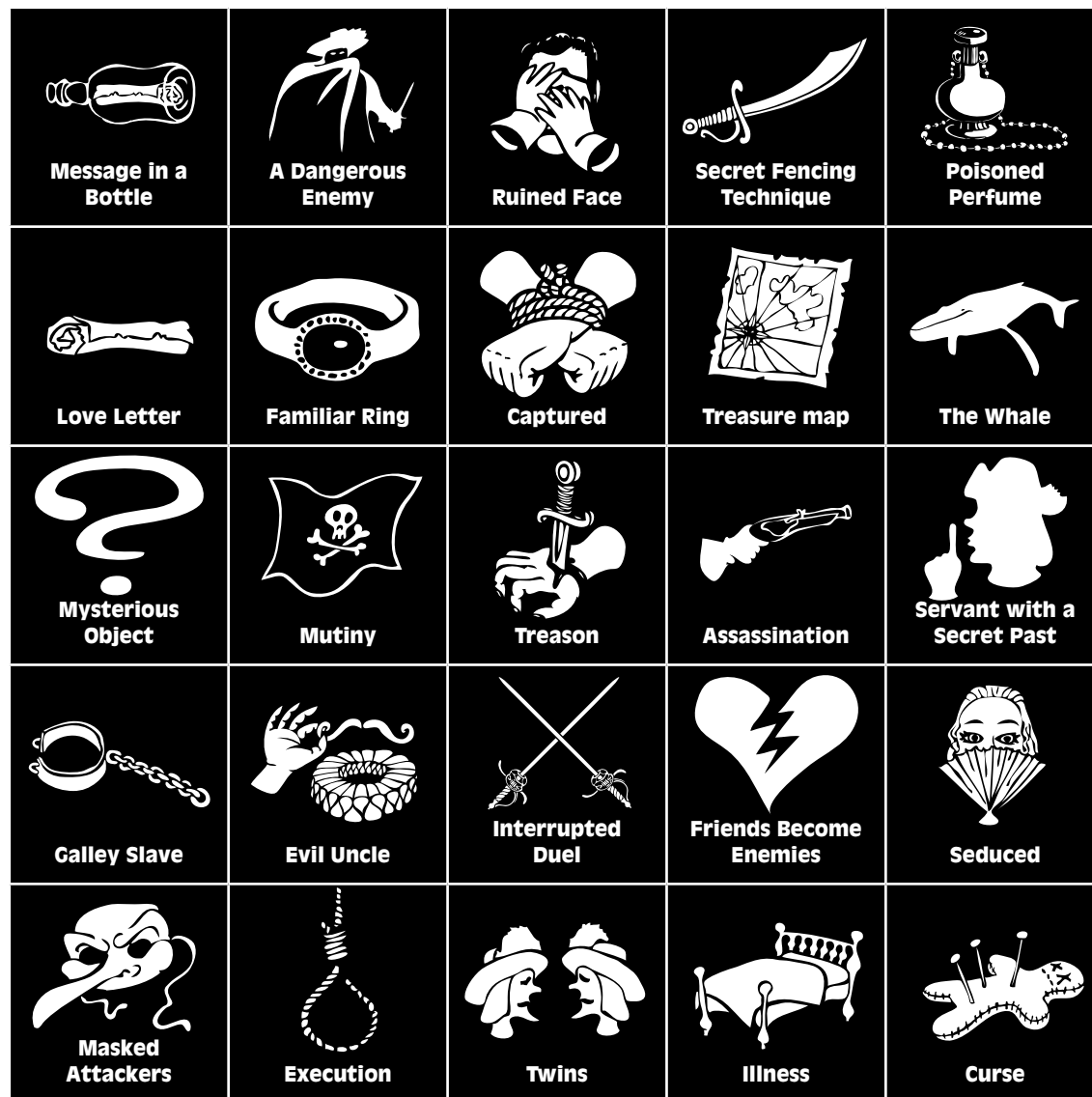
## *Hieronymus von Pellendorf*

☛ Bavarian scientist

☛ Weird



<div>In The Belly of the Whale</div> <div>Action Card</div>	<div>In The Belly of the Whale</div> <div>Action Card</div>	<div>In The Belly of the Whale</div> <div>Action Card</div>	<div>In The Belly of the Whale</div> <div>Action Card</div>	<div>In The Belly of the Whale</div> <div>Action Card</div>
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**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**



### Threatened honor

In some way your honor is at stake, and for you honor is more important than life itself. Did you fail when it mattered the most, or is it your family honor that must be reinstated? During your first narration you must describe what happened. You will sooner sail to Hades than show yourself to be without honor.

### Hatred

You hate something or someone. It may be a rival, or someone who betrayed you, or maybe even the whale itself – did it perhaps eat a chunk of your leg a long time before it swallowed the rest of you? The reason for your hatred will be revealed during your first narration.

### Forbidden love

You love a person from whom you are separated, and you will do anything to break the bonds that keep you apart. Is he/she engaged or even married to another? Guarded by strict relatives? Or perhaps you simply lack the wealth to be worth marrying?

### Captured love

Your only goal is to win back your love, who have been taken from you. Is he or she captured for ransom? Or, even worse, waiting to be executed? Perhaps brought unwillingly to the New World? Describe the one who robbed your love and how it happened during your first narration.

### Penance

You have done something terrible and are plagued by remorse. More strongly than anything else you wish to make penance for your sins. What have you done and how do you seek to clear your conscience? Perhaps you must aid someone you have once wronged? Or their children, if they themselves are dead?

### Prove innocence

You have caught the blame for a crime you did not commit, and your goal is to free yourself from suspicion. Probably the gallows await you at home. What crime is it that you have not committed? Describe what happened during your first narration.



**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Motivation**

**In the Belly of the Whale**  
**Epilogue**

## Quest

You are on a quest for some special object. What object is this, and why is it so important to you? Will it help you prove anything? Is it a holy relic? Is it the only thing left of your family's greatness?

## Discovery

You are on the track to discover something great, something that will awe the world! Your enthusiasm makes it impossible for you to rest. During your first narration you will tell how you caught scent of this discovery, and what it is you're really looking for.

## Unknown Background

You don't know where you came from. You might be an orphan, searching for your ancestry, or perhaps you were recently washed up on the shore without any memories of your former life. Finding out who you really are is your greatest need.

## Prove theory

You have a theory that you want to prove. You may have made a bet, or perhaps your scientific discoveries will be for the good of mankind?

*«As soon as [character name] had finished his tale the belly of the whale began to shake and rumble, and amongst wreckage and seawater the prisoners of the whale were vomited out in the ocean. As if by a miracle they were close by land, and with their last strength they managed to reach the unknown shore.»*

(Each player tells a short epilogue for the character of the player on his left side.)

## Wager

You have made some outrageous claim and now you are forced to actually prove it. What is it that you have to do, and who is making you do it? What do you gain by succeeding and what do you risk by losing?





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# The Trouble with Demons

a role-playing game written and illustrated by  
**Margrete Somerville**

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**written:** 2007  
**form:** role-playing game  
**players:** 3-5, 1 game master  
**duration:** 2-5 hours  
**need to play:** rules  
character sheets (included)

## Instructions

THESE instructions should be read by the GM. The players should also make themselves familiar with them, whether they read them themselves or are instructed by the GM.

### Scenario background

The city's magical underground had some trouble some years back with an evil cult called the Cult of Gavrian. The whole thing ended in a magical battle where many good wizards sacrificed their lives, but the cult was beaten and destroyed forever. Now the wizards are led by Quanthalas the Mighty, who in his kindness has taken it upon him to mentor Hans, the orphaned son of two of the wizard heroes. Everyone looks up to Quanthalas, and trusts his judgement in all matters.

Too bad for young Hans, then, that he's just found out that Quanthalas the Mighty is a member of the Cult of Gavrian, and is planning to usurp world power with brutal force! To make things worse, Hans finds himself tied up in an unknown basement with only four imps to help him. And he can't quite control his imps, either.

It should be mentioned that one of the seven magical seals that keep the demons out of our world is rumored to be in this very city. This seal must be protected at all costs!

## Rules and setting

The scenario takes place in a world much like our own, with the exception that demons, wizards and other magical creatures actually exist.

### Demons

...come in many shapes and forms, from the lowest imp to the mightiest demon lord. The one thing they have in common is that they love chaos and devilry.

So why don't they just do whatever they like? That's because all demons share the same disadvantage: They can't stay in our world unless summoned by someone – most often a wizard. Furthermore they have to obey whoever summoned them (within certain limits), and are bound by old agreements not to do anything on their own initiative in our world. Naturally they're not very happy about this, and will use every opportunity to get out of these deals.

You might also wonder why all the normal mortals don't panic thinking of demons walking the city streets. The simple explanation is that demons are invisible to us. Only those with magical ability can see them; others can, however, see the effects of what they do.

### Wizards

...aren't the classic fireball-wielding type. In fact, they have very little magical power except the ability to see, summon and to a certain extent control demons. How many demons, what type they are,

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**Margrete Somerville** was an active and creative force in Norwegian gaming. She participated in LARPs, board games, role-playing design and organized gaming. Her yearly games at Arcon were often light-hearted and funny, such as *Smurf Wars*, *Battle Ludo* and the *Toy Animal Tournaments*. She was a member of *Spillskaperlaget* (the game designers' association). Margrete passed away due to heart failure on June 1. 2007, at the age of 27.

### The Obedience Scale

On each imp's character sheet there is an Obedience Scale. At the beginning of the game place a token on the field named «Normal». Move the marker up or down the scale as the Wizards gains or loses control over his demons.

- **Straitjacket:** Full control. The imp must obey the command to its full extent, with the best intentions, even if called by its nickname. However, it will go down one notch on the scale afterwards.
- **Controlled:** Any misinterpretations will be over very little things.
- **Obedient:** Pretty good control. The imp can misinterpret commands, but not badly.
- **Normal:** This is the starting position. Imps will tend to follow orders.
- **Disobedient:** The wizard starts losing control. The imp can misinterpret its commands some.
- **Oops:** The imp can interpret commands in the worst possible way.
- **Chaos:** All control is gone! The imp can do whatever it wants, even on its own initiative. But as soon as it performs any mischief, it goes up one notch on the Obedience Scale.

and how well they are controlled all say something about how mighty a wizard is.

If you only controlimps, for example, that's not much to brag about – they're the lowest of the low and have very few (and weak) powers. If you control a demon lord, on the other hand, you're the mightiest of the mighty, but only two wizards have been known to do this through the ages.

It is said that if you're really powerful you can make a deal with a demon, so it will voluntarily submit to you in return for additional powers, but these are only rumors – and such a thing would be illegal anyway.

### Controlling a demon

So how do wizards control these demons? The easiest demons to control areimps, and most wizards can do that with no problems, but let's see what happens when you don't yet have 100 per cent control of yourimps.

First of all, there are two ways to issue a command to an imp. One is to address the imp by its nickname; the other is to use its true name. This will affect whether they follow the command, how they do so, and their Obedience Scale (see sidebar).

**Nickname:** The imp has to do what it's told, but can choose to misinterpret the command – so it's very important for the wizard to be precise. If the imp chooses misinterpretation, the wizard will gain more control over it – it goes up one notch on the Obedience Scale.

**True name:** Here the imp has to do exactly what the wizard commands, with the best intentions. Why not use the true name at all times? Because it means the wizard loses some control over the imp – it goes down one notch on the Obedience Scale.

### Other rules

There are no rules for combat and suchlike. If a situation arises where such rules are needed, the GM decides how well an action succeeds.



## The scenario

### General information for the GM

Make sure to familiarize yourself with the information on all the players' sheets before the game! Hans, the wizard's apprentice, doesn't really know what the imps can or can't do. The information on the imps' character sheets is correct.

The scenario is divided into scenes, but some of these will probably be skipped. I've mostly only described those events that are part of the main plot. I've tried to add some other possible events as well, but since it's impossible to predict what kind of mess the imps end up making (such as for example burning down the Grand Café), be prepared to improvise. If you want, you can put in minor challenges – for example, let the «hero» Hans get hungry along the way. He starts out with only his imps and his clothes, after all.

The Amulet of Perdian, which the characters will find at some point, has no effect if worn by a human. For a demon, however, it gives some extra abilities.

1. It gains three times the strength of a normal human
2. It can double its size at will
3. It can't be damaged
4. It's harder to control, and will never end up on *Controlled* or higher on the Obedience Scale

The locations in this scenario are described in a generic fashion – use your imagination and local color to flesh out the descriptions. (In the Norwegian version, locations from Oslo are used; it's a good idea to use locations from your own city or town). The characters can get hold of equipment in the city if they manage to steal it, con the owners, or find money to pay for it.

## The scenes

### Imprisoned in the house

The scenario starts with Hans tied up and gagged, lying in the corner of a basement. The only way he can command the imps is by making gestures until they remove his gag.

There's not much to look at – just dust and mould on the walls. On one wall there's a light switch that controls the one tiny bulb hanging from the roof. Other than that there's only a long staircase that presumably ends in a door. If someone investigates, they'll find the door is locked, but through the keyhole they can see a little table with a key on it. The key fits the door.

The house is that of Zakander the Sly, Quanthalas' co-conspirator. The house is situated in the wealthy part of town; there's nobody home, and the house doesn't hold much of interest. On the fridge door is a little yellow post-it note that says «Grand Café, Friday, one o'clock». Today is Friday – and now it's twelve o'clock!

Once the characters go outside they'll hear a poof! and a small imp will appear. It looks most of all like a little, green ball of hair. It tells the characters they can't leave the house, and that it will use force to stop them if necessary. However, the only things it can actually do is make somebody's nose grow long (the effect lasts for one minute), and scream loudly so its master can hear it. So if the characters leave they'll hear the imp screaming a warning to Zakander.

### To the cafe

The only sensible way to get to the Grand Café in one hour when you're 14 years old and have no transport is by tube. (Feel free to drop a hint to our little hero if his player can't figure that out). When

our hero arrives at the station he'll understand that he has no ticket, nor any money to buy one. If he chooses to sneak in, or get a ticket by some means, is up to the player. However, there will be a ticket control along the way, and if Hans doesn't have a ticket, he'll probably be thrown off – and not make it to the café on time.

### Grand Cafe

This is actually more of a restaurant than a café, and there are hotel rooms on the floors above it. What the characters see here depends on whether they make it here on time.

If they don't there's not much to look at, but Hans will notice a magazine in the stand next door. It's called «National Treasures», and the front story is about some old jewelry from Prague that's currently on exhibition at the Museum of Arts. There's also a picture of an amulet. One of the imps, Snoble, will recognize this as the Amulet of Perdian.

If they get there on time, Hans will see someone he recognizes in the restaurant: Wilbert Snusle, a sleazy werewolf known to everyone in the magical underground. He's a criminal, willing to do anything for money, but his specialty is theft on demand – stealing things for other people.

Wilbert is on the phone when the characters come in. He's looking nervously around the café. When he sees Hans he gets up quickly, accidentally spilling his coffee on some papers on the table. He grabs the papers and heads for the stairs leading up to the hotel rooms.

If the characters manage to catch him, he'll tell them nothing, even under threats (werewolves are immune to illusions). If they get hold of his cell phone, they'll see that the last person to call Wilbert was Zakander. The papers appear to have something to do with the alarm system at the Museum of Arts,

but the coffee stains make it impossible to find out more.

Wilbert leaves a magazine at his table – it's the current issue of «National Treasures», as described above.

### The museum of arts

#### Daytime

There's no admission cost, and the museum is open until five o'clock.

On the first floor there's an exhibition of national treasures from Prague. In one of the main display cases the Amulet of Perdian is lying on a small blue velvet pillow. There are ropes around the display case, and guards stand ready to stop visitors from getting too close. The case is of bullet-proof glass, and if it is touched, an alarm will go off.

There's a little plaque on the display case with the following text:

The Amulet of Perdian, ca. 1300-1400, is rumored to have belonged to Perdian the Cruel, accused of witchcraft. He died when his subjects rebelled against his brutality and burned him at the stake. According to legend, the flames burned so fiercely that all that remained after the fire was the amulet, which lay unharmed in the ashes.

#### Nighttime

All the lights are off, and there isn't much to see from outside. There's a window about 2 meters above the street, but trying to climb in will trigger the alarm, and police will arrive in fifteen minutes. The watchman is sleeping – he's been drugged by Wilbert.

If the characters get up on the roof, they'll find an open hatch with a rope hanging down. If they climb down, the alarm won't go off, since Wilbert has

disconnected it.

They'll get to the display case just in time to see Wilbert looking triumphantly at the amulet in his hand. When he notices the characters he'll run quickly down the stairs, setting off the alarm. He'll throw himself out the window, jump into a car and drive away.

It is, of course, possible for the characters to stop him and take the amulet. If they don't, Wilbert will hand it over to Quanthalas.

### Quanthalas' house

If the characters decide to go here, they'll only find scorched ruins. The neighbors will be able to tell them that the owner unfortunately died in the fire. They will be glad that Hans has survived, though, and will want to help him as much as they can.

Mrs. Jones, an elderly lady from the house next door, can tell them that a suspicious-looking man (who matches Zakander's description) was skulking around the area just before the fire. He lost a letter, but when she called after him he ran away. Mrs. Jones will hand over the letter with a little persuasion. It says:

*«Dear Zakander,  
Please take care of these little details before the grand plan commences. Get Wilbert to fetch the amulet for us – and make sure he does so before Saturday night; we must have it for the Grand Ritual! The old lake could be a fitting location, don't you think?*

*Yours,  
Quanthalas*

*Oh, and: If Hans turns out to be a problem, just take care of him, would you? And make sure to get rid of any evidence in the house!»*

### The police station

If Hans gets arrested at any point, he will be

brought here. The police will call Quanthalas, but there will be no answer. A little research shows that Quanthalas' house has burned down, and the police will offer Hans a bed at the station until they find another solution. They can't just let him go, and will try to stop him if he attempts to escape.

### Saturday, before dawn

After the burglary at the Museum of Arts a little messenger imp will come to Hans, and talk to him in a spiteful voice, reminiscent of that of Quanthalas. What it says depends on whether the characters have the amulet.

### If they have the amulet

*«So you think you can stop me, you little worm!  
You're not even worth the clothes you're wearing!  
Know that I, Quanthalas the Mighty, won't let anything stop me. I don't need the amulet for the ritual! Just give up right now! If I see you again, you'll face a fate worse than death!»*

The imp stops for a second and adds in a more normal voice:

*«So it's the old lake at midnight, then, Zakander! I hope you're ready for your part of the ritual... hahaha!»*

And finally, in a louder voice:

*«What? Are you still there, imp? Run off and deliver the message! Every word of it!»*

After this, the imp disappears with a poof.

### If they don't have the amulet

*«You're probably crying now, you useless fool. If you stay out of my sight until I've taken over the world I'll show you mercy and let you become my slave. Think about the offer – it won't last long!»*

The imp stops for a second and adds in a more normal voice:

*«So it's the old lake at midnight, then, Zakander! I*

*hope you're ready for your part of the ritual... habaha!»*  
And finally, in a louder voice:

*«What? Are you still there, imp? Run off and  
deliver the message! Every word of it!»*  
After this, the imp disappears with a poof.

## Saturday

There's not much exciting happening today, other than some news in the paper.

- ☞ The Amulet of Perdian has been stolen from the museum (or, if the characters stopped the burglary, attempted stolen).
- ☞ There's also a little notice about a house burning down in the wealthy part of town (Quanthalas' house).
- ☞ Finally, there's an ad for Clara, a medium who can help with any and all problems. The characters will need a phone to call her. If they do, she'll say that there's a dark cloud hanging over Hans's life, and she can help him if he is of pure heart and wants only what's good. She can also see a vision of him getting off the tube at the old lake, and disappearing into a great darkness.
- ☞ If Hans has been arrested and escaped, there may be something about that in the paper as well.

During the day the characters will pass a woman whose purse is snatched by a thief. If they help her, she will thank Hans and give him 20 dollars as a reward.

## The old lake at midnight

The lake area is large, and Hans won't be able to find the two wizards until just after midnight. What

he sees is the following:

There's a circle of torches that have been stuck in the ground, and in the middle is a pentagram of red sand. At the centre of the sigil is Zakander, bound and gagged. Quanthalas is outside the circle of torches chanting. Hans doesn't know enough wizardry to understand what's being said, but before he can do much a demon lord appears in the circle. It's two meters tall, and has the body of a spider with a human torso. It's black with four glowing, red eyes, distorted features and huge fangs. The imp Snoble will recognize the demon as Frashkt.

Hans can act at any time, and what happens next depends very much on his actions. Quanthalas doesn't have any of his demons present, but might make do with Tyrannus.

Frashkt lets out a demonic scream that pierces the air and makes the temperature drop at least 10 degrees.

«What do you want, you maggot? How dare you disturb me – and with such a pitiful sacrifice?»

He kicks Zarkander, who's pale and deathly afraid.

Quanthalas answers: «I want you to serve me of your own free will!» Frashkt just laughs.

If Quanthalas has the amulet, he'll hold it out and Frashkt soon stops laughing. They'll start negotiating a deal. If Hans doesn't interrupt the proceedings, the world will be lost. With Frashkt on his side, Quanthalas will kill all the wizards of the city, starting with Zakander. Thereafter he will rule the world, and Hans will be his slave forever.

If Hans has the amulet, however, things get much more dramatic.

Quanthalas says: «Serve me, and you shall have the Amulet of Perdian. My apprentice has kindly brought it for me». He points at Hans, and Frashkt turns to stare at him. Then Frashkt shouts: «Snoble,

break the circle for me!» Unless Snoble's Obedience Scale is at Controlled or Straitjacket, he'll run over and break the pentagram by kicking away some sand.

Quanthalas will scream out in despair and say: «What have you done, you useless beast!» Farshkt, on the other hand, will laugh roaringly and take the amulet. With an evil smile he says: «Since I'm here, I might as well have some fun.» With one claw, he cuts Quanthalas in two – which doesn't kill him instantly. Frashkt expands his wings and flies towards the city.

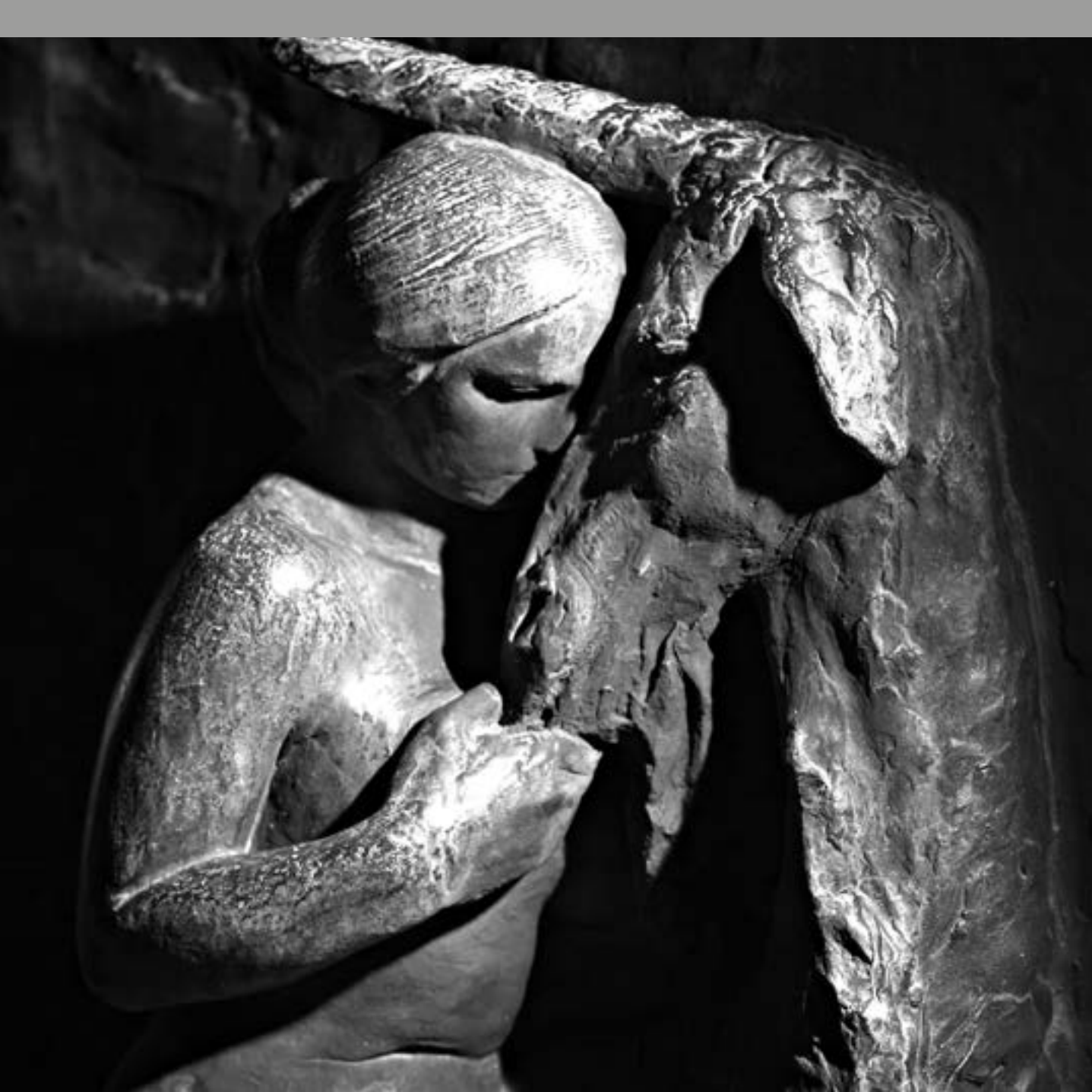
Quanthalas turns towards Hans and gives him a sacrificial dagger. With his last breath he gasps: «Here! The only thing that can stop him now is a human sacrifice! Zakander is lying there – DO IT NOW!» After this, he dies.

It's all up to Hans now.

- ☞ If he does nothing, Frashkt will destroy the city, and along the way destroy the seal that keeps the demons out of our world. They will crawl in and do as they please.
- ☞ If he does as Quanthalas says, Frashkt will land in the circle and laugh: «You think you can stop me now I have the amulet? Well, you certainly have the potential for chaos! This must be rewarded.» He murmurs some words in an evil-sounding language. Hans feels a strong, sharp pain, and everything goes black. When he wakes up again, it's in the shape of an imp.
- ☞ If he releases Zakander, Zakander will say: «We must hurry! The other wizards must be warned! We must defend the seal!» If Hans lets him help, Zakander will get one of his demons to teleport them to the seal – hidden underground, in catacombs below the city. There Zakander, with Hans' help, will perform a ritual to send Frashkt

back where he belongs.

The ritual requires an imp to voluntarily touch the seal and say «Frashkt, return whence you came!» Zakander has no imps, so it must be one of the player characters. If this doesn't happen, Frashkt will soon arrive to crush the seal – and the world as we know it ends. If it does, however, a piercing demonic scream will be heard, followed by a deathly quiet. Frashkt is gone – but the amulet remains, somewhere out there.





## Hans Xavier Pentadrion III



<b>Height:</b>	156 centimeters
<b>Hair:</b>	Brown
<b>Clothes:</b>	Blue and purple
<b>Age:</b>	14 years
<b>Occupation:</b>	Wizard's apprentice
<b>Master:</b>	Quanthalas the Mighty

**Personality:** You are Hans Xavier Pentadrion III, a greatly talented wizard from a long line of great wizards. Unfortunately you're the only one left, which makes it even more important to uphold the family honor. A true wizard always fights on the side of good, hates injustice and saves damsels in distress... or wait, perhaps that's knights? Sadly, your will is good but your competence doubtful. However, that doesn't stop you from trying to do what's right.

**History:** Your parents died some years ago defending the city against the evil Cult of Gavrian, and since then, you've been raised by Quanthalas the Mighty, a deeply respected wizard.

But lately you've started to doubt whether you've actually been getting the best education you could wish for. It seems like you still can't control your imps all that well, when most students your age have already

started on more advanced demons – and you're not quite what your imps can actually do, either; you just have a vague idea. Just a few weeks ago, though, you got a new imp from your master. Its name is Tyrannus, and it seems to be a much better one than the three you've summoned yourself.

Then it happened...

You'd been trying out a lesser formula that kept going wrong, and thought you'd seek Quanthalas' advice, so you went to his office. He was speaking to someone, and even if you didn't mean to, you ended up eavesdropping on the conversation. And what horrors you heard!

Apparently Quanthalas the Mighty is actually a member of the evil Cult of Gavrian – in fact, he's the one who killed your parents. Even worse, he and his co-conspirator are plotting to usurp the power of the city's magicians, and eventually to rule the world.

That's all you heard before they discovered you. You were attacked by a demon that picked you up and carried you away. Now you're in a dusty basement somewhere, bound and gagged, and all you know is that you have to stop them before it's too late. You can't expect any help from the other wizards – they'd never believe you.

If you only had more control over your imps! But no matter – you'll have to make do with what you've got, and if things might not turn out perfect along the way, it's still better than a razed city and a ruined world.

**Demons:** You have four imps under your command. Their abilities – at least, those you know of – are listed below.

- 👹 **Aburi** (true name **Abusiamineser**) can open things
- 👹 **Snoble** (true name **Snaoblariant**) can fly
- 👹 **Snitz** (true name **Snitzwavisjk**) can teleport and create illusions
- 👹 **Tyrannus** (true name **Gavnizlak**) can start fires

*Hans Xavier  
Pentadrion III*







## Abauri

<b>Height:</b>	12 centimeters
<b>Color:</b>	Putrid green
<b>Eyes:</b>	Fluorescent yellow
<b>Goals:</b>	Destroying the world, getting your back straightened, and make as much trouble as possible for Hans Xavier Pentadriion III.
<b>Favorite sin:</b>	Sloth
<b>True name:</b>	Abusiamineser

**Personality:** You're so tired, tired of it all. The world's injustice weighs you down, and you'd wish that everyone in the world felt as miserable as you. There's hardly any point in doing anything, so you might as well do nothing. There's nothing worth taking the time to do properly. Except maybe making life miserable for that disgusting wizard's apprentice that's forcing you to work all the time.

**History:** Once, thousands of years ago, you were a straight-backed imp who loved making trouble for common mortals. Ah, those were the days! But repeatedly having to work for wizards has worn you down, and the little zest for life you had has disappeared. After a long time in slavery you decided that enough is enough, never again. But slaving for others is the burden of the imp, that's just the way of the world, so you're going for the only solution there is – the end of the world. You just wish ending the world wasn't so much work... and speaking of wishes, you'd love to get your back straightened again. 12 centimeters is low enough as it is, and you don't want to spend eternity as a hunchback as well.

- ☞ **You can untie any knot with a touch of your staff (teaspoon, that is.)**
- ☞ **You can turn wine to water.**
- ☞ **Your blood is made of acid.**
- ☞ **You can make people itch horribly.**

## The Obedience Scale

<b>Straitjacket</b>	Full control. The imp must obey the command to its full extent, with the best intentions, even if called by its nickname. However, it will go down one notch on the scale afterwards.
<b>Controlled</b>	Any misinterpretations will be over very little things.
<b>Obedient</b>	Pretty good control. The imp can misinterpret commands, but not badly.
<b>Normal</b>	This is the starting position. Imps will tend to follow orders.
<b>Disobedient</b>	The wizard starts losing control. The imp can misinterpret its commands some.
<b>Oops</b>	The imp can interpret commands in the worst possible way.
<b>Chaos</b>	All control is gone! The imp can do whatever it wants, even on its own initiative. But as soon as it performs any mischief, it goes up one notch on the Obedience Scale.

# Abauri



# Snoble



**Height:** 20 centimeters

**Color:** Reddish brown

**Eyes:** Black

**Goals:** Eat until you're stuffed.  
Find the Amulet of Perdian.

**Favorite sin:** Gluttony

**True name:** Snaoblariant

**Personality:** A little shy, but full of mischief. You're not one to brag about all the bad things you've done, and you aren't a smooth talker. If you get over-eager or nervous you sometimes stutter. If you're stressed or sad, you like to have a snack... perhaps a bag of nails or a little stick; there's always something around worth eating.


**History:** Once you were an important and mighty demon. At least, you were the guardian of a powerful magical artifact called the Amulet of Perdian. But at a poker game with the boys you were persuaded to stake the amulet – and you lost it to an imp named Grax. Grax turned out to be a wizard in disguise, so the owner of the amulet, the demon lord Frashkt, wasn't too happy, to put it mildly. As punishment you were demoted to imp status, the lowest of all the demon types, and cursed with eternal hunger.

Your only hope is to reclaim the amulet and pray that Frashkt will have mercy on you... or to create so much chaos that someone sees your potential and promotes you to proper demon status again.

 **You can scale any surface.**

 **You can slow your fall by flapping your wings, but you can't actually fly – although you won't admit that.**

 **You can eat anything that isn't meat, but not too much at a time.**

 **You have a tiny bottle that can contain any liquid you want whenever you open it (for example wine, water, gasoline etc.)**

## The Obedience Scale

**Straitjacket**

Full control. The imp must obey the command to its full extent, with the best intentions, even if called by its nickname. However, it will go down one notch on the scale afterwards.

**Controlled**

**Obedient**

Pretty good control. The imp can misinterpret commands, but not badly. Any misinterpretation is over very little the

**Normal**

This is the starting position. Imps will tend to follow orders.

**Disobedient**

The wizard starts losing control. The imp can misinterpret its commands some.

**Oops**

The imp can interpret commands in the worst possible way.

**Chaos**

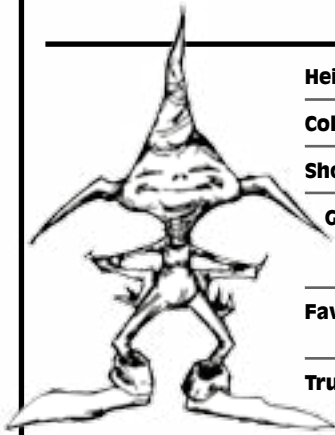
All control is gone! The imp can do whatever it wants, even on its own initiative. But as soon as it performs any mischief, it goes up one notch on the Obedience Scale.

## *Snoble*

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## Snitz



<b>Height:</b>	18 centimeters
<b>Color:</b>	Blue gray
<b>Shoes:</b>	Brown
<b>Goal:</b>	To cause as much mischief as possible in the shortest possible time.
<b>Favorite sin:</b>	All of them, preferably at the same time.
<b>True name:</b>	Snitzwavisjk

**Personality:** You're playful and bouncy, and there's nothing you love more than a practical joke – preferably one that goes a bit too far. You love things that go wrong, and people getting their lives ruined.

**History:** You're a fairly young imp, only three years old. In fact, Hans Xavier Pentadrion III is your first master. There's still a lot to learn about misinterpreting your master's commands, and you're an eager student of the art.

You've discovered that being an imp is a marvellous thing – the only disadvantage is that you can't cause as much mayhem as you should, since the wizards tend to keep you on a tight leash. However, this one doesn't seem as experienced as they're usually supposed to be.

 **If you touch someone, you can make them hear and smell things that aren't there.**

 **You can teleport up to 2 meters To a spot you can see.**

 **You can mimic voices once you've heard them.**

## The Obedience Scale

### Straitjacket

Full control. The imp must obey the command to its full extent, with the best intentions, even if called by its nickname. However, it will go down one notch on the scale afterwards.

### Controlled

Any misinterpretations will be over very little things.

### Obedient

Pretty good control. The imp can misinterpret commands, but not badly.

### Normal

This is the starting position. Imps will tend to follow orders.

### Disobedient

The wizard starts losing control. The imp can misinterpret its commands some.

### Oops

The imp can interpret commands in the worst possible way.

### Chaos

All control is gone! The imp can do whatever it wants, even on its own initiative. But as soon as it performs any mischief, it goes up one notch on the Obedience Scale.

# Snitz



## Tyrannus



<b>Height:</b>	25 centimeters
<b>Color:</b>	Bright greenish yellow
<b>Eyes:</b>	Red
<b>Goal:</b>	To stop Hans Xavier Pentadriion III from getting in the way of your lord and master.
<b>Favorite sin:</b>	Pride
<b>True name:</b>	Gavnizlak

**Personality:** You're quite aware of your worth, and that your abilities are better than those of the average imp. You have no problem at all telling others how they should do things – after all, you're the expert here, right? Other than that you've always been willing to do whatever you can to increase your own importance and powers.

**History:** A while back you were among the most wretched of the imps, with completely useless abilities – but you'd rather not talk about that. All your problems were solved when a wizard called Quanthalas the Mighty summoned you. You made a deal that he'd give you better abilities and more power, if you served him of your own free will.

The first task you've been assigned is to spy on his apprentice Hans and make sure he doesn't cross his master and stop him from taking over the world. Sadly, you're bound to Hans just like the other imps – the same imps you despise for working for such a useless fool as Hans Xavier Pentadriion III.

**Note:** If Hans and Quanthalas ever end up in battle, you'll choose sides depending on your Obedience Scale. Normal means you're neutral; obedient or above means you're loyal to Hans; and disobedient or below means you're loyal to Quanthalas.

- 👁️ **You can see things in perfect detail from a very long distance.**
- 🔥 **You can start small fires at will.**
- 👁️ **You can choose to make yourself visible for normal mortals.**

## The Obedience Scale

<b>Straitjacket</b>	Full control. The imp must obey the command to its full extent, with the best intentions, even if called by its nickname. However, it will go down one notch on the scale afterwards.
<b>Controlled</b>	Any misinterpretations will be over very little things.
<b>Obedient</b>	Pretty good control. The imp can misinterpret commands, but not badly.
<b>Normal</b>	This is the starting position. Imps will tend to follow orders.
<b>Disobedient</b>	The wizard starts losing control. The imp can misinterpret its commands some.
<b>Oops</b>	The imp can interpret commands in the worst possible way.
<b>Chaos</b>	All control is gone! The imp can do whatever it wants, even on its own initiative. But as soon as it performs any mischief, it goes up one notch on the Obedience Scale.

## *Tyrannus*







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# Gun Smoke

a story game by Håken Lid

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**written:** 2006  
**genre:** story game  
**players:** 2 or more  
**duration:** 30–60 minutes  
**need to play:** revolvers  
a fistful of dollars  
a deck of cards

## About the game

Gun Smoke is a role-playing game where each player takes the role of one of the protagonists in an exciting story set in the old Wild West. More precisely, in Dodge City, Kansas. Each episode of Gun Smoke is divided into a *prologue*, a *main part* and an *epilogue*. In the prologue the characters are introduced, in the main part the conflicts are established and escalated and in the epilogue one or more of the characters will be dead or chased out of town, and a single player will be declared the winner.

To play Gun Smoke you will need this text, at least two players, a table, one revolver each, and a fistful of silver dollars. A deck of cards will also come in handy. If you don't have enough silver dollars or revolvers you can use substitutes. The dollars and the guns are distributed to each player so that everyone has one gun and five silver dollars on the table in front of them. You also need one extra dollar which is placed at the centre of the table.

### Once upon a time in the West...

In the table on the next page you'll find examples of *names*, *vocations*, *personalities* and *ambitions* for some of the inhabitants of Dodge City. Before the prologue each player should determine each of these four character traits for his or her character. You will make up a new cast of characters each time you play Gun Smoke, but if you've played it before you

could recycle your characters if you like.

In the prologue the cast is presented. Only one player is allowed to speak at any time. That player is called the *narrator*, and will deliver a hard boiled monologue to introduce his or her character to the other players. The narrator should only speak in the first person and in the past tense as shown in the sidebar examples throughout this text. During the prologue you have to reveal some details about your character: your name, your vocation, personality or ambition.

The prologue should not be very long. A few sentences are enough, and you should only focus on your own character. When you are finished speaking, take a dollar from your own stack and give it to the player to the left. That player becomes narrator and will present his or her character in the same way you just did. The prologue ends when everyone has introduced their character and the dollar has travelled full circle around the table.

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**Håken Lid** (b. 1980) did the graphic design on this book and has written several short role-playing games. He is also an occasional larper, sword fighter, illustrator and student.

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### Example of prologue

*«I slowly picked up the cards I had been dealt. Around the table were some of the most cold blooded poker players of the West. But I was going to beat every last one of them, because I was determined to become the richest man in Dodge City. A bead of sweat trickled down my temple as I inspected my cards.»*

### For Queers and Cowards...

Ok, so you don't have any silver dollars, and you don't want to risk your priceless collection of 19th century revolvers to play a silly game. Don't worry! The silver dollars can be substituted by any kind of coins (use more coins for a longer game), and you can use a pointed finger instead of a gun. In fact it's probably better that way. If you're a gutless pacifist you may even choose not to shoot anyone during a shootout. Simply point your finger in the air.

When using your index fingers for guns, here's a way to do it: When the shootout starts, put both hands palms down on the table. When you have decided your target and are ready to shoot you can start tapping impatiently with your fingers. Remember that everyone is supposed to draw and shoot more or less simultaneously. Any player caught trying to cheat by choosing a target after his opponents have drawn, is of course ridiculed and declared a loser in that particular shootout.

### The Character Table

Use this table and a deck of cards to create random characters. Draw cards until every player has one card of each four suits and discard any extra cards. To make character generation quicker and easier you could write down the 52 traits

on the cards with a permanent marker before playing. If you don't have a deck of cards you can use a die or even pick and choose traits. However, random character generation is recommended because it's quicker and gives more surprising and varied characters.

	♣ Name	♦ Vocation	♥ Personality	♠ Ambition
<b>A</b>	Jonas Henderson	Cowboy	Gambler	Getting even
<b>2</b>	Mildred Fuller	Outlaw	Cold Blooded	Finding true love
<b>3</b>	Will Kane	Prostitute	Diseased	Become filthy rich
<b>4</b>	Amy Fowler	The Law	Heart of Gold	Seeing justice done
<b>5</b>	Jim Pierce	Prospector	In love	Screwing, Drinking, Partying
<b>6</b>	Tiny Timmy	Livestock	Inexperienced	Running away from someone
<b>7</b>	Little Bill Daggett	Servant	Old	Finding a lost relative
<b>8</b>	Strawberry Alice	Merchant	Stupid	Become a legend
<b>9</b>	Skinny Dubois	Entertainer	Loud	Making a great discovery
<b>J</b>	Quick Mike	Indian	Insecure	Proving a point
<b>Q</b>	Silky	Labourer	Filthy	Dying with style
<b>K</b>	Angel Eyes	Bounty Hunter	Religious	Helping People

### Boom! Headshot

To decide who will start out as the narrator you will have to perform a *shootout*. This honourable Wild West tradition is the method used throughout the game to settle conflicts. It's also used to settle any rules disputes and any ties not otherwise covered by the rules.

The shootout starts with each player grabbing his or her revolver, deciding who they want to shoot. (*Note: this is only symbolic, you're not actually supposed to kill each other, so to be on the safe side, remove the bullets from the guns before the game. In fact, you don't have to use guns at all if you don't want to – see sidebar*) When you have decided who your victim

will be, you should twitch and stare fiercely at your opponents, just like in the spaghetti westerns. Look into each other's eyes and when you think everyone's ready, you draw and «shoot» simultaneously, yelling «Bang!» You can aim at any player that participates in the shootout, *including yourself*.

### Who wins the shootout?

Any player forgets to draw loses. And of course any player that was shot by someone also loses – with one important exception: If you shoot yourself and someone else also shoots you the bullets *reverse*. You survive and the other player loses (I know it's not realistic. You'll just have to suspend your disbelief). At the end of the shootout you will usually end up with some «dead» and some «surviving» players. If there are several winners in the first shootout, the survivors will have to repeat the process until there's only one man standing. In later shootouts there may be several winners.

## Playing the game

When the main part of the game starts, this should be the situation around the table: Everyone should have revealed something about their characters, you have all learned the rules of the shootout, and you should each have five silver dollars in a stack in front of you. There should also be a single dollar in the middle of the table. This coin is called the *ceiling*, and will be explained later.

The player that started narrating the prologue will continue narrating the main part of the story. When you are narrator you can decide anything you like as to what your character says and does. You can also narrate what other characters and the supporting cast is doing, but other players may supply their own characters' lines of dialogue, if there are any.

The characters may start out as complete strangers, or they may already know each other. One way or the other conflicts will emerge during the main part of the game which will probably end in the deaths of one or more characters. However, there's no reason to rush it. The story should have some time to build up, and the initial dealings between the characters should be mostly peaceful, the hostility building up as the game progresses.

### Challenging

At any time during the narration other players may challenge the narrator by putting a single dollar in the middle of the

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#### Example of shootout

*There are four players: Bill, Ted, Alice and Rita. The guns are drawn, the triggers pulled. Bill shoots Ted, Ted shoots himself, Alice also shoots herself and Rita shoots Ted.*

*Bill and Rita lose because they (very rudely) try to shoot the suicidal Ted. Ted survives because his self inflicted wound is reversed by him being shot by Bill and Rita. Alice on the other hand succeeds in shooting herself. Ted wins the shootout by cleverly ending up as the only survivor.*

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#### Example of narration

*Bill: «I walked up to the filthy stranger and spat in his face. He touched the gob of spit and fell down on his knees begging.»*

*Ted: «Please forgive me Lord, for the sins I'm about to commit.»*

*Bill: «The bastard smiled and head butted me in the groin. The pain surged through my body and I could hardly stand on my feet.»*

**Dodge City**

...was founded in 1872 and was named after a nearby old cavalry fort that was built to protect passing caravans of settlers from the wild Indian tribes. The year of the founding the Santa Fe railway also reached the city and the population soared. Railway workers, traders and bison hunters flocked to the city.

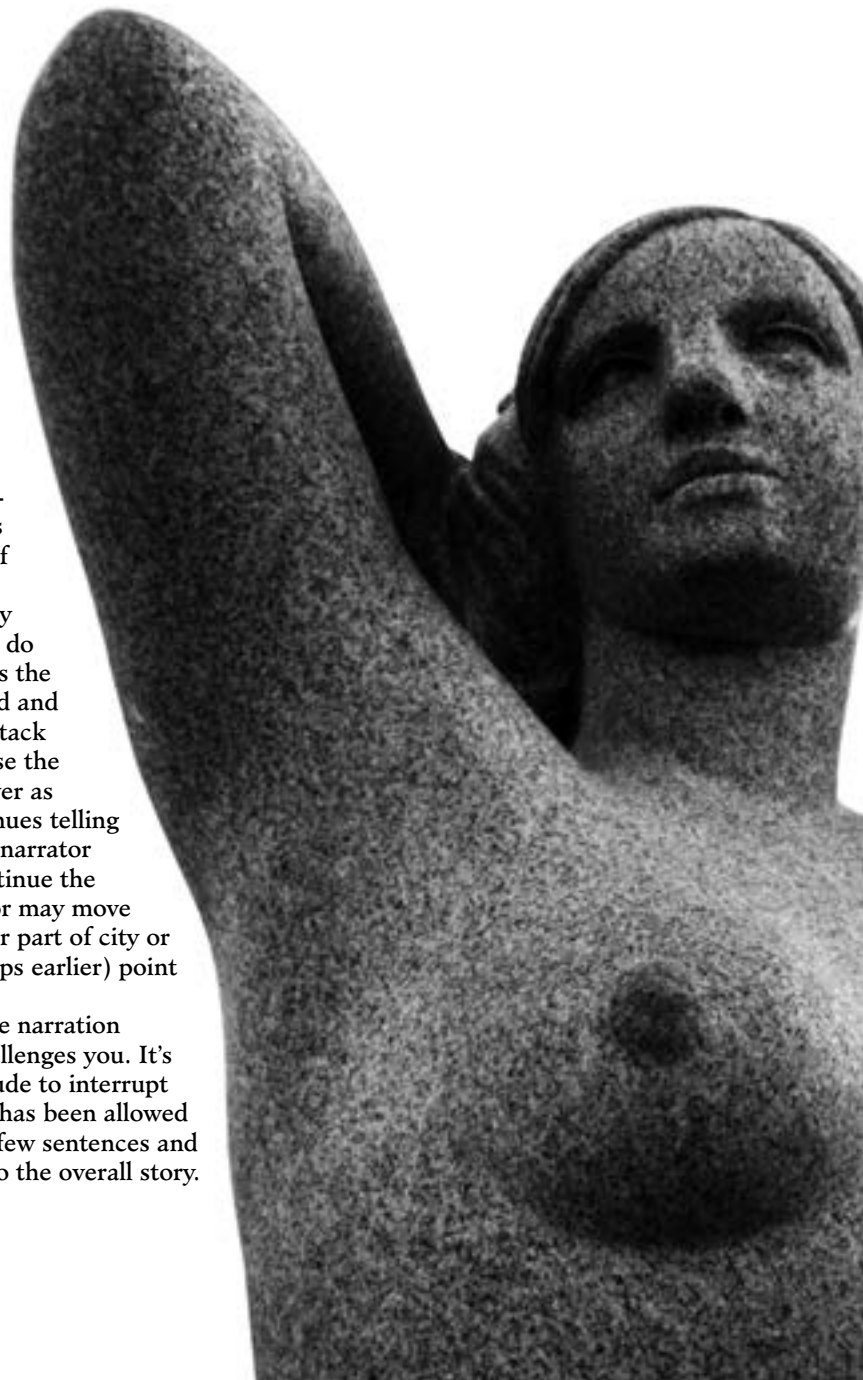
Dodge was central in the near extermination of the once huge herds of bison roaming the great North American plains. By the mid eighties only a few hundred animals were left. By then over a million hides had been shipped out from Dodge City.

As the bison disappeared, herds of cattle took over the prairie. Along with the cattle came cowboys. The wealth of Dodge City also attracted gamblers, saloon girls and criminals to the city, which in the early years still had no law enforcement. The rampant crime made Dodge City infamous across the nation.

table near the ceiling. This means that you want to take over as narrator. You can challenge for any reason at all. Maybe you disagree with the way the story is going. Maybe you have a great idea that you want to put into the story. Or perhaps the current narrator seems to be running out of ideas.

The narrator may chose to forfeit. To do this he simply takes the single dollar offered and puts it in his own stack of coins. In this case the challenger takes over as narrator and continues telling the story. The new narrator may choose to continue the scene in progress or may move the story to another part of city or to a later (or perhaps earlier) point of time.

You will continue narration until some else challenges you. It's considered quite rude to interrupt a narrator until he has been allowed to speak at least a few sentences and added something to the overall story.





## Conflicts and Betting

If the narrator does not forfeit when he's challenged he is accepting the challenge. He has to put at least one dollar from his own stack near the challenge dollar. These dollars are called *the Pot* and are the prize money for whoever wins the challenge.

By accepting the challenge the narrator has started a betting round. This works much like betting in poker. The right to bet passes from player to player clockwise around the table starting with the current narrator. Each player has four options when it's his time to bid:

- ☞ **Calling** – putting as many dollars in the pot as the current highest bid.
- ☞ **Raising** – putting more dollars in the pot than the current highest bid. You may only raise in your opening bid, or when someone else has raised since your last bid.
- ☞ **Folding** – declining to call the bet. In which case you don't put any dollars in the pot, and are no longer part of the challenge.
- ☞ Finally you can go **All In** by betting all the dollars you have left. You can do this even if it's less than the current highest bid. By going all in you are guaranteed to be part of the shootout, but you risk losing the entire game.

The betting ends when everyone around the table has either passed or called.

## Example of betting

*There are four dollars in the ceiling. Alice challenges Bill who accepts the challenge, putting two dollars of his own into the pot. Rita passes, and Ted calls, putting another two dollars in the pot. There are now more dollars in the pot than in the ceiling and betting ends. Alice, Bill and Ted must have a shootout.*

## Gun Smoke

...shares its title and setting with the classic CBS classic radio- and television show Gunsmoke about Marshal Matt Dillon and the law in Dodge City. With 20 seasons from 1955 until '75 it's the longest running drama show in American television history. However this game is not really about that show, or even about the historical Wild West. It's about the Wild West Cliché. The myth of the Old west as portrayed in comic books, television and motion pictures. Growing up in Norway in the eighties my conception of the Old West was mainly formed by the Franco-Belgian comics Lucky Luke by Morris and Goscinny and Blueberry by Charlier and Gieraud. You can use any sources of inspiration you like. Do not feel bound to historical facts, Gun Smoke canon or even common sense.

**Story games and improvisation**

Gun Smoke is a story game. Even though there is a winner and a loser, the real goal of Gun Smoke is to tell an enjoyable and exiting story. This might seem a bit intimidating to some, so here are a few tricks to have in mind to make it easier.

**Don't make gags.** It's ok to make a funny story, but do not use every opportunity to make jokes.

Instead: **Be obvious.** When in doubt, try to lead the story in its most obvious direction. What would be the least surprising thing to happen? Don't be afraid of using clichés.

Still out of ideas? Try to **listen to the other players.** What are the characters' motivations and what do the other players find interesting? Pick up storylines that other narrators have started and elaborate. Introduce stuff that could help or hinder other characters in reaching their goals.

Instead of always making up new stuff; **reincorporate characters and plots** that have been mentioned earlier on by someone else. This is a great way to get a fulfilling story without too many loose ends.

Betting also ends immediately whenever the number of dollars in the pot exceeds the number of dollars in the ceiling.

When betting ends there will be a shootout to decide who wins the money in the pot. Anyone who has put dollars in the pot (and who has not passed on their turn) will participate in the shootout. But before the shootout starts, take a single dollar from the pot and place on top of the ceiling. This way the ceiling will grow in height throughout the game.

The shootout represents a conflict between the characters in the story. Before the shootout starts each remaining participant may in turn narrate a single sentence about this particular conflict. The level of the highest bet indicates the severity of the conflict. Use the following table as a guide when narrating the conflict and its aftermath.

**Conflict table**

The level of betting should be used as a guideline when narrating a conflict and its aftermath. The narrator is free to interpret these guidelines as he or she wishes. Keep in mind that the object of the game is making a cool story, not pissing the other players off.

<b>One dollar:</b>	Hostile staring and implied insults.
<b>Two dollars:</b>	Verbal confrontation and harmless physical contact. Planning to do physical harm.
<b>Three dollars:</b>	Brandishing of weapons, severe insults and accusations. Supporting characters' lives in danger.
<b>Four dollars:</b>	Armed fighting. Shots are fired, knives or broken bottles used.
<b>All in:</b>	Life or death.

The shootout is conducted by the rules explained earlier in the text, but most often only a few of the players will participate in any single shootout. This shootout does not (necessarily) symbolise an actual shootout between the characters, but can be viewed as a part abstract, part symbolic way to settle conflicts over the right of narration between the players.

**The outcome of a Shootout**

The shootout will end with one, several or no winners.

☛ If a single player wins he collects the entire pot and adds the dollars to the stack in front of him. He also becomes the next narrator. This also happens if all but one player folded during the betting.



- ☛ If more than one player survives they divide the pot evenly amongst themselves. Any remaining dollars are placed on top of the ceiling.
- ☛ If there are no survivors, no one gets any money. Instead half of the pot, rounded down, is placed on the ceiling. The rest remains in the pot for the next challenge.
- ☛ If there's no single winner the participant in the shootout with the fewest dollars in his stack becomes the narrator.

The winning narrator gets to narrate the conflict and its aftermath. He has to come up with a positive outcome for any characters whose players won the shootout, and a negative outcome for the ones who lost. Use the conflict table as a guide to determine the severity of the consequences. The other players should let the narrator finish narrating the aftermath before issuing another challenge. The players who just lost the shootout in particular should accept their defeat and wait a while before making another challenge.

### High Noon

Sooner or later one or more players will go all in during a betting round. In this case the conflict will be about life or death for these particular characters. The player (or players) gets to narrate an introduction to the fateful final combat. Any player who ends up with no dollars at the end of a shootout becomes the

game's *loser*. The player who has the most dollars at this time is the *winner* of the game. Any ties are resolved by a shootout.

### Epilogue

The overall winner of the game narrates the final conflict and its outcome. Remember that the result of the final shootout determines which characters come out on top. Then each player gets to narrate a short personal epilogue about their own character, tying up any loose ends and finishing the story.

#### Example of epilogue

*«I was shot in the leg, couldn't feel the pain, tried to run, but I stumbled and fell into the mud, face first. I could hear the sheriff's soggy footsteps closing in slowly. 'Please have mercy with me, I didn't mean to strangle those twelve orphans!' I pleaded in vain. The last thing I saw was the barrel of a Winchester rifle pressed down on my forehead.*

*I was buried south of the city. On my simple wooden cross there was a single word: 'Bastard'»*

## The End

#### Winning and Losing

When I first published this game on the web, someone commented that who wins the game is determined by pure chance and that the shootout rules are nothing but a glorified version of rock, paper and scissors. This is of course completely true. But although the game requires no skill to win there is a definite psychological aspect in the betting and the shootout. Double guessing what the other players will do gives the shootout quite a bit of tension. I hope you will enjoy the game as much as I did. Good Luck!

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# **The New Middle Ages**

**or**

## **Ten ways to dream about the middle ages**

a role-playing game by **Anders Nygaard**  
based on the essays of **Umberto Eco**

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**written:** 2007  
**form:** role-playing game  
**players:** 5 players and a CM  
**duration:** 2-4 hours  
**need to play:** a die  
the included cards  
map of Paris in 1229

## About the game

*When do we begin to dream of the middle ages ? (...) When the day is over, and the nightly work on it, which has dream as its natural form, begins. But because the middle ages, according to the agreement of evil people, is the night, we are supposed to start dreaming as the new day dawns, and joyful humanity, as a famous student song goes, (...) wakes up and join in song «We are free, we are free, the middle ages are at an end!» And then it is that we begin to dream, but with open eyes.*

Umberto Eco, Ten ways to dream about the middle ages  
(translation from Italian via Norwegian)

**I**N this game, the players take part in something that happened in the middle ages. No story, perhaps least of all one told in a role-playing game, can depict a completely accurate and «real» middle age. Instead, this story takes place in the middle ages of your dreams – the middle ages we have been constructing, imagining and inventing ever since their alleged end.

The players will follow and portray their characters through a series of scenes of your own making, which will make up a story. Each main character will represent a way to dream about the middle ages. The challenge of the game is to make the flavor of «your» middle age felt in the story, while you cooperate to create a story based on your character's background, real historical events,

scenery and some cues for inspiration.  
(...) we are trying to develop a «hypothesis of the middle ages» (almost as if we had decided to build a middle age, and considered what ingredients are needed to make a likely one).

Umberto Eco, The new middle ages

The main idea of this game is to give the players a way to toy with the ways we see and use the middle ages in our own games, literature, poetry and similar fantasies. Between World of Warcraft's exquisitely aproportional, surrealist pastel landscapes, to Ars Magica's enchanted look at the original sources, is a vast array of middle ages being used as a playground for our imagination. Even the task of finding the one, true and authentic middle age is, when all is said and done, the work of gluing together a puzzle of remaining scraps from the middle age's own dreams about itself. Such an academic feat is, needless to say, outside the scope of this game.

The «real» middle ages was a moment in history, now gone forever. What is left to us today is a myriad attempts at reconstruction, a shell of stories built on a skeleton of ideas about history – stories of growth and fall, darkness and enlightenment, evil and good. Our dreams of the middle ages are templates for stories, for how we interpret new events, and how we order and make sense of the things around us, what solutions we choose to apply to new challenges.

**Anders Nygaard** (b. 1981) always wanted to be an accountant, but fell in with historians, after which it soon became clear that role playing games would be the end of him. Having for the most part limited himself to disturbing and confusing his fellow gamers, and norwegian academia, with a number of minor written contributions, this is his third complete game, following *Kritikk* (Critique, 2004) and the *Tante Grusom* (Auntie Horrible) series.

### Contents:

- Part 1: Game parts
- Part 2: Sequences
- Part 3: Events
- Map of Paris in 1229
- Part 4: Stages
- Part 5: Dreams
- Background cards
- Cue Cards
- Stage Cards
- Dream Cards

### Nationalities

The students and masters of Paris divided themselves into four «nations», which later became formal entities. They were the French, the English, the Norman and the Picard nations. The «French» nation included masters and students from Paris, Southern France, Spain, Italy, Greece and Asia Minor. The «English» nation included the British Isles, the German empire, Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. The «Normans» came from the province of Rouen, the Picards from northeastern France and the Netherlands. A Magister Artium, with the right to lecture, would be between 21 and 28 years old, while a master of theology may well be as old as 30. Students are enrolled at the age of 14–15.

The middle ages is useful as source of Truth. New stories are continually built, drawing on the authority of the middle ages, from the story of the Renaissance, to Star Wars to the war in Iraq.

The events included in this game are taken from documents surviving from the middle ages. There has been no critical review of the sources on my part, and the information is not meant to be historically accurate or true in any sense. There are just enough facts mixed in to give an idea of the real sequence of events, making a thread for the main characters' story to happen in, with enough invention to give the players something to play with.

*Therefore: Long live the middle age, and the dream about it, as long as reason does not sleep.*

*We have already bred too many monsters.*

Umberto Eco, *Ten ways to dream about the middle ages*

## Part 1: Game parts

### Game parts

Before the game starts, you should prepare and distribute the players' cards. Then give the players the tour of 13th century Paris in Part 4, and make characters. For the characters, the players will need a background card, a dream card, and cues. You, the game master, should keep the stage cards. When you have done all this, and read the rest of this Part, you can begin playing by starting a round according to the sequence in Part 2.

### Playing your roles and telling stories

Role-playing is a kind of improvised theatre, where you play a character or tell a story about your character. Sometimes, you speak as the character you are playing, and describe actions, feelings and thoughts to the other players.

You can also tell stories, to get to the interesting parts of your plot faster, or include things in the game which doesn't fit in a speech or a dialogue. When you do, you can speak as if you are the character telling the story of what happened, or as a storyteller's voice in a book.

Different styles of playing the game opens up different possibilities and moods – switch between them however you prefer.

### Rounds

The game takes place in rounds, each round containing several scenes. During

a round, each player gets a scene where his character is the main character. The round ends when each player has started and ended at least one scene, as described in the sequence for scenes in Part 2.

### Characters

All the players play students (scholars) or tutors (magisters) at the University of Paris. A character is made up of a name, a background and a number of cue cards. In addition, each player picks a dream, which he will use when he tells his character's story. The players should take turns reading the background aloud, or describing it to the other players. You are welcome to invent your own backgrounds and expand on the ones included. An easy way to do this is to improvise, by telling the other players what your character did yesterday. The character is finished when its background has been introduced to the other players.

### Extras

The game master and the player who started the scene you are currently playing in can invent, introduce and play extras. If they want to, they can give them to other players. Extras have no cards, and can do anything the player who plays them wants to include in the game.

### Stage cards

Each round takes place on a stage, described on a stage card. You can pick a stage, or draw a random card. If all the

players agree, they can pick a stage for the next round.

Each stage card describes a place in Paris and what goes on there. (Part 4, and the sequence for rounds in Part 2)

### Cues

The cue cards decide how the characters accomplish what they are attempting to do in their scenes. You use two cards in each scene – one of your own, and one played by another player in a previous scene. (Part 7 and the sequence for scenes in Part 2)

When you run out of cues, you can end the game, keep playing by reshuffling the deck, or invent your own cues. If you want to keep playing after round nine, the game master can invent new events for each new round.

### Dream cards

Each card describes a way of telling stories about the middle ages. All the other cards should be interpreted in the light of this dream, and gives the player a unique privilege during the game.

### Events

Things happen between rounds. Tell the players what happened at the start of each new round, consulting Part 3, and paragraph I in the sequence for rounds in Part 2. The game is over when all the events have taken place. If the characters do something which could change the events or their sequence, you may want to improvise.

---

### Common French men's names

Abelard Adh mar  
Aleaume Beaudonnier  
Begon Begue Caschin  
Doolin Dreu Durand Elle  
Ernaut Eustache Fallard  
Faure Fiebras Fluvant  
Forsard Gaidon Gaillard  
Galafre Hamund Harde  
Hardouin Huidemar  
Huon Isore Jacquelin  
Jakelin Jehan Loup  
Mainet Malbert Malger  
Maugis Mercadier Orable  
Oriabel Oriablaus Prades  
Rabel Renier Renouart  
Tancrede Turpin  
Varocher Vivien Wigayn

---

### Common French women's names

Aaliz Adaliz Adeline  
Bellisente B reng re  
Bernadette Clarisse  
Condors Eglantine  
Emersende Ermbourg  
Ermengarda Florence  
Fredegonde Gaillarde  
Galienne Gaude Gauzia  
Hermengart Honors  
Huguette Joie Josiane  
Louve Mathena  
Maura Mengarde  
Passerose Pernelle  
Petrona Roese Roheis  
Rosemonde Sybille  
Thomassa Thomassia  
Vuissance Willelma

## Part 2: Sequences

### Sequence for rounds

#### I: What has happened?

Ask the players what has happened since the last round, described in Part 3. Let the players take turns telling the stories of what their characters have been doing in this time.

#### II: Set the stage

Draw or choose a stage card, describe the stage to the players, and place the stage card with the map, in the middle of the table so everyone can see. What is happening? Who and what is on stage? Sights, sounds and smells?

#### III: Cues

Ask the players to state what their characters want to do in their scene, and to play their cue cards. Answer all their questions before proceeding. Players answer questions about their characters.

#### IV: If the players want to

- A. Risk something, or a player disagrees with what another players' character is doing – go to the sequence for risks.
- B. Role play or tell a story – go to the sequence for scenes.

### Sequence for scenes

#### I: Order of play

Ask the players to roll a dice. The highest roll starts.

#### II: First scene

- 🎲 The player should either role play or tell a story.
- 🎲 He should use his cue card, and one of the

other players' cue cards.

- 🎲 When role-playing, the game master keeps order and plays the extras. A character who does not belong to the scene starter should only participate when he is addressed or mentioned during the scene.
- 🎲 When a player is telling a story, only the game master may interrupt him before he has used both his cues. If the player includes another character in the story, you can switch to role-playing, or allow the player of that character to agree or offer an alternative story

#### III: Next scene

- 🎲 The next scene goes to the one who had the second cue card. Unless the player states otherwise, it takes place just after the previous scene, without interruption.
- 🎲 Characters do not have to do what their players said they would do at the start of the round, but they have to use the cue card they played.
- 🎲 If they would rather risk something, go to the sequence for risks.

#### IV: Next round

When all the cue cards played at the start of the round has been used, start over at paragraph I in the sequence for rounds

### Risks

#### I: Pro

Ask all the players to state what their characters want to accomplish and how.

#### II: Contra

Tell them what their opponents want to achieve and how.

**III: Stakes**

Ask each of the players what he wants to risk in order to achieve his stated objective – a humiliation, a black eye, a broken arm and so on. The opponents can then raise the stakes. To kill someone, you must risk your life.

**IV: Outcome**

When someone cannot or will not raise the stakes further, the higher bidder wins. If both opponents risk their lives, play paper-rock-scissors to determine the winner. If your character dies, you have lost the game. Only the final stake is lost.

**If the player does then wish to:**

- A.** Risk more, go to paragraph I.
- B.** Do something less risky, go to paragraph II in the sequence for scenes. The one who started the bidding is central the scene.

## Part 3: Events

**First round**

Paris is a booming city. Its university is the best in all of Christianity. When the theologians of Paris interpret scripture, everyone from Jerusalem to Nidaros listens.

Since all academics are men of the cloth, even the laziest and poorest of students are immune to secular law. Only the papal courts can hear their cases. But students are pouring into the university, the citizenry is greedy, and the carousing is tough. A number of students have become little more than thugs, forming gangs with members down to the age of fourteen.

It's early spring in the year 1229, and the carnival ends with the party at Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras. There will be drinking, eating and merrymaking before the fast begins tomorrow, Ash Wednesday. Both city folk and academics have made costumes and prepared for the feast all year.

**Second round**

It started with a fight at a hostel in the suburb of Saint Marcel.

A quarrel over the bill developed into a fight, and a group of students of unknown origin was given a thorough beating and thrown into the street.

Quarrels are fanned all over the city. The prices are too steep, say the students and magisters. There isn't enough for everyone, says the merchants and landlords.

**Common English men's names**

Adam Geoffrey  
Gilbert Henry Hugh  
John Nicholas Peter  
Ralf Richard Robert  
Roger Simon Thomas  
Walter William

**Common English women's names**

Agnes Alice Avice  
Beatrice Cecily Emma  
Isabella Joan Juliana  
Margery Matilda Rohesia

### Common German men's names:

Abelard Adalbert  
 Adalbrecht Baldewin  
 Bardo Baro Carbo  
 Ceubasnus Chacili  
 Dammo Deigenhardus  
 Didericus Eburhart  
 Eckardus Edelstein  
 Faramund Fastred  
 Fato Gabo Gadfrid  
 Gaido Hagilo Haimirich  
 Haimo Ivvanus Jofridus  
 Johannes Judo Kacili  
 Kuonrat Laico Lallo  
 Landebert Madulinus  
 Magahard Maganhard  
 Nadilo Nagal Neozzo  
 Ortwinus Otho Pizzo  
 Poppa Quito Radulf  
 Raffo Rafold Raganald  
 Shilgen Sibertus Sibico  
 Tadica Tallo Teutobod  
 Ulricus Uita Unsenis  
 Waibilo Waldo Walahfrid

### Common German women's names:

Ada Adala Adalberta  
 Balthildis Bauin  
 Bava Chlotichilda  
 Chunegundis Cilia  
 Dagarada Danburga  
 Demuth Ebertana  
 Eburhild Eburhilt  
 Folclinda Folcrada  
 Folcuuara Gailan Gailana  
 Geila Harwara Hazeca  
 Hedewigis Idasgarda  
 Ideslef Idesuulf Lidliardis  
 Liedrada Liefhun  
 Megenberta Megendrod  
 Megenhelda Nidlebis  
 Niesenn Nordrada  
 Olga Orieldis Osgarda  
 Radsuinda Rainilda  
 Rainildis Stenburch  
 Stilleuuara Strilleburg  
 Teudsindis Thancuuara  
 Theaduuaara

### Third round

The students of yesterday's fight were so enraged by their beating that they decided to return in numbers, armed. They broke into the alehouse, beat their tormentors, and trashed the place.

Friends of both sides came to assist. Fighting escalated and spread into the street, with several other businesses destroyed in the riots now breaking out all over town. People are erecting barricades; the people of each neighborhood looking out for themselves first.

### Fourth round

Enraged complaints have been poured into the papal courts in the last few days. The merchants demand something be done with the reckless students. Usurers and Pharisees are in no position to complain, others remark. Many blame the «grey brothers», who preach Christ's poverty, and want their founder, Franciscus, sainted.

### Fifth round

It appears nothing will be done. The university is protecting its privileges, and even the Pope won't dare to challenge the Colleges of Paris.

### Sixth round

The King's Mother has intervened. Blanche of Castille rules the French until her young son, Lois the ninth, comes of age. She demands punishment for the ones responsible. The Pope is far away, but Blanche is in the city, and she will not

be cowed by learned disputes or polished rhetoric.

### Seventh round

Exactly how it came to pass, no one knows. But the city guard has been given the power to arrest clergy! The world hasn't just turned upside down for the students today – how can any worldly power claim the right to interfere with the servants of God? The theologians decry it as a sin against Our Lord and nature itself! But they are not crying it too loudly. These are dangerous days for those who have made an enemy of the French nobility.

### Eight round

The city guard has found the wrongdoers, or so they say. Others claim the arrestees were innocent. However things are, they're now at the Chatelet more dead than alive – those of them who survived the arrest.

### Ninth round

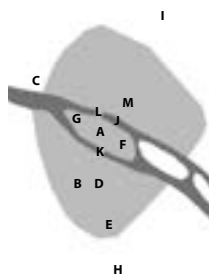
The university is closed! No lectures are taking place! The lecturers are leaving the city, and the students are following, to Oxford, to Spain and God knows where. They will not return until justice and God's will is restored.

### Post ludium

The university will reopen after two years of negotiations, now with even more privileges than before the strike. When the ninth round is over, you can end the game and tell each other what happened to your characters, tying up any loose ends.

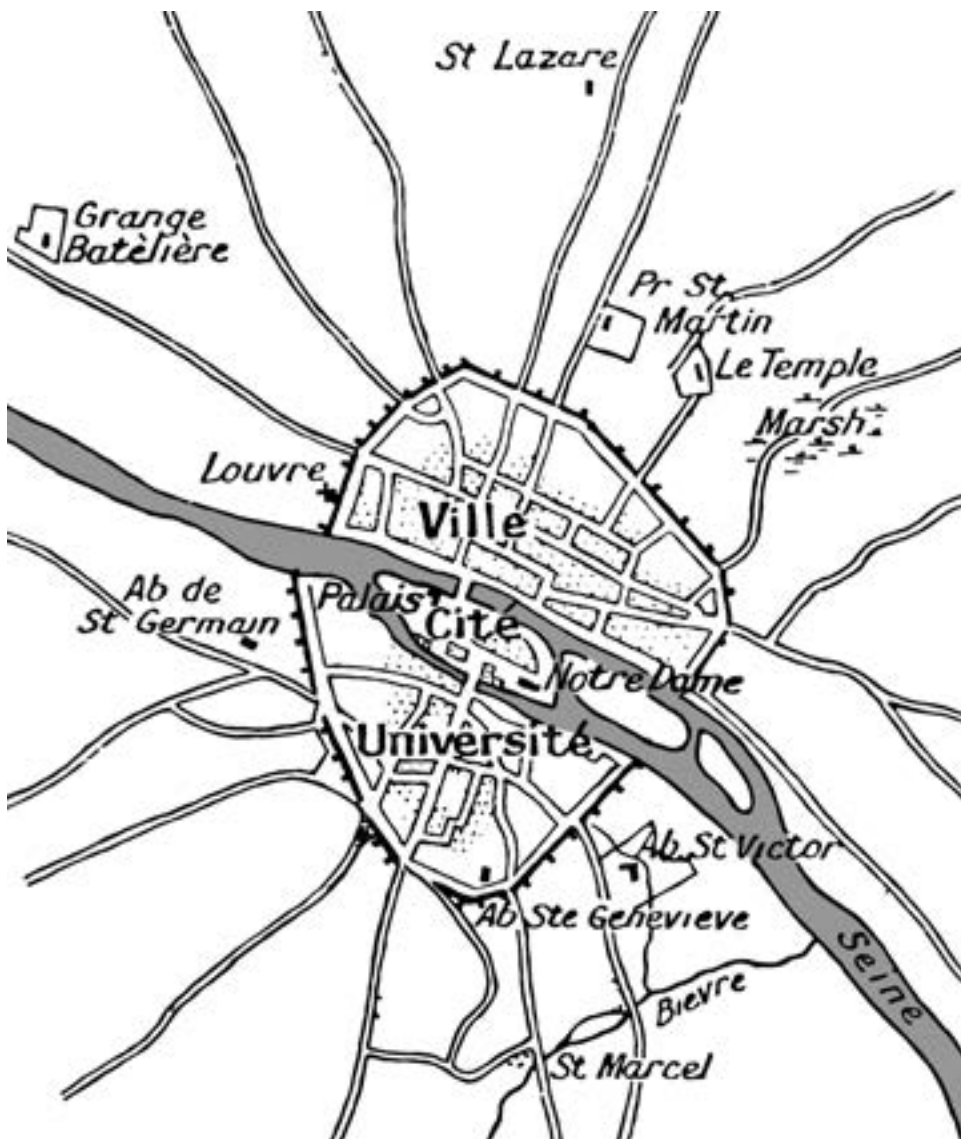






### A map of Paris

- A. Cité
- B. Université
- C. Louvre
- D. Grand Rue
- E. The Sainte-Geneviève school
- F. The Notre Dame School
- G. The Palatine School
- H. Saint Marcel
- I. The priory of St. Martin
- J. Notre Dame Bridge
- K. Petit Pont
- L. Grand Pont
- M. Place de Grève



## Part 4: Stages

### A tour of medieval Paris

The city on the right bank has markets, workshops and fine town houses. The royal market is located in Les Champeux district, the cloth market at St. Merri, and a somewhat less official one at the beach market. The fortress, Louvre, was constructed on this bank by the city wall, the new cobbling, and the fortifications around the Latin quarter on the left bank. Outside the walls, we find St. Martin. The monastery is a mere priory, unlike the abbeys on the left bank. The many roads lead to suburbs such as St. Marcel, St. Lazare and Grange-Batelière, and «the Temple», castle of the Knights Templar, making up a small fortified village of its own.

### A Cité

#### In the Seine

The island where the Parisian tribe first settled is the location of the royal palace and the cathedral. The cathedral of Our Lady, the «parish church of European royalty», is an imposing sight despite still being under construction. It will continue to be so for generations to come. The basilica of St. Etienne stood here before it, and before that a pagan temple to Jupiter. Attached to the cathedral is the famous Notre Dame school. The towers and the great rose window has been the main attraction the past decades, and has brought some of the continent's finest craftsmen to Paris. The royal palace, its

gardens and the palatine school occupies the other end of the long island.

### B Université

#### Left bank

On the left (southern) bank we find the Latin Quarter, where the old king Philippus Augustus gave the scholars license to settle in 1200. You can get there over the little bridge along Grand Rue. The abbeys of Ste. Geneviève, St. Victor and St. Germain with their schools are also here, and the remains of the Thermes, the roman baths.

### C Louvre

#### Right bank

The tall walls block out the sun. The smell of soot, rot, wood shavings and horse dung is everywhere. The noise and its echoes are deafening.

This is an exemplary fortress, recently modernized. Behind the walls can be found an arsenal, a dungeon, treasury, archives, smith, stables, hospital and anything else need in the event of a siege. The royal palace is situated elsewhere.

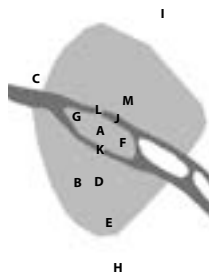
In the throngs in the tall, narrow gates are all kinds of hawkers, hustlers and beggars.

In the cellar hall, a new vaulting is under construction. The fort is crowded with craftsmen, the King's overseers and city guards.

### D Grand Rue

#### Left bank

The main street of the Latin Quarter will



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take you from the Saint-Martin gate to Petit Point and Notre Dame. It is broad enough for two meeting wagons to pass each other without incident!

Many students have lodgings here, and lectures are given in noble halls, in rotting sheds, in courtyards and on street corners.

40 years ago, the king ordered the 300 streets of Paris be cobbled, as he could no longer stand the terrible smell. It hasn't made much of a difference.

### E The Sainte-Geneviève school

#### Left bank, the Latin Quarter

The abbey of Sainte-Geneviève is situated on a hill, rising above the noise and stench of the city. The Sorbonne hill, crowned by the abbey, is becoming the nucleus of the growing university.

The school has produced famous clerics, bishops, and even a saint or two. The scholars here are known for their piety.

The abbey has one of the city's oldest schools. The monastic schools teach the young the bible, arithmetic, reading and writing, and make their facilities available for the university's lecturers.

The monks perform their daily routines, trying to cram the alphabet into the young and easily distracted heads of their charges.

### F The Notre Dame School

#### Cité

The cathedral school houses the most learned of magisters. The disputes

resound day and night in its hallowed halls. Fortunately, violence and sword-play is relatively rare. Peter Lombard, writer of *Libri Quattuor Sententiarum*, the main theological textbook, once taught here.

These days, the famous Englishman, Alexander Halensis, lectures this book in his own compilation.

The air is better here at Cité, and the sun enters the school through high windows. Students copy each other's notes in silence, or practice their rhetoric.

### G The Palatine School

#### Cité, at the royal palace

This is the finest school in the city, where wealthy young noblemen have received their education for centuries. The teaching here is the best, and the fees reflect it.

The school is no shelter for anyone who drops by, but with servants, companions and relatives entering and leaving all day, it's rare to see anyone turned away. If one is acquainted with one of the young nobles, one will generally be welcome.

In the courtyard, young sir Anselm is receiving his punishment for speaking ill of the King's Mother.

### H Saint Marcel

#### Left bank, along the road southward

The village of Saint Marcel is merging with the growing university city, to the unrestrained joy of its inhabitants. Some of the student's favorite watering holes can be found here. The alewives brew

all year round, and some rent lodgings on the side. Some of the houses are old country houses with two rooms – living room and cow shed. But the new wealth has brought several fine new town houses with lofts. The people here have not yet achieved the kind of greed found on the right bank. Many of the less fortunate students keep warm in the stables and outhouses of Saint Marcel during the winter.

## **I The priory of St. Martin**

### **Right bank, across the road for Le Temple**

The Priory of Saint Martin in-the-fields possess a piece of the saint's skull, on display in a reliquary in the chapel. (The larger part of his body can be found in the city of Tours) His reverence has been among the most popular in France for a while now. People seek out the priory to ask the saint to carry their prayers to God, or in the hope of a miracle. He protects against alcoholism and poverty.

In the yard outside the chapel, pilgrims of all classes gather, waiting for their turn and securing supplies for their journeys. Monks care for the suffering to the best of their ability.

## **J Notre Dame Bridge**

### **Between Cité and the right bank**

On the bridge itself can be found a number of guildhalls, owned by the merchant guild or the Provost (the mayor), and similar buildings kept by the wealthy.

There is less traffic than on the other bridges. But the guildhalls arrange charitable feasts for the poor during the holy days, and they swarm the bridge like flies.

## **K Petit Pont**

### **Between Cité and the left bank**

The Little Bridge has been here since the days of

the Celts, in various incarnations. It has recently been remade in stone for the first time, ordered and designed by the master architect of the cathedral. At the start of the Little Bridge stands Petit Châtelet, two massive towers with a guard house bridging the street. The old building serves as fortress, jail and city gate in one. The network of corridors, vaults, dungeons, and torture chambers beneath it is even older than the building above. Here, heads are placed on spikes as a dire warning to evildoers. The newly formed inquisition, given the task of eradicating Catharism and other heresies, has ensured a steady supply of heads for the gate – heretics fleeing the Albigensian crusade, hiding in the city. Children are amusing themselves by throwing rocks at the heads. The guards chase them, but they keep returning.

## **L Grand Pont**

### **Between Cité and the right bank**

Money changers and loan sharks keep their houses and businesses on this bridge. Usury is forbidden for Christians, so a number of rich Jews can be found here. The bridge is the most heavily trafficked in the city; huge ox carts cross it bound for the markets, loaded with wares from Orléans, great barrels, bales of hay and materials for the cathedral.

## **M Place de Grève**

### **On the right bank**

On the beach plaza, a market has begun to grow, after the construction projects of the past decades left it inside the walls. Bordering the place, merchant houses and halls are being built. Citizens who do not have their own well gets their water here, and small vessels are pulled onto the beach, where chattering washerwomen gather with their laundry and their younger children. It's a good place to be for those who want to meet people and hear the latest news.

## Part 5: Dreams

### Ten ways to dream of the middle ages

#### I Manner and excuse

The middle ages are actually just like the present, only with armor and stuff. Use it as a stage where anything can happen. Imagine the middle ages as presented in *A Knight's Tale*, anything by Disney, and the World of Warcraft MMORPG.

In your scenes, you can introduce historical elements which didn't exist in the middle ages. Only you and the game master can use them for the rest of the game.

#### II Ironic hindsight

Life for medieval people was nasty, brutish and short. And so were the people. Use the middle ages to make fun of all kinds of primitive stupidity and romantic foolishness. Monty Python, Cervantes' Don Quixote and Sergio Leone.

In scenes where your character becomes involved in something a) nasty b) unnecessarily brutal or c) ridiculously superstitious, you can end a risk by using something in tune with the ironic hindsight as a stake where others would have to risk their life.

#### III The site of savagery

In the middle ages, strength rules over intellect. The middle ages is the original hairy cave-man land where men are Conan and all others are wimpy subhumans, richly deserving of the fate dealt to them by your mighty sword. Use it to show us the triumph of animal cunning and strength over all that is civilized, complicated and abstract. Conan and his descendant characters are your cure for this one.

You do not have to put your life at stake to kill someone. As long as you make use of monstrously

poor manners and plenty of unrestrained violence, you will always get your way in a conflict. Should you or your character – at any later time during the game – display any hint of regret at your character's actions, draw a new card.

#### IV Romance

The middle ages are where noble knights, fair maidens and evil barons are to be found. Delightfully dark and cruel, but also a place where the lights of faith and mercy can shine even brighter. Gothic novels, French ballads, and other victorianesque fantasies.

Your character does not notice or dwell for very long on anything which does not fit in the romantic or gothic aesthetic. If you don't see it, it doesn't exist, and cannot harm you, involve you in a challenge etc. If it becomes utterly impossible to ignore, you may reinterpret it as you see fit.

Also, in any given scene, the weather will slowly and subtly begin to change to fit whatever mood you are in. (Lightning and storms when you're agitated, twinkles, sunshine and bluebirds when you are happy and so forth.) If you can find a way to get this to work in your favor, more power to you.

#### V Philosophia Perennis

In the middle ages, all things are in their place, and there is a place for everything. Nothing is new under the sun. Use it to highlight a present state of things, whatever said state may be, as the only eternal, perfect, immovable and divinely ordained one. All deviance and irregularities in the great edifice of scholasticism is heresy, and to be regretted. Think of Narnia, Orwell's 1984, the Paranoia RPGs and certain conservative Catholic theologies.

Your character can explain to the others how the world really works. These explanations are always



true, as long as you can find an explanation for any little inconsistencies, such as the evidence of your own eyes .

## **VI National identities**

The middle ages are the cradle of the nations. Choose a European stereotype. Play it to the hilt, preferably past it. Snorri Sturlason; Dante Aligheri, The Quest for the Grail and the Nibelungen ring.

As long as your choice of action reinforces your national identity, no one except a GM controlled character can challenge you to take a risk.

## **VII Antidote of modernity**

Actually – the middle ages weren't all that bad. A lot of things worked a lot better than today. Show us how everything was really better in ye olden days – all the troubles we know today were unknown to the 13th century.

Everything which happens is probably for the best, and couldn't have happened in any better way given the circumstances. If any aspect of the middle ages makes the character unhappy, you may modify its effect by explaining how the problem (lack of hygiene, burning at the stake, forced marriage, amputation involving carpenter's tools and boiling pitch...) was actually, in some way, better than the modern solution, wasn't as common as previously assumed, or can have beneficial consequences in the long term.

## **VIII Reconstruction**

This is the historically correct house of cards, founded on long and painstakingly precise studies of the sources. You know what the Middle Ages were actually like.

If you're a historian, fully up to date on the latest in medieval studies, you may choose to correct any

and all mistakes made by the other players. The best of your knowledge is law. If you're not, pick two other dreams not in use by the other players, and try to make them fit together. You get both their abilities, except in situations where they would contradict each other.

## **IX The Traditions**

This middle age is the place of ancient conspiracies, templars, satanic cults, lost relics, witches, occult secrets, grails and other goodies. Try to cram as much occult bric-a-brac as possible into the story. Think the Da Vinci Code, Illuminatus! and add some Lost Merovingian Heirs in the corners.

You may discover hidden connections between places, people and events. Such connections are always true.

## **X Waiting for the Kingdom of God**

The world could end any moment now. Soon, Christ will return to judge the living and the dead, and the New Jerusalem shall be his throne. Fear judgement! Penitenziagite! Use the middle ages to study the many faces of fanaticism, fear of the Heretic, dreams of the ultimate, and of death and glory. Think Tolkien and his imitators, and end-of-the-world preachers through the ages.

You spread the fear of the End wherever you walk. Extras who are told of the coming apocalypse will always believe you.





**The New Middle Ages  
Background**

**The New Middle Ages  
Background**

**The New Middle Ages  
Background**

**The New Middle Ages  
Background**

**The New Middle Ages  
Background**

**The New Middle Ages  
Background**



## The great loneliness

Yesterday, he attended a lecture on Aristotle's Poetics. The lecturer was useless, and was shouted at until he was forced to leave. When the student and some friends went to reclaim their money, the lecturer refused. The Doctor quickly reconsidered once they showed him their knives. Afterwards, they went down to the river to watch the washing women. While the others flirted and chatted, he sat at the river stairs. He could not remember the last time he received news from home.

## Love lost

Yesterday he stood outside the little window at the back of the city house again. No one came. He took out the pouch the silent servant had handed him the last time he came here, counted the coins in it one more time, and threw it through the window. Then he went to his college to drink.

## The New Jerusalem

Today he finished his copy of Avveroës the Arab's comments to Platon's dialogue on the state. His fingers are sore and stained with ink, his head is afloat and his eyes are aching. Now he can see everything in a new light.

## A conspiracy of heretics

One of them followed him yesterday. He shook him off among the money changers on the grand bridge. They number of grey brothers in the city is growing. They stand at corners, begging. Visits the hospital of the templars. He knows what they really want. And now they know who he is.

## The Gilded Cage

He was returned to the city yesterday. Father's hired lances caught up with him just past Montfacon. He has been at University since he was fourteen. Father has decided that his youngest son shall make a career in the clergy. This city is unbearable! Next time, they'll lock him up in a monastery.

## The Heir

The messenger arrived yesterday, in the deepest secrecy. His father Count Raymond has signed a treaty at Meix. The protector of the Cathars has been defeated. The gruesome crusade, raging since the time of his grandfather, taking so many of his loved ones, is finally at an end. His sister will be married to the king's brother, Alphonse, who will then inherit the County of Toulouse. The King's Mother thinks he is dead. He is disinherited and alone. At least no one in Paris knows who he is.

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

<b>Trivium: grammar, dialectics, rhetorics</b>	<b>Quadrivium: arithmetics, geometry, music, astronomy</b>	<b>A dangerous gang</b>
<b>The Fransiscan heretics</b>	<b>A true friend</b>	<b>Unruly students</b>
<b>An honest lawman</b>	<b>A corrupt city guard</b>	<b>An unforgettable night of drinking</b>
<b>An unhappy poet</b>	<b>A Dominican caught with his pants on his knees</b>	<b>Knives and clubs</b>
<b>Magister Artium</b>	<b>A silk cloak</b>	<b>An unrelenting enemy</b>



**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
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**The New  
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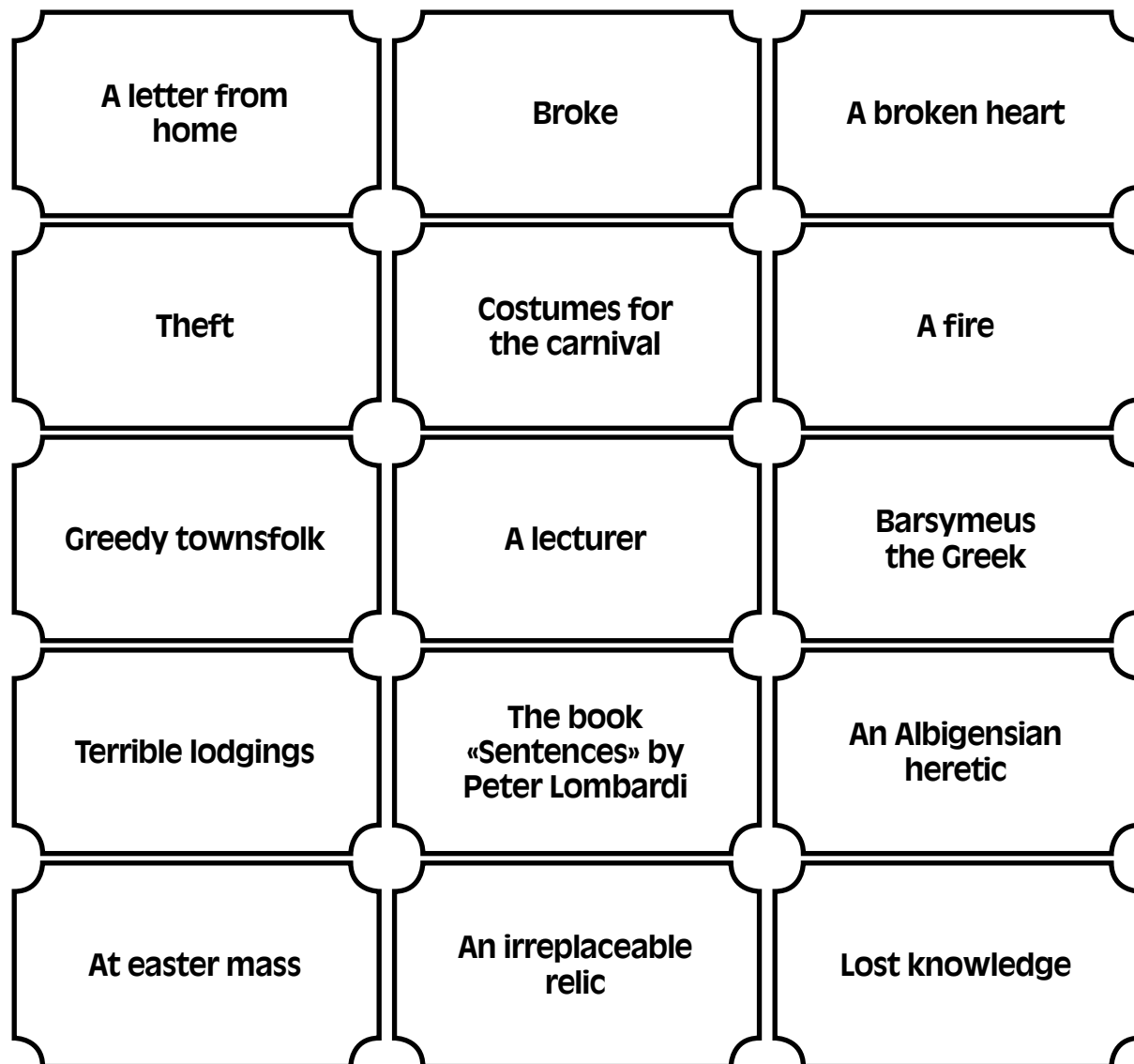
**The New  
Middle Ages:  
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**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Cue Card**



**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Stage**

**The New  
Middle Ages:  
Stage**

**The New  
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**The New  
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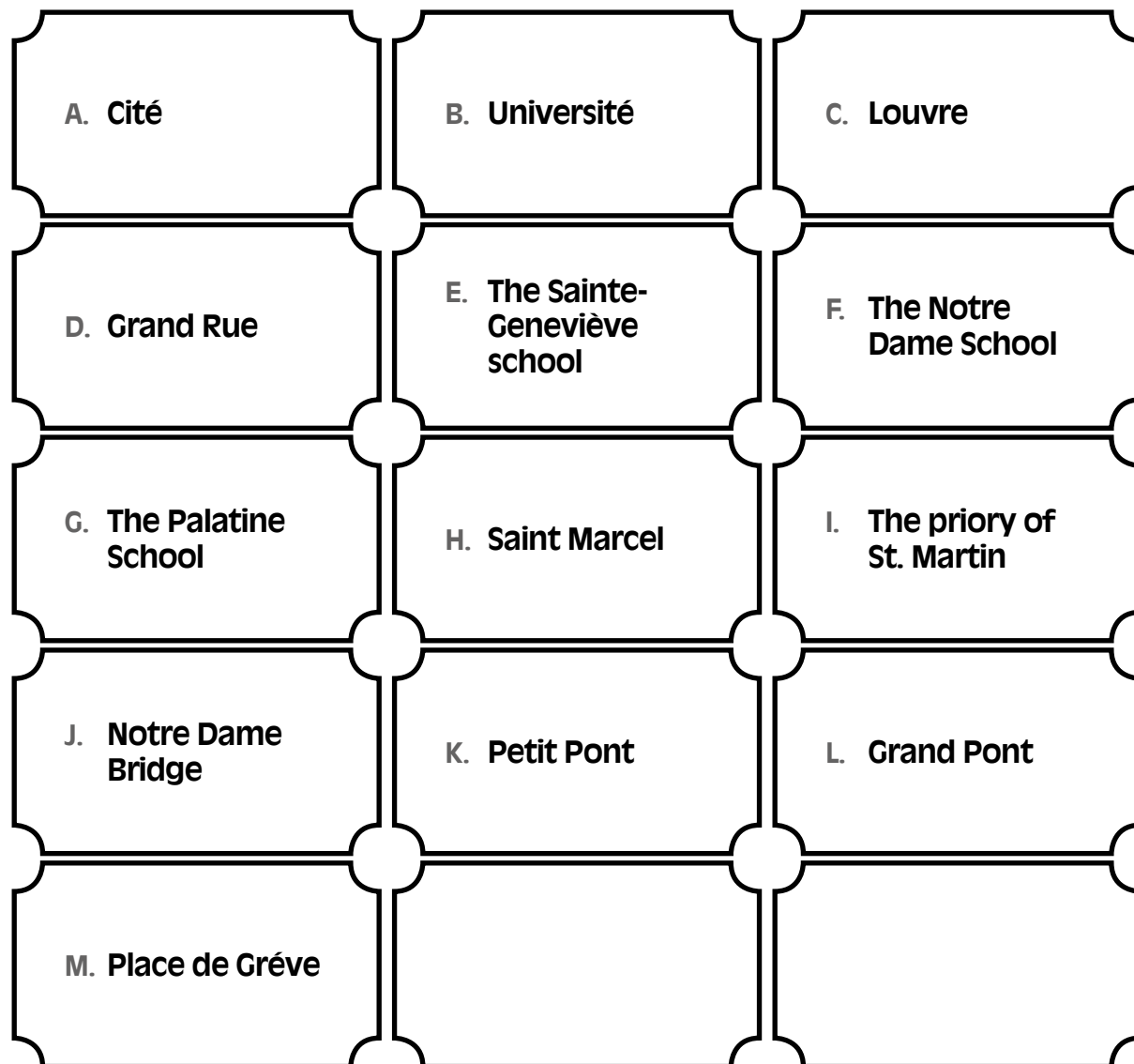
**The New  
Middle Ages:  
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Stage**





**The New Middle Ages:  
Dream Card**

**The New Middle Ages:  
Dream Card**

**The New Middle Ages:  
Dream Card**

**The New Middle Ages:  
Dream Card**

**The New Middle Ages:  
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**The New Middle Ages:  
Dream Card**

**The New Middle Ages:  
Dream Card**

<b>I</b> Manner and excuse	<b>II</b> Ironic hindsight
<b>III</b> The site of savagery	<b>IV</b> Romance
<b>V</b> Philosophia Perennis	<b>VI</b> National identities
<b>VII</b> Antidote of modernity	<b>VIII</b> Reconstruction
<b>IX</b> The Traditions	<b>X</b> Waiting for the Kingdom of God





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# Forgotten Memories

a story game by Håken Lid

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written:	2007
form:	story game
players:	3 or more
duration:	1 hour
need to play:	pens and paper

*I'm going to tell you a story I've never told anyone before...*

## What the game is about

Forgotten memories is about telling stories from your childhood and adolescence. However it's a role-playing game, and the stories you are about to tell are fiction. Even so the game gets much better if you use your own memories and experiences as part of the stories.

The characters in the stories are based on yourself. You use your own name and gender. The characters in the game grew up together and are roughly the same age, even though the players probably didn't and aren't.

Your alter egos, the characters, have not seen each other for many years. For some reason or another – a funeral? a class reunion? It doesn't really matter – you have decided to share some of your childhood memories. Sad memories, innocent memories, scary memories, happy memories, forgotten memories.

## The rules

Before you start everyone should introduce themselves by name. Get pens and some pieces of paper. You'll need two pieces of paper for each player. Everyone then writes down two story titles on two separate pieces of paper. Put the pieces on the table with the text up, so that everyone can read them.

## The Storyteller

The oldest (or the bravest) player starts

to tell the first story. The title of the story must be chosen from the ones on the pieces of paper on the table, but she may only choose one she didn't write herself. The first story must start with this phrase: «I'm going to tell you a story I've never told anyone before...»

## The Prompter

The person who wrote the title of the story becomes the Prompter. She may whisper instructions to the Storyteller, and her job is to make the story interesting. The Prompter can give direct instructions «Enter the bedroom», «Tell her you love someone else», «Steal the neighbour's underwear». She may also give other types of input: «There's a knock at the door», «What was going through your mind?», «Wrap up the story».

## The audience

As a story is being told the other player may only speak when the storyteller asks them a question: «Do you remember the fat man living next door to us?» An appropriate answer may be «Yes, the one that always started to cry when he listened to opera music» or «He went to prison before I moved here».

## Ending a story

The stories with titles should always end with some question unanswered. For example «I never found out who my mother's secret lover was» or «Why did the parish priest commit suicide?» The

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**Håken Lid** (b. 1980) did the graphic design on this book and has written several short role-playing games. He is also an occasional larper, sword fighter, illustrator and student.

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## sample titles

«Losing my innocence»  
 «Mrs Parker's plum tree»  
 «French kissing»  
 «My uncle's secret club»  
 «The tandem bike»  
 «A magic potion»  
 «The mystery of the raspberry lollipop»

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## Sample questions

«Who stole Mrs Parker's knickers?»  
 «What did Daddy hide in his drawer?»  
 «Why did Lucy break up with me?»  
 «Why was Will always called 'Coconut'?»  
 «Who told the teacher I cheated on the math test?»  
 «Where did the raspberry lollipop go?»

storyteller writes this question down on the back of the note with the title of the story and puts it amongst the others with the question facing up. When this is done the Prompter becomes the new Storyteller and chooses a new piece of paper from the table.

### Questions and Answers

If there are notes with questions on them on the table the storyteller may chose one of those as a story title. That question must be answered before her story is over, and that story will not end with an open question. Instead the piece of paper is crumpled together, and may not be chosen again.

When there are only crumpled pieces of paper on the table the game ends.

### Advice on Storytelling

So you don't know how to tell original, funny and surprising stories? Don't worry: you don't have to! Your job is to be unoriginal and unfunny. If the story's not interesting it's the Prompter's fault.

**The beginning:** Just start talking. The first idea you get is 9 out of 10 times better than anything you will come up with if you start contemplating.

**Getting to the point:** You shouldn't stall the story unless you have a good reason. There's no shame in getting to the point quickly. Look at the title «French kiss» – why not start the story by describing the taste of the kiss. How it felt, how it tasted and what was going through your mind?

**Digressions** can be a very nice spice to a story, making your little world more believable, and giving the other players ideas to pick up later in other stories.

**Listen to the Prompter:** Follow the Prompters instructions, especially when you really don't want to.

**Using yourself:** Start with something you really did experience when you were younger. It doesn't matter if it's a boring story, it will soon deviate from reality. Anyway It's not your job to make it interesting, that's up to the Prompter.

### Advice on Prompting

The prompter has an important job. You must make sure that the story is interesting. If you are bored, the other players probably are too. Do something about it.

**Make the storyteller shine:** You are not the focus of attention, the storyteller is. Work with her, not against her. Listen to what she is saying, try to make her comfortable, and make sure everyone knows she's the star. Don't interrupt just to hear your own voice. But give input at least once or twice during one story.

**Challenge the storyteller:** Don't let her shy away from the juicy bits. If the story is about to get to a climax, but she chickens out of it, push her back in. Make her describe unpleasant details. (But also the pleasant ones.) Use instructions like «Describe in detail», «go through with it!», «do it!», «don't back out», «what did it smell like?» and so on.

**Add trouble:** If the story is starting to slow down add some complications. Introduce some stuff from an earlier story, another character or other kinds of trouble. Make doors lock up, send in the police, let the character find a dead body, a wad of money, a nude picture of her cousin or some other surprising thing. Give her dilemmas, surprises and big problems. But be brief! Use single sentences and do not elaborate, that's the Storyteller's job.

**Short and sweet:** Make sure that the story is not too long. Don't be afraid to tell the Storyteller to wrap up the story.



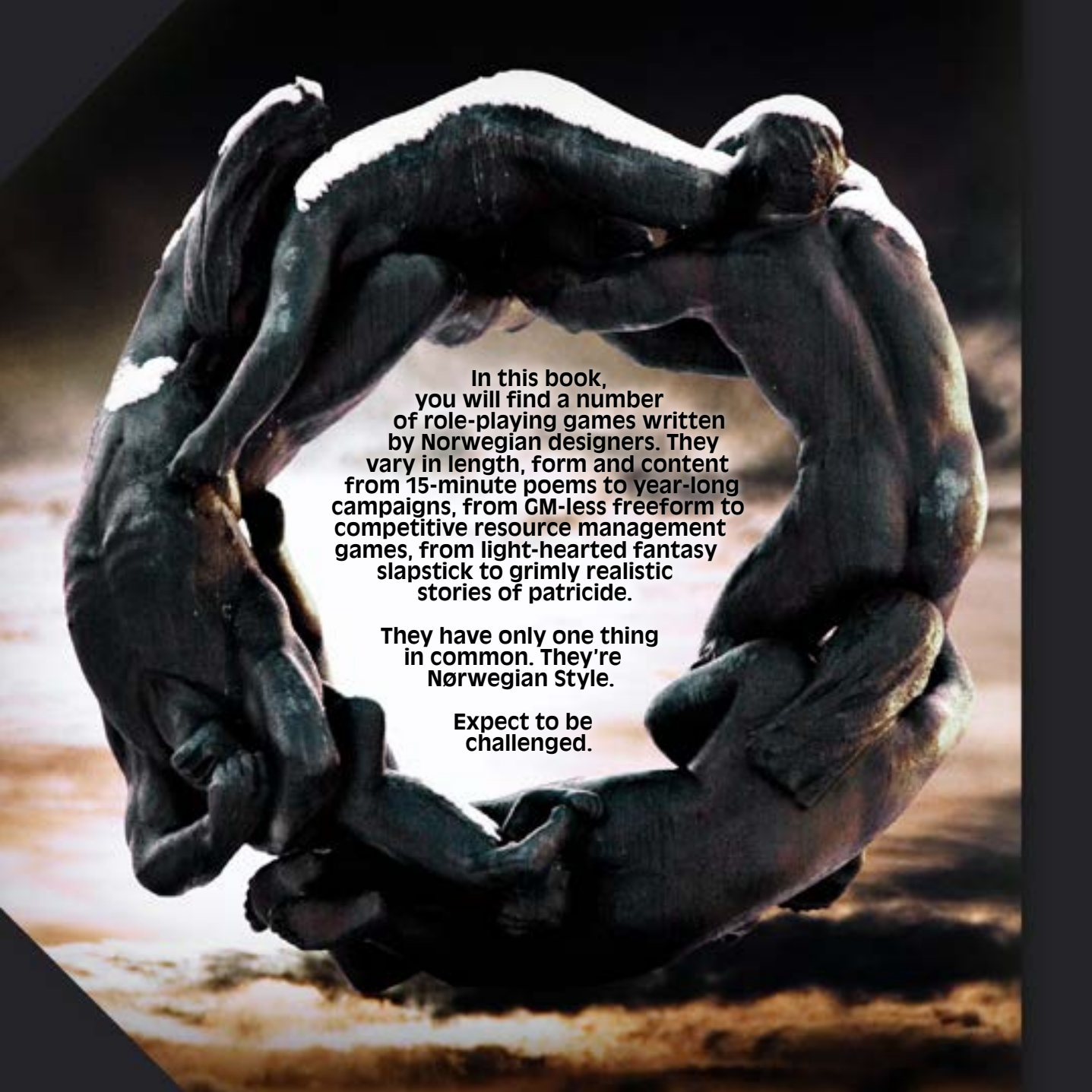
## Afterword

THIS has been a snapshot, an overview of what's happening in Norway just now. You've read the games; hopefully, you've played and enjoyed many of them. So we repeat our question from the book's introduction: Is there such a thing as a Norwegian style of gaming? The publication of this book could be considered an answer in itself: Now there is. At least, a Norwegian style of game design.

However, no game exists without play. The text in this book is only a part of a process where play influences design, and design influences play. As you read these words, the spiral turns, the culture changes, and we're somewhere else again. Somewhere different, perhaps even better. We hope to meet you there.





A bronze sculpture of two figures, possibly by Fritz Koenig, forming a circular shape. The figures are dark and muscular, with their bodies and limbs intertwined to create a ring. The background is a warm, golden sunset over a body of water, with a dark, triangular shape in the top-left corner.

In this book,  
you will find a number  
of role-playing games written  
by Norwegian designers. They  
vary in length, form and content  
from 15-minute poems to year-long  
campaigns, from GM-less freeform to  
competitive resource management  
games, from light-hearted fantasy  
slapstick to grimly realistic  
stories of patricide.

They have only one thing  
in common. They're  
Nørwegian Style.

Expect to be  
challenged.