

GET *OUT*
GET *AWAY*
GET *WISE*
GET *BACK*
GET *EVEN*

by Graham Walmsley

GET OUT GET AWAY GET WISE GET BACK GET EVEN

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ABOUT THE GAME

This is a storytelling game about running for your life. It is inspired by movies such as *The Fugitive*, *North by Northwest* and *The Thirty Nine Steps*.

The story

Each of the players will tell a different story about a different Hero. But all the stories have the same structure:

- The Hero returns to his quiet suburban home to find everything he loved has been destroyed. There are people that hate him, but he does not understand why. Suddenly, he realizes that they are watching him. He must **get out** before they kill him.
- The Hero runs for his life, trying to **get away** from the people that hate him. As they chase him through towns, cities, hills and wildernesses, he evades them but never completely escapes them.
- Finally, the Hero gets the better of his pursuers. He **gets wise**. He realizes why they hate him and that, to defeat them, he must return back to his home.
- Still pursued, the Hero runs to **get back** to his home.
- The Hero arrives back at his home. He confronts and defeats the people who hate him. He **gets even**. But whether he is strengthened or destroyed by the chase depends on fate alone.

The different stories may not intersect and their Heroes never meet. They must face the chase alone. And Heroes never die.

Preparing to play

To play the game, you need:

- Many six-sided dice
- A set of *Destination* cards (see the back of this book)
- A set of *Final Obstacle* cards (see this back of this book)

Put the six-sided dice in the middle of the table.

Shuffle the *Final Obstacle* cards. Then take out the “Get Wise” card and slide it into the deck about halfway down.

Shuffle the *Destination cards*. Then take out the “Get Even” card and slide it into the deck near the bottom.

Order of play

The players decide who will start by majority vote.

That player takes the first turn, telling the first part of his Hero's story. Then play proceeds to the left, with each player telling the first part of another Hero's story.

(Note that taking a turn has a particular structure, explained below).

When play comes back to the first player, he tells the next part of his Hero's story. And play proceeds to the left, with each player telling the next part of his Hero's story. And so on.

This carries on until all the heroes get even and the stories end.

Taking a turn

The player whose turn it is takes the role of the Hero. He will narrate the story.

All the other players are Antagonists. They will interrupt the narration to put obstacles and difficulties in the Hero's way.

At the start of the turn, all the Antagonists turn their chairs towards the Hero, as if interrogating him.

Then, in silence, they take the top Destination card and place it, face down, in front of the Hero. This is the destination that the hero has to run to.

They should then take a Final Obstacle card and look at it. This is the last obstacle that the Hero will face before getting to his destination.

There should be a moment of silence. Then one of the Antagonists will say "Go!". The Hero must immediately start narrating.

As the Antagonists interrupt with difficulties and obstacles, the Hero must adapt his story to describe how he copes with these.

When an Antagonist is enjoying the story, he should give the Hero a die, by sliding it from the center of the table towards the Hero.

When an Antagonist is impressed by the way that the Hero dealt with a difficulty, he should do the same.

When an Antagonist is unconvinced by the way the Hero dealt with a difficulty, he should take one of the Hero's dice, by sliding it back to the center of the table.

When an Antagonist is bored with the story, he should do the same.

At some point in the narration, the Hero must turn over the Destination card. The player narrates seeing the destination on the card.

The Antagonists should then reveal the Final Obstacle standing between the Hero and his Destination. The Hero narrates how he copes with this Final Obstacle.

If the Antagonists enjoy the way the Hero copes with the Final Obstacle, they should all give the hero a die. If they don't, none of them give him a die.

The Hero rolls all the dice he has been given during the turn.

If the total of the dice exceeds the number printed on the Final Obstacle card, the Hero has successfully avoided the obstacle. The Hero should briefly narrate arriving at his new destination. The *Final Obstacle* card is discarded.

If the total is less than the number printed on the card, then the Hero has avoided the obstacle, but damaged himself in the process. Perhaps he is physically damaged (he has broken his leg), perhaps mentally (he is scared) or perhaps spiritually (he has broken a deep-held moral code).

The Hero should briefly narrate arriving at his new destination damaged. He keeps the *Final Obstacle* card. It will be used at the end of the game.

Then, the turn is over. All dice are returned to the center of the table.

Note that there are two cards which have a special function: the *Final Obstacle* card called "Get Wise" and the *Destination* card marked "Get Even". These will be described later.

Example of play

➤ The Antagonists turn to face the Hero. They place a destination card face-down in front of him. They take a Final Obstacle card and look at it. It says "Guard". There is a moment of silence.

Antagonist 2: Go!

Hero: David is walking through crowds of commuters, sweating, with torn clothes. People are looking at him curiously. He's scared and he keeps looking round for people following him. But he's trying to look normal. He tries to breath. He smooths his hair. Must look normal. Must not draw attention.

Antagonist 1: He notices someone up ahead, on a mobile phone.

Antagonist 2: He's looking straight at you –

Hero: It's probably nothing. It's OK. Must keep walking. Mustn't get paranoid.

➤ Antagonist 2 slides the Hero a die

Just in case, I cross the road. I try not to look at him –

Antagonist 2: But you see him out the corner of your eye and...he's coming in your direction -

Hero: It's a coincidence, I'm getting paranoid –

➤ Antagonist 1 slides the Hero a die

Antagonist 3: And there's a guy on the other side of the road, like he's waiting for you.

Hero: I freeze. Try to get away. I walk along the middle of the road, dodging traffic.

➤ Antagonist 3 slides the Hero a die

Antagonist 2: And they're definitely following you now. Both running along, talking into their phones.

Antagonist 1: (raises voice) What do you do?

Antagonist 3: (raises voice) What do you do?

Hero: I, er –

Antagonist 2: They're crossing the road towards you.

Antagonist 1: *One says into his phone: "Definitely him"*

Hero: *I run -*

Antagonist 3: *You can't run, they've got you surrounded.*

Antagonist 1: *There's nowhere to go.*

Antagonist 2: *Do something!*

Hero: *I get away from –*

➤ Antagonist 1 takes one of the Hero's dice

Antagonist 3: *You can't, they're coming for you!*

Antagonist 1: *They're coming for you!*

Antagonist 2: *You've got seconds!*

Antagonist 1: *One of them grabs your arm.*

Hero: *I jerk away, dive in front of a car. It knocks me to the ground, brakes suddenly, blares its horn. Everyone looks. It's an accident. They can't touch me now, I'm injured.*

➤ Antagonists 1 and 2 slide the Hero a die

Antagonist 3: *So there's a police officer, he comes over: "What the hell are you doing? You leapt out –"*

Hero: *"Shit! My arm! It's broken, I can't move –"*

➤ Antagonist 2 slides the Hero a die

Antagonist 3: *"Oh for Christ's sake."*

Hero: *"Get an ambulance! I need –"*

Antagonist 3: *"You're not getting an ambulance. My car's there. Get in."*

Hero: *"Thank you! Thank you so –"*

Antagonist 3: *"Just shut up and get in"*

Antagonist 1: *So you're driving through the streets. Looking backwards –*

Antagonist 2: *You see the same guys talking frantically into their phones. One hails a taxi –*

Antagonist 3: *They're following you. They swerve through the traffic –*

Antagonist 1: Right on your tail now.

Antagonist 3: Waiting for you to get out of the car –

Hero: The car stops at the hospital. I run up the steps, clutching my arm –

Antagonist: Their taxi screeches to a halt –

Hero: I run. I run. Crash through the doors. Looking for somewhere to hide.

➤ Antagonist 2 slides the Hero a die

Antagonist 1: The doors crash open behind you –

Hero: Running through the corridors. Got to be somewhere. Take a door at random.

Antagonist 3: One of them hits the fire alarm.

Hero: Hospital room, two people in it. I dive out the window, shards of glass, tearing my face.

➤ The Hero turns over the Destination card. It says "Countryside".

So I'm in an alley behind the hospital. It backs on to a field. Not just a field, like a park, a huge park on the edge of the city.

➤ The Antagonist now reveal that the Final Obstacle between the Hero and the Destination is a guard

Antagonist 1: And there's a gate into the field. But then you see there's a guy. He's guarding the gate.

Antagonist 2: And you drop your gaze and see a gun. He's got a gun on his belt.

Antagonist 3: He's leaning against the gate. Looks bored but alert. What do you do?

Hero: All right. So I pick myself up, brush the glass off. I open my hand and there's a syringe. Must have grabbed it from the hospital room. There's something in it. Don't know what. Being quiet, keeping close to the wall, I creep up on the guard. Then stab the syringe in his leg. Give him the full dose of whatever's in there.

➤ All the Antagonists give the Hero a dice. The Hero rolls all his dice. But the total he rolls is less than the number on the "Guard" card.

Hero: He cries out, turns towards me...then slumps to the floor. I drag the body through the gate. Check his pulse. He's dead. Christ knows what was in there. I'm horrified. They've driven me to kill. But I've got to keep running. I run into the park.

And the turn ends.

Antagonising the Hero

The job of the Antagonists is to interrogate the Hero. Not just to invent difficulties, but to demand that he answers them.

They should put more pressure on the Hero as the scene progresses. By the end of the scene, the pressure should be nearly unbearable.

Often, the Antagonists are required to reveal parts of the plot. For example, in a Get Wise scene, they will reveal who hates the Hero and why.

They don't really "reveal" this information. That is, they haven't previously decided who hates the hero and why. They make it up as they go along.

Be creative

Sometimes, a Destination Card will not seem to make sense. How can the Hero get directly from the city to the mountains?

When this happens, be creative. Perhaps the hero gets on a plane destined for Switzerland. Perhaps the mountains are mountains of garbage.

The same may happen with Final Obstacle cards. Why should there be a security system in the middle of a forest?

Again, be creative. Perhaps the Hero has stumbled upon a high-security base. Perhaps it's not a high-tech security system, but a tripwire.

The different types of scene

There are five types of scene: Get Out, Get Away, Get Wise, Get Back and Get Even.

The story moves progressively from one type of scene to the next. So, for example, once a Get Back scene has been narrated, there will not be another Get Wise scene.

And the different stories move in tandem: so, for example, there will never be a situation where one player is narrating Get Back scenes while another narrates Get Away scenes.

Each type of scene is subtly different. They are described below.

GET OUT

Each player starts by narrating the Hero's return to his quiet suburban home. The story should start on a positive note. The Antagonists should not interrupt, although they can give the Hero dice.

Hero: As David drives, he can feel the stress of the day disappearing. He turns into his road. He's looking forward to dinner: he has a surprise. He's going to cook for Karen, his wife. He imagines her smiling when he tells her.

Then the Hero finds that his life has been destroyed. It is a scene of destruction and hate. Still, the Antagonists should not interrupt.

Hero: He stops the car. The front door is open. That's strange. He pushes it open. "Karen?". In the middle of the living room is what looks like a lump of meat. He looks closer. It's his cat. It's skinned. Then he looks around. There's graffiti on the walls. "You're next", it says. He yells "Karen? Where are you?" And then he realizes that she's gone.

Then the Antagonists interrupt. First, they sow suspicions that the Hero is in danger. Then they place the Hero in such danger that he needs to run.

Antagonist 1: Someone bangs on the door.

Hero: I don't answer it. I back away from the door so they can't see me.

Antagonist 2: They shout. "Mr Travis!"

Hero: Quietly, I go up the stairs so they can't hear me. I move towards the window, ducking in case someone's watching. I can smell Karen's perfume.

Antagonist 1: You can smell something else. Gasoline.

Antagonist 2: Then you realize, they're pouring it through the letter box. You risk a peek. The black liquid's flowing over the hallway.

Hero: I open the window.

Antagonist 3: It's locked.

Antagonist 1: "Burn him out", says a voice.

Antagonist 3: Then there's a huge explosion. Everything burns.

Antagonist 2: Thick black smoke.

Antagonist 1: Chokes you.

Finally, the Hero turns over the Destination card.

➤ *The Destination card says “Train”*

Hero: Running at the back of the house is a train track. The whole house starts shaking – there’s a freight train coming. I tear the bathroom cabinet off the wall, throw it through the window. Get ready to jump on to the train.

And the Antagonists reveal the Final Obstacle between the Hero and the Destination.

➤ *The Final Obstacle card says “Snipers”*

Antagonist 1: There’s a gunshot which just misses your left ear. It buries itself in the wall.

Antagonist 2: A glint catches your eye in the distance. Like there’s someone watching you through binoculars.

Antagonist 3: Another shot. This one shatters the mirror behind you.

Hero: I grab some towels, throw them out the window as a distraction. Run round to the bedroom window and force the lock. As the train hurtles past beneath me, I jump, landing in besides some empty crates.

And then the roll of the dice will determine whether the hero was damaged in his escape.

Once all of the players have narrated how the Hero gets out, they will narrate him trying to Get Away.

GET AWAY

In the Get Away scenes, the Hero runs for his life, trying to escape his pursuers. The Example of Play above is a good example of a Get Away scene.

The players continue to narrate Get Away scenes until the Final Obstacle card Get Wise is turned over by the Antagonists. The scene in which this card is turned is the first Get Wise scene.

GET WISE

The first Get Wise scene

When the Antagonists turn over the Final Obstacle card “Get Wise”, the current scene becomes the first Get Wise scene.

Of course, the Hero does not see the card. He will think he is narrating a normal Get Away scene.

So, at the end of the scene, he will turn over the Destination card and narrate seeing the new Destination, expecting there to be a Final Obstacle in his way:

➤ *The Hero turns over the Destination card, which is “Industrial Complex”. Although he does not know it, the Final Obstacle card is Get Wise*

Hero: Running through the field, I come to a wire fence. On the other side is some sort of chemical facility.

But there will be no Final Obstacle. Instead, the Hero will learn who hates him and why. The Antagonists will mostly narrate this scene, although the Hero may join in once the situation becomes clear:

Antagonist 1: You see a hole in the fence and climb through., you hear two guards talking. “Where is he,” says one, “Is he coming this way?”

Antagonist 3: “Stupid,” says another, “If his brother hadn’t stolen...”

Antagonist 2: “You steal our secrets, you get burnt.” Says the first. “That’s what happens to his brother. He got burnt. To a crisp.”

Antagonist 1: “How do we know the brother passed the secrets on?” says the other guard.

Antagonist 2: “That’s the funny thing. The guy we’re chasing? Doesn’t even know he’s got the secrets on him. His brother gave him a keyring. Thing is, that keyring holds data. All our production data for the last 10 years.”

Hero: I reach into your pocket and pull out the keyring my brother gave me. This thing? That’s what they were after?

The Hero will also find out that, for some reason, he must return home:

Antagonist 1: The guards walk off in different directions. But before they go, one of them stops. "What if this guy gets too close?" The other one smiles: "Don't worry. We've got his wife. Held hostage at his own home."

And note that no dice are rolled at the end of a Get Wise scene, because there is no Final Obstacle. The Hero gets to the new destination without difficulty.

The other Get Wise scenes

Immediately after the first Get Wise scene, each other player uses their turn to narrate their own Get Wise scene. Of course, they have the advantage that they know their Hero will Get Wise.

No Final Obstacle card is drawn for these scenes. However, a Destination card is drawn, and the Hero will get to this destination without difficulty. And again, no dice will be rolled.

In each scene, each Hero will learn who hates him and why. And he will learn a reason why he must return home.

When each player has narrated a Get Wise scene, they will narrate how the Hero Gets Back.

GET BACK

In the Get Back scenes, the Hero runs, trying to reach his home and evade his pursuers. The Example of Play above would also be a good example of a Get Back scene.

Reaching home

Eventually, a player narrating a Get Back scene will turn over the Destination card “Get Even”. The Destination for that scene is the Hero’s home. So that player should narrate the Hero seeing his home.

In the usual way, there will be a Final Obstacle between the Hero and his home and dice are rolled.

Immediately after that scene, each other player uses their turn to narrate one final Get Back scene. No Destination card is drawn for these scenes: the Destination is the Hero’s home. There will be a Final Obstacle between each Hero and his home and the dice are rolled as usual.

Once all the Heroes are home, they will Get Even.

GET EVEN

In the Get Even scene, the Hero confronts the people who hate him. One way or another, he gets even with them: kills them, imprisons them, humiliates them.

No Final Obstacle or Destination cards are drawn for this scene.

As with other scenes, the Antagonists award dice if they enjoy the story and take them away if they do not.

- Hero: Inside the house, David creeps towards the basement. He hears Karen's voice, a muffled scream, as if she's gagged.*
- Antagonist 1: As you creep, you hear a click behind you. You look behind. Two guards are pointing guns at you.*
- Hero: I open the door to the basement. There's a single gunshot. It misses me. I run down the steps. There's Karen, on the floor, her hands tied with electrical cable.*
- Antagonist 2: And there's a man. Leaning calmly on the wall. Wearing a dove-grey suit, with a silk tie. He smiles, as the guards cover you with their guns.*
- Antagonist 3: "We haven't met," said the man, "Paris Courtney. I run Global Chemicals. Didn't I see you at my factory earlier?"*
- Hero: My voice catches in my throat. "Let my wife go," I say, "She knows nothing about this."*
- Antagonist 1: "I can't do that, David", says the man. "Now. I understand you have some data. Stolen by your brother?"*
- Hero: I reach into my pocket. Take out the keyring. At the same time, I conceal the syringe in my hand. I give him the keyring.*
- Antagonist 3: "Thank you." Says the man.*
- Hero: "Will you leave me alone now?" I say.*
- Antagonist 2: "I'm afraid not. You see, now we've disposed of the data, we need to dispose of you."*

At the end of the scene, the Hero narrates how the people who hate him meet their end.

Hero: I lurch back into the guard behind me. While he's off balance, I plunge the syringe into the other guard. He drops his gun. I take it. I shoot both of them.

Antagonist 1: The man in the silk tie looks at you, with panic in his eyes: "No," he says, "Let's talk about this. Let's make a deal."

Hero: I untie Karen.

Antagonist 2: As you do that, the man knocks the gun out of your hand.

Hero: Quick as a flash, I strangle him with the electrical cable. As the life leaves his body, he falls to the floor. The light dies from his eyes.

Then, the Hero rolls the dice he has accumulated during that scene. The total is compared against the highest number on the Final Obstacle cards which the player holds – that is, the Final Obstacles which the player was damaged after facing.

If the total roll is less than the highest number on the Final Obstacle cards, then the Hero has been damaged by the chase. He should narrate a bittersweet ending, in which the Hero returns to his life damaged and scarred.

Hero: Karen stares at me. "You killed him," she says. "You killed him." She looks scared, as though I might kill her. I reach out to her, but the electrical cable is still in my hand. Terrified, she runs up the stairs. I hear her lock the basement door. In the dark, I look at my hands, and wonder about what I've done.

If the total roll equals or exceeds the highest number on the Final Obstacle cards, then the Hero has survived the chase undamaged. He should narrate a happy ending, in which the Hero regains what he has lost, or at least comes to terms with the loss.

Hero: Karen runs to my arms. She cries. "It's OK, baby," I say, "He's gone." And I pick up the keyring. Contained on it is enough information to make us rich.

HOW THE STORY MOVES ON

For reference, here is a breakdown of how the game progresses from one type of scene to the next.

- In their first turn, each player narrates a **Get Out** scene.
- Once each player has narrated a Get Out scene, the players narrate **Get Away** scenes. They continue doing this until the Final Obstacle card “Get Wise” is turned.
- The scene in which the “Get Wise” card is turned is the first **Get Wise** scene. After the first Get Wise scene, each of the other players should use their turn to narrate a Get Wise scene.
- Once each player has narrated a Get Out scene, the players narrate **Get Back** scenes. They continue doing this until the Destination card “Get Even” is turned.
 - When the “Get Even” card is turned, the Destination for the scene being narrated is the Hero’s home.
 - All of the other players, in their next turn, narrate one final Get Back scene, in which the Destination is their Hero’s home.
- To end the game, each of the players narrates a **Get Even** scene.

THE CARDS

Destination cards

Destination COUNTRYSIDE	Destination CITY	Destination TOWN
Destination BEACH	Destination TRAIN	Destination ROADS
Destination WASTELAND	Destination MOUNTAINS	Destination MOORS
Destination OFFICES	Destination TOWER	Destination AEROPLANE
Destination RESEARCH FACILITY	Destination UNDERGROUND	GET EVEN

Final Obstacle cards

Final Obstacle GUARD 14	Final Obstacle CAMERAS 9	Final Obstacle SNIPERS 18
Final Obstacle SECURITY SYSTEM 11	Final Obstacle HIGH WALL 10	Final Obstacle GUARDS 20
Final Obstacle POLICE 7	Final Obstacle DETECTIVES 13	Final Obstacle ELECTRICITY 12
Final Obstacle CROWD 5	Final Obstacle LYNCH MOB 25	Final Obstacle FIRE 17
Final Obstacle WATER 8	Final Obstacle DOGS 16	GET WISE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This game was written in 24 hours, starting at 2pm on 10 September 2005 and ending before 2pm on 11 September 2005.

It is an entry for Ron Edwards' "Ronnies" competition, which challenged the entrants to design a roleplaying game based on two of the following words: Suburb, Hatred, Girlfriend and Rat. I chose Suburb and Hatred.

The idea of narrating a story with a known ending is stolen from Paul Czege's game *My Life With Master*. Many other things are stolen from that game too.

The structure of the chase story is stolen from Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey" story structure, outlined in his book "The Hero with a Thousand Faces". I learnt the structure from Christopher Vogler's book "The Writer's Journey".