

The G.A.M.E. System
(generic action mediation engine)

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What this game is about:

This isn't exactly a "game" in the usual RPG sense. Oh there's characters, advancement, fighty stuff, and so on. However, this is something else. It's a bit more, while being a bit less. If you're a veteran of many RPG sessions, have you ever watched an action movie and thought to yourself, "Man, I wish I could play a character who could do all that." I know I have. The Generic Action Mediation System is basically a blank slate of a system that liberates the players and the characters to act how they choose in feats of heroism and skill. This game is about challenging yourself to top yourself each and every time your character faces a challenging situation. Liberate your dreams, then do them.

What the characters do:

Characters in the GAME system are given destinies (chosen by their players). They have an opportunity to reach this destiny through what is called a Campaign. Characters are blessed with any number of tools and advantages to help them achieve their destinies. Their choices will affect the entire world. In my mind, the default "setting" is usually a fantasy world full of all those tropes we've come to expect and love, and in fact, some of my examples in this game will reflect that predication. A lord of darkness constantly wars against a lord of light. A prophecy that a group of heroes who have each reached their destiny will overthrow one or the other. Those sorts of things. However, GAME is not limited to that in any way. Setting elements such as these are treated more like color and are highly dependant on the sorts of destinies the players want to explore. The focus of play should not be so much on the geography and peoples of the world, but on the characters and what they can achieve.

What the players do:

Players guide their characters through the Campaign. Each player who portrays a character must choose his Destiny. The player is challenged with using all the tools and advantages of the system to overcome the challenges his character faces on his fated path. The GM uses the characters' Destinies to craft a Situation. This Situation is what he will present the characters with at the beginning of the Campaign. He is not to tell them which side to choose, which NPCs they can trust, or how their characters will reach their Destiny. Those decisions are left up to the players and are discovered through the process of play. The GM does not need to prep a story in advance. The story should emerge as the destinies of the characters are explored.

Chargen (Character Generation):

Creating characters in the GAME is easy. There are 7 steps:

- 1) Choose a Heritage
- 2) Choose a Trade
- 3) Choose 10 Skills
- 4) Generate Your Stats and Values

- 5) Generate Your Relationships
- 6) Equip Your Character
- 7) Create Your Destiny

1) Choosing a Heritage:

A character's Heritage is his or her background. It can be anything about the character that comes from his or her background. Each player can choose whatever he wants to be his character's Heritage, be it a Family Name, a Church or Denomination, a Tribe, a Diet, a Culture, a Home Town, Schooling, a Clan, Upbringing, Sexual Orientation, a Species, a Race, or a Nationality. Players should consider their character very carefully. What aspect of your character's ancestry is most important to his or her identity and future? Does the father's last name matter most? Is he or she descended from a powerful overlord, god, or master? Is it culture or genetics that is key to understanding who he or she truly is and will someday become? Whatever matters most to you, as the player, whatever you want to come up most in play, should be what you write in for your character's Heritage.

2) Choosing a Trade

Your character has learned a skill or profession of some kind during his or her life. It could be something simple like "student" or "blacksmith." It could be something much more grand like "starfury pilot" or "holy avenger." Much like a character's Heritage, a character's Trade will affect his or her past and future. Choosing a Trade signals to the GM and to the other players what types of stories, adventures, and challenges you want to have with your character. A Trade isn't necessarily what your character is "good at," but instead reflects the career path he or she might have chosen and the types of goals you will likely pursue in the future as you play.

3) Choosing 10 Skills

When your character begins the path towards Destiny, he or she will have been mentored by someone else in the same Trade. During this mentoring process, your character would have picked up some very useful techniques and methods of survival. In this stage of character generation, choose any 10 skills to write on your character's Record Sheet. Note some skills might be more useful for your character than others. Players are free to create skills their characters might use while adventuring, but they are cautioned not to make any skill too broad or narrow in scope. A skill too broad creates a dependency that stymies creativity. A skill too narrowly defined will seldom see use. Consult your GM when creating your skills for your character, and remember challenging yourself to use these skills in important and creative ways is a huge part of the fun of playing the GAME system. Once you have chosen your character's skills, move on to the next step.

4) Generating your Stats and Values

Each character has several stats and values. These are numerical representations of a character's prowess, capabilities, and resources. They will come into use frequently during a campaign as your character attempts to overcome hardships and conflicts.

Stats

Each character begins with 6 stats- three physical and three mental. Stats are your character's inborn capabilities. They help determine how well he or she will perform in a crisis situation. When rolling during a contest, players will choose which stat best fits the situation and take dice from that stat to create a dice pool. The creation and use of dice pools are covered in greater detail in the Resolution chapter of this book. Players can create the names for their six stats and add their own descriptions, however I have included six example stats (Brawn, Agility, Toughness, Logic, Empathy, and Presence) that can be used as the default statistics for a character. All stats start out with a Die Number and Size of one d4. As a character advances, the Number and Size of the dice will increase (this is covered later in the Advancement chapter). Below is a description of each of the example Stats.

Physical Stats

Brawn

Brawn is a character's ability to use his or her muscles in a brute-force way. It can cover everything from lifting heavy objects to slamming objects into each other to pushing objects against an opposing force. This Stat is useful in combat and in physically forcing one's way through or out of an obstacle of some kind. Brawn is most associated with raw muscle power.

Agility

Agility is a character's ability to use his or her body with finesse. It can cover everything from running to swinging to fine motor control. It applies both to large and fluid movements of the body and minute and controlled movements of the body. Agility is useful in combat and in avoiding or surpassing obstacles that are in the character's way. Agility is most associated with controlled movements, dexterity, reflexes, grace, and efficient use of physical prowess.

Toughness

Toughness is a character's ability to use his or her musculature to withstand physical use. It can cover everything from stamina to resilience to endurance. Toughness can be used in combat when taking a hit or to withstand the onslaught of an obstacle of some kind such as extreme temperatures or weather phenomena. This Stat is most associated with using one's bulk to take physical punishment without losing effectiveness and one's ability to physically endure pain or discomfort.

Mental Stats

Logic

Logic is a character's ability to use his or her mind to think unemotionally and scientifically about a situation. It can cover anything from mathematics to memorization to reading comprehension to reasoning. Logic can be used when dealing with magic, problem solving, debating, or concentration. It is most associated with science, rational thought, and clear thinking.

Empathy

Empathy is a character's ability to use his or her mind to read the emotions and moods of the people and places around him. It can cover everything from intuition to compassion to guessing to manipulation. Empathy can be used when dealing with magic, romance, emotions, fortune telling, or when a situation calls for educated guesses. It is most associated with gut feelings, hunches, and faith.

Presence

Presence is a character's ability to use his mind to influence other living creatures. It can cover everything from leadership to romance to deception. Presence can be used when dealing with magic or when a situation involves influencing other beings. Presence is most associated with one's looks, appearance, confidence, aura, and inspiration.

Values

Each character also has several other significant values. They are divided into three categories: Barriers, Miscellaneous, and Progression. First are the 4 Barriers: Mystical, Natural, Influence, and Damage. Under the "Miscellaneous" category are one's Rate of Healing, Initiative, and Hits. And finally, the Progression category keeps track of the character's Destiny Score and Advancement Points. All scores begin at ZERO with the exception of Rate of Healing and Hits. Each is explained in greater detail below.

Barriers

Barriers are a character's natural ability to resist harmful, outside forces. For each point in an applicable Barrier, the Default Difficulty for actions or effects against that character is raised by 1. (This will be explained in greater detail later in the Resolution chapter) The Mystical Barrier protects against supernatural abilities or effects. The Natural Barrier protects against poisons, toxins, and diseases. The Influence Barrier protects against skills, spells, and abilities that try to alter a character's intent or emotions. Skills like Charm, Intimidate, Interrogate, and so on fall under this category along with situations that might cause the character to flee in terror or fall in love with someone. The Damage Barrier protects a character from being physically harmed by an opponent. It increases the Default Difficulty your opponent must roll against during combat (see the Resolution chapter). The values of your various Barriers may not exceed 10 for any reason nor drop below 0 (zero) for any reason.

Rate of Healing

A character's rate of healing governs how many "hits" they recover per hour of rest. Hour of Rest can be defined as 60 minutes of undisturbed inactivity. A character can read, talk, sleep, eat, drink, and muse during the hour and still be "at rest". However, walking, fighting, working, etc. are all considered non-restful activities and cannot be performed while a character is trying to heal. Your Rate of Healing may not exceed 10 for any reason nor drop below 0 for any reason. All characters begin with a Rate of Healing (RoH) of 1.

Initiative

Initiative is used when deciding what order characters will act when more than one character wants to act at the same time. Your Initiative value cannot exceed 10 for any reason, nor can it be lowered past 0 for any reason. Applying your initiative during a contest will be further explained in the Resolution portion of this game.

Hits

The "Hits" value is a measure of how much physical damage a character can take. Each time he is struck by a weapon or suffers physical trauma of some kind, he will lose Hits. The real nature and use of Hits is explained in greater detail in the Resolution chapter of this game. All characters begin with 5 Hits.

Destiny Score

A character's Destiny Score tracks how close he is to attaining his goal. The higher the value, the closer you are. When a character reaches 15 Destiny Points, he has a "Moment of Truth" (explained in the Endgame section). You will choose a Destiny for your character later in the character generation process.

Advancement Points

During the campaign, a character will face many challenges. These challenges will make him stronger and bring him closer to fulfilling his Destiny. Advancement Points is a game currency used to represent a character's learning and progression. These points are spent to increase his power in his various aspects such as Heritage and Trade as well as improve his other Values. Spending Advancement Points is covered later in the Advancement chapter. This line on the character sheet is there for you to keep track of the number of unspent AP's you have accumulated. Each character begins with 0. There is no maximum; however, once an AP is spent, it is gone forever.

5) Generate Your Relationships

Your character has gotten to know the other characters in some form or fashion. Over time, he has built up relationships with some of them. In this phase of character generation, you will choose what type of relationship you have with 1 to 3 other characters portrayed by the other players. Each relationship has certain features that will enhance your character's prowess in contests. Relationships are one-way. Both characters do not need to have the same relationship with each other or even with the same characters. Each character is free to have his own unique relationship to each other character. Below is a description of each kind of relationship.

Antipathy

You hate this other person. He or she is your mortal enemy. You would almost never pass up an opportunity to strike at him or her. This is a person you would never trust or love.

Bonus: +2d8 when in conflict with this person.

Handicap: Drop one of your highest die results when working cooperatively with this person.

Blood

You and another character share the same Heritage. You may or may not have known each other from birth, but you do share at some commonality as far as your ancestry is concerned.

Bonus: +1 Heritage Die when you are within eyesight of the other character.

Romantic

You are romantically involved with another character. Your love may be reciprocated or unrequited; regardless, you feel a deep attraction to the other person.

Bonus: +1 to all Barriers while you are within eyesight of the other character.

Friendship

You and the other character have been chums for some time now. You've gotten to know each other's strengths and weakness. You regard the other person as a close ally.

Bonus: +1 Stat Die when engaging the same foe.

Professional

You and one of the other characters share the same or similar Trade. You share your knowledge and are good at working together to solve problems.

Bonus: +1 Trade Die when you within eyesight of the other character.

Indebted

You owe a personal debt to another character. Perhaps he saved your life. Perhaps he saved your family's farm. Either way, you owe him something and are insecure when he is not around.

Bonus: +1 to your Rate of Healing while the other character is within eyesight of you.

Survival

Without the other character, you would not be walking around alive now...an neither would he. Both of you rely upon each other for protection and support.

Bonus: You earn one Advancement Point when you help the other character succeed during a Destiny Moment.

Casual

Your relationship with the other character is informal at best. Both of you are heading in the same direction and mutual trust is not an issue.

Bonus: +1d4 to all actions while you are within eyesight of the other character.

Spiritual

There is a religious connection between yourself and another character. You share the same or very similar faith values. One of you may even be a spiritual mentor to the other.

Bonus: Each of you begin with 1 extra Spiritual Ability, but you can only use that ability if you are making physical contact each other.

Special Note: You may only have one Relationship for each other character. For instance, you cannot have both a Survival and Romantic relationship with the same person.

6. Equipping Your Character

In The GAME system, a character relies on his gear as much as he relies on people. Each character was given the following by his mentor before he left the master's presence: **One New Weapon** (player's choice) **and Sheath or Holster** (includes 25 pieces of ammunition and an appropriate container for that ammunition), **One Traveling Outfit, One Formal Outfit, One Haversack, One Bedroll, One Utility Knife, One Suit of Light Armor** (player's choice), **a 1 gallon liquid storage device** (full), **One Large Food Pouch** (with 2wks of provisions), **and One Utility Kit** (that he can use to fulfill basic survival chores). Characters also begin with 10 pieces of the basic currency they may keep or spend on equipment during this phase.

7. Creating Your Destiny

The most important facet of creating your character is the last. Choosing your Destiny is a big step. To begin, imagine all the great heroes you have ever head of, read about, or seen in movies. What did they accomplish that made them so great in your eyes? Would you like to be like them or do you want to accomplish beyond what even they could imagine? Take some time to consider what Destiny you want for your character. What follows next are some sample Destinies that might get your imagination working:

- ❖ Become King of a Nation
- ❖ Stop a Terrorist Attack
- ❖ Save a Princess
- ❖ Avenge the Death of Someone you Love
- ❖ Destroy a City
- ❖ Become the Head of A Covenant
- ❖ Become a General in the Army
- ❖ Discover an Ancient Space Station
- ❖ Slay an Ancient Creature
- ❖ Become a Wealthy Aristocrat
- ❖ Discover a New Kind of Magic or Technology
- ❖ Make love to the most beautiful man/woman in the world.
- ❖ Discover a Lost Artifact
- ❖ Free your People from Slavery or Tyranny.

Once you have chosen your character's Destiny, you are ready to begin adventuring. However, if you have not read all the way through this book yet, it may be wise to do so. There are many secrets still contained within its pages.

Character Advancement

Characters change. This is an inalienable truth. In The GAME system, your characters will also change. One thing that you will have to unlearn if you have played other role-playing games is that as a character advances in The GAME system, the options that are open to him do not scale up in power. The options he has from the first day he begins will be the same ones he has the day he puts down his weapon and retires. The power of available options at the first session of the Campaign are the same as those available on the 19th session. The point of this game is not to marginalize the players' strategies and tactics by creating ever more powerful skills, spells, and feats. It instead is designed to open up more depth of play and further characters' progress towards their destiny by providing more and more options as you go.

Characters advance when their players spend Advancement Points on various options. Advancement Points (APs) are earned by the players in several ways. At the beginning of each session, every player-character receives 5 APs. This includes the session where the players create their characters—even if you don't play. However, if a player does not show up to play that night, his character does not receive any APs in this manner. Players also earn 1 AP for each group of **3 or more dice** available to them that they choose NOT to use on a roll that when resolving a contest. Resolving contests is explained in the Resolution section of this game. Players also receive 1 AP each time their character helps another character during a *Moment of Destiny*. Moments of Destiny are times your character moves closer to achieving his ultimate goal. Characters can also receive 1 AP each time they perform an action that involves one of their Passions. Passions are explained below, and all participants should remember that a situation involving a Passion can be subjective. It is best for the GM to be as generous to your fellow players as possible when it comes to invoking a Passion. The object of Passions is to increase motivation and attention to scenes during a campaign. They are not to be used as points of contention between players.

APs can be spent at any time a character has an hour or so of peace and quiet to meditate and rest. The middle of combat or during a public debate are inappropriate times to spend APs. However, when

your character has a moment to contemplate life and how he is living it, there are several things you-as the player-can spend your APs on. Below is a comprehensive list of ways you can advance your character using APs. See Appendix C for sample lists of Abilities, Allies, Contacts, Advantages, Items, etc.

- ❖ Gain a New Skill- Cost: 1
- ❖ Gain a New Relationship to another Character- Cost: 2
- ❖ Raise your Initiative by +1- Cost: 3
- ❖ Gain a Passion- Cost: 3
- ❖ Gain +1 to your Hits- Cost: 4
- ❖ Gain a New Advantage- Cost 4
- ❖ Gain a Mystical, Social, Spiritual, Technical, or Combat Ability- Cost: 4
- ❖ Gain a New Spell or Psionic Power- Cost: 4
- ❖ Gain a Special Ally or Contact- Cost: 4
- ❖ Increase any die Size by 1- Cost: 5
- ❖ Practice With Your Weapon or Armor- Cost: 5
- ❖ Increase a Barrier by +1- Cost: 6
- ❖ Increase any die Number by 1- Cost: 7
- ❖ Gain a Mystical Item- Cost: minimum of 8
- ❖ Gain an Artifact- Cost: minimum of 13

Moment of Destiny

A Moment of Destiny is a time when your character is getting very close to a clue or big step forward in achieving his ultimate goal in life. Any scene can be declared a “Destiny Moment” by any player for his or her character, though only one player at any time may make such a declaration. Be kind to your other players and do not monopolize the spotlight during every scene. Destiny Moments are serious times, and it is not a race to see who can get there first.

When declaring a Destiny Moment, there must be some conflict already in play. For instance, the PCs walk into a local saloon looking for information. The barkeep probably has some dirt on everyone and player-character, Rastiss, wants to declare this a Destiny Moment. He must then engage the barkeep in some kind of conflict. It could be as simple as bribing him with a few dollars to spill the beans, to using his Charm skills to force him to tell what he knows, all the way to a fist fight between the two characters. If the character is successful in resolving the conflict in his favor, then he or she receives one Destiny Point and all those who helped him earn one Advancement Point. The player of Rastiss must then describe what he learns or finds and how it relates to his Destiny. This is not something the GM does. This is a player’s big moment to show off and develop the character’s story. What clue did you discover? Where does it lead next? What might your next Destiny Moment involve? Your narration of the outcome of the conflict must at the very least answer those three questions. Of course, Fate is a fickle thing. Just because you answer those questions now doesn’t mean they will come true. However, it will give you and the GM an idea of what’s coming next.

When a character reaches 15 Destiny Points the player may declare a Moment of Truth. This is explained further in the Endgame section of this book.

Passions

Passions are things your character cares deeply about. They can be anything from a **person** to a **place** to an **object** to an **emotion** to an **activity**. Almost anything can be a passion. Whenever your

character is in a situation where his Passion could come into play, you must declare it to the GM. Once you do, your Passion grants you a bonus 1d6 to use for the rest of the scene for any roll you make. At the end of the scene, you gain 1 AP if you made at least one roll. Each character begins with one Passion. You may purchase others for 3 APs, but you may only have a maximum of seven (7) Passions at one time. You may choose to “buy out” a Passion. If you do, erase it from your character sheet and add 2 APs to your Advancement Point total.

Gaining a New Skill

Each character begins with 10 skills, but that may not be enough for your purposes. Buying a new skill is simple. Pay 1 AP and either choose one from the list in Appendix A or create your own according to the guidelines mentioned in the Character Generation chapter. Write the new Skill under the Skill Section of your character’s Record Sheet and you are now free to use it whenever the occasion arises.

Gaining a New Relationship

Characters begin with one to three relationships to other characters in their group. These relationships may change from time to time and new ones will be formed. If you wish to end a current relationship, erase it from your Record Sheet and add 1 AP to your Advancement Point total. To gain a new Relationship, spend 2 APs, pick another character and write down one of the Relationships mentioned in the Character Generation chapter. Characters may not have more than three relationships at a time and never have more than one relationship with the same character.

Increasing the Number and Size of Dice

Each character starts off with 1d4 in his Stats, Trade, and Heritage. The number of dice for each and the size of dice for each can be increased by spending APs. For instance, Rastiss could spend 7 APs to raise the Number of dice in his Brawn Stat. Now he would have 2d4. Next, he could pay 5 AP to raise the Size of the dice he uses for his Brawn Stat by one Size. So now he would have 2d6. There are five Sizes for dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, and d12). Once a stat or value hits the d12, it cannot be advanced further. Likewise, a character cannot raise the Number of dice he rolls per Stat, Trade, or Heritage by more than 5. Therefore the maximum Number and Size per Stat, Trade, or Heritage is 5d12.

Gaining Mystical Items and Artifacts

Mystical Items and Artifacts are powerful creations, but might not be included in every type of campaign. They’re optional. They can be anything from a weapon, to a ring, to a piece of clothing. Mystical items tend to be simpler creations. Typically they are weapons and armor and sometimes jewelry. When a player spends at least 8 APs to get one, he or she chooses what kind of object it is and how it is used. It automatically has a die Number and Size of 1d8. For each AP he spends beyond the initial 8, he may increase its Number or Size by 1. Once the player has bought the item, the GM must somehow introduce the item by the end of the same session in which the player purchased it (with APs). If that is not possible, the character begins with the item at the beginning of the next session. The character may be given the item, or he may have to take the item from someone else by force. The method of delivery is up to the GM.

Artifacts are ancient items created for the heroes of old. They can add mystery, intrigue, a sense of history, and a sense of importance to any campaign, even one with a heavy Sci-fi leaning. They are extremely rare and powerful. Having one is an honor, having two is unheard of. If a player spends the minimum 13 APs required to receive one, he may also choose to spend additional APs to increase the Number of dice associated with it. All Artifacts begin with a die number and size of 1d12. Players may buy up the die Number and Size from there at a cost of 1 AP per Number. He may also add additional features to the

Artifact such as spells, powers, and abilities by spending an amount of APs equal to half their cost (rounded up) on the character Advancement Table. Just like Mystical Items, the character must end up with the artifact somehow, somehow by the end of the next scene in the Campaign no matter how trivial that scene might be. Each artifact **automatically** has three aspects or bonuses (ex: Cast a Spell 1x per day, Use an Ability 1x per day, increase the number or size of one chosen resource by 1 at all times, has a curse that lowers the character's RoH by 1, etc.) **in addition to extra powers** and bonuses the player might purchase. The player buying the Artifact gets to choose one of those aspects, another player gets to choose the second aspect, and the GM chooses the third. Like a mystical item, an Artifact should end up in a character's possession by the end of the session.

Resolution- Getting Things Done

The resolution system in the GAME system is a bit unique. When in a contest, whether it is against another person, an inanimate object, supernatural powers, or force of nature, the player must make a "roll" and draw upon the resources his character has at hand to achieve success. These resources can include each of the following: Stats, Trade, Heritage, one weapon or piece of equipment, one Mystical Item and one Artifact. Each of these aspects of a character has dice associated with it. These dice form the pool that the character uses to accomplish his feats of heroism. Using this pool along with Skills, Spells, and Abilities is covered in the following sections.

Generating Your Pool

To generate your Pool, you will draw on all your character's appropriate resources. For instance, you can draw dice from your character's Heritage and Trade. Add to it the dice from one or more of your character's Stats that best fit the situation along with one piece of gear your character has access to. Then finally add any dice you have from one Mystical item and one Artifact that the character is actively using (if your character has such items). Some contests may only include a character's Stats. Some may use dice from all the possible resources listed here. The character must be actively using each aspect in order to add that aspect's dice to his pool. You may have to justify to the GM why you drawing dice from each resource if there is a dispute. Once your Pool is created, you are ready to roll with it

Using Your Pool

Collect all the dice you have chosen to use and then roll them. In any given contest, the Default Difficulty (the target number you will need to beat with your rolls) is 8. You must add the result of all your rolls together to either meet or exceed the number 8. If you can make that total on one die great! If not, you may group any number of dice together to get there. Now it's possible that you can create several groups of dice that to meet or exceed the Default Difficulty (DD). If so, that means your character may perform a number actions equal to the number of groups of dice that meet or exceed the DD during his or her turn to act. So for example, if you can make five groups of dice the equal 8 or more, your character can take up to five actions! Running your character's full movement and readying your character's weapons do not count as actions.

For each grouping of dice meets or exceeds the Default Difficulty you must choose a skill that your character has if at all possible. He is considered to have succeeded in using this skill. So for instance, if the character Rastiss wanted to pick a lock he would have to first have the skill Pick Lock then have a grouping of dice that met or exceeded 8. If he wanted to pick the lock and do it quietly, he would have to have both the skills of Pick Lock and Move Silent and have two groupings of dice whose total met or

exceeded 8. However, if a character wants to attempt an action **without the appropriate skill**, the Default Difficulty becomes **16 instead**. So, for instance, if he wanted to find evidence that a local bully was extorting the shop owners but didn't have the "find evidence," "investigation," or "find dirt on someone" skill, he would have to have a dice group that totals 16 or better to find what he was looking for. Players may always adjust their next action in light of the result of their previous action. So if a dagger does not penetrate the armor of a foe on the first group of dice that beat the Default Difficulty, the player may choose to perform other actions with the rest of his successful rolls if he so desires. He is not locked into attacking every time with a dagger for no damage.

Modifiers to the Default Difficulty

There are several things that can raise the Default Difficulty. Barriers are a good example. If a Barrier can apply in a contest, then the Default Difficulty is raised by the target's Barrier Value. For instance, the Intimidate Ability tries to weaken a character's Stats. Rastiss, a character with the Intimidate Ability, wishes to use this Ability against another character named Phaedren. Phaedren has a Value of 2 in his Influence Barrier. The Default Difficulty for Rastiss is now 10 instead of 8.

GMs may also create Hazards. Hazards are modifiers that can hinder a character's attempts. Each scene, the GM can create 1 Hazard per player-character that is in the scene. The Hazards add +1 modifier to the Default Difficulty for the scene. All dice groupings for that scene would now need to meet or beat the value of 9. The GM must describe the Hazard to the other players and how it would affect their characters' actions. Hazards are limited to the immediate area around the characters, but do carry over from cycle to cycle if the player-characters revisit that same site.

Initiative

If an contest occurs where more than one character is wanting to act at the same time (in combat for example), then a specific order of actions is needed. This order is called Initiative. It will have a value between zero and ten. Whenever characters are attempting to act simultaneously, the GM will begin counting down starting at ten. When your character's number comes up, it will be your turn to act. That will be the order you follow until the contest is resolved. If characters have the same Initiative, then they are considered to have acted at the exact same time. Players will have to decide amongst themselves who will actually narrate their character's actions first or they can collaborate to intertwine their characters' actions.

Narrating Your Character's Actions

Rolling the dice to see if you succeed is one thing, but explaining that success is another. When your character's turn comes up and you've rolled all your dice, only you will know how your character succeeded or failed in his or her actions. It's up to you, the player, to explain what he or she did and how it turned out. Use this as an opportunity to explore your own creativity. The game will benefit from your narration and color. The more exciting you tell the story, the more interested your fellow participants will be in what your character does.

Damage

In combat, your character may suffer or inflict damage. The damage system in The GAME system is very simple. Weapons are divided into three categories: Light, Medium, and Heavy. Light weapons tend to be smaller and include things like daggers, pistols, and slings. Medium weapons are arms like broadswords, rifles, crossbows, baseball bats, and the like. Heavy Weapons are those whose size makes them very formidable in battle. Weapons like battleaxes, claymores, lances, longbows, shotguns, assault

rifles, and grenades fall into this category. Light weapons deal 2 Hits. Medium weapons deal 3 Hits, and Heavy weapons deal 4 Hits.

Using Your Abilities, Powers, and Spells

Using Abilities in The GAME system requires a skill check. The skill required is associated with the kind of ability you wish to use. For instance, to activate a Mystical Ability you must use the “Use Mystical Ability” skill. For Combat Abilities it is “Use Combat Ability” skill. Spells require the employment of the “Use Spell” or “Spellcasting” skill. Each Ability, Power, or Spell may only be used once per session. However, if the attempted use of an Ability is foiled, canceled, aborted, or countered in some way, that attempt does not count as a “use.”

Unused Dice

Quite often you will have a group of dice left over that you either didn’t need or didn’t total 8. If you have 3 or more dice left unused, you can exchange them for 1 AP. If you have a group with less than 3 dice in it, those dice are simply lost and their results ignored.

Just Saying Yes

Sometimes a situation may arise that would normally require the player to make a roll, however, the GM views the situation as either trivial or critical to the story’s advancement. In these cases, the GM has the power to just say, “You succeed” without any roll being necessary.

Taking a “16”

There may be times while you are playing that you don’t want to take the chance of rolling to see if you can overcome an obstacle. In these instances, you may take a “16.” This means that you forgo rolling dice and settle for the total value of 16. This should be a success on any normal roll vs. the Default Difficulty. However, taking a 16 costs the character time. 16 minutes must pass while the character works on overcoming whatever obstacle for which the player would rather just take a 16. For instance, if a character has time and wants to disarm a spring trap, the player make declare that he or she is “Taking a 16.” If the character has 16 consecutive minutes to work on the trap, that character earns a 16 value for his roll. If that beats the Default Difficulty plus any modifiers, the character automatically succeeds. If the DD is higher than 16, the character must take a number of minutes equal to or greater than the DD in order to succeed.

The Setting

The GAME system is setting agnostic. There’s not one included as a default setting for play.

The GM’s Responsibility

At the beginning of the Campaign the GM must create a Situation. A Situation is comprised of five main parts: Geography, People, Relationships, Agendas, and Points of Interest. It is your job, as GM, to create these for the players to explore. The following sections detail how you can do this.

Geography

Geography is simple. Whether you draw a map or simply explain the lay of the land, it will be up to you to generate the initial local for the adventure. Forests, tunnels, stashes, stations, cities, caves, mansions, are all examples of places on which you can base your setting. My advice is to start small and then add more as play naturally expands the setting organically.

People

A land full of places but no people is boring. Once you have the locale of the Situation decided it's time to populate it. You can safely assume that the towns, cities, and villages are all filled with people who are about their busy lives. Those you do not have to worry about. But significant NPCs and monsters are another matter. They all want something and need someone or something else to get it.

Relationships

Now that you have several NPCs to work with, it is now time to decide what they want and how they all interact with each other. There are several methods of doing this. One is to list them out, individual by individual and write down how they interact and feel about one or more of the other people in your list. Another way is to plot them out in a circle on a sheet of paper. Draw lines to show which people know each other and what they want from that person. Think about how these people get along? Do they work in concert? Do they hunt each other? Are there secret relationships no one knows about? This step in Situation creation mainly ties the characters and setting together so that when the player-characters begin their campaign you will be prepared for whatever direction they choose to take.

Agendas

Each of the people you created for your Geography wants something. What is that? What is each of them after? This step is almost like choosing Destinies for the player-characters. Decide what each of these people and creatures you've created for your Geography want to get, want to become, or want to go. Giving your characters Agendas will bring them to life for your players and make the setting even more vibrant to explore.

Points of Interest

Points of Interest is a broad category. It can mean a place, a person, or an item. A place that might be a point of interest would be a cave or ruins or bottomless pool of water. Items of interest could be a treasure hoard, an artifact, or an ancient manuscript. People of interest may be religious leaders, politicians, historians, magi, or experts in a field of study.

Once you have your Geography and People created, along with their Relationships and Agendas and any other Points of Interest, you have completed a basic Situation. It will grow more complex and interesting as you play, but now you are now ready to begin the game.

The most important thing, though, that you can do as a GM is to take into account the Passions, Relationships, and Destinies of the player-characters. Those should be the core of everything you build. Read them first. Glean details from the information provided to you by the players to flesh out the setting you'll use in play. In fact, the entire character sheet provided to you by the players is full of clues about what challenges they want to face, what foes they want to vanquish, and what conflicts they want to have. Take that into account as you build the world for them.

The Endgame

All stories come to an end. That is the way of things. Characters too will have their end, one way or another. Sometimes the events of the game will bring your character to his or her death. Sometimes the characters will achieve their Destinies. And sometimes your characters will want more than that. This section covers all three possibilities.

Death and Dying

It is possible that through combat or other unfortunate events your character will perish. If any character gets to zero hits, he or she falls unconscious. If any character goes below zero hits or is caught up in some catastrophic event such as a massive explosion, the character dies. If it's a player-character, you will need a new one. Look back over the Relationships mentioned in the Character Generation chapter. Create a new character that has one of those Relationships to your old character (this may be "bought off" immediately if the player so desires). This new Character will follow all the same rules as creating a new character with several additions.

- ❖ First, your new character inherits all the equipment of your old character
- ❖ Second your new character gains a number of APs equal to 10 plus the combined Trade and Heritage die Numbers of your old character.
- ❖ He gains the Passion: Honoring (Your Old Character's) Memory
- ❖ Your new character may, at your choosing, inherit all the old Relationships and Passions your old character established at no AP cost.
- ❖ Your new character may, at your choosing, gain all the skills you had purchased for your old character. If not, the new character begins with 15 skills of your choice.

Reaching Your Destiny

Once your character has accumulated 15 Destiny Points, he or she may embark on a Moment of Truth at a time of your choosing. A moment of truth is your one shot to reach your Destiny or fail trying. When a player declares a Moment of Truth, the game is reaching one of its apexes. Your goals and your character's goals are on the line. At this point, anything else going on in the Campaign comes to a halt. It is your time to shine.

The GM now will consult with you concerning what you have in mind for your character to do. You must communicate your intentions clearly and in as much detail as you can. It will then be up to the GM to help you get the opportunity. There is no guarantee of success. That is up to you and your fellow players. Below is an example of a Moment of Truth. The players are James (who is portraying the character Rastiss) and his GM Frank.

Frank (GM): Okay, you guys have entered the capital city.

James: I declare a Moment of Truth for Rastiss.

Frank (GM): Alright, what's your Destiny?

James: To become king of this land.

Frank (GM): That's fine. The king lives here in this city. You want to do this now?

James: That's why I declared it.

Frank (GM): Got a plan?

James: I need some time to come up with one with my friends.

Frank (GM): That's cool. Let's talk about it. Everyone is in on this. Let's see how we can get Rastiss to the throne.

At this point several ideas may be thrown out. Everything from usurping the current king, to challenging him to a duel, to the GM having the current king die and then creating a tournament to see who is most worthy to succeed him. All these scenarios and more are possible. You may already be thinking of others, and it may take several sessions to complete a Moment of Truth. The GM is given great liberty to change the Setting to help fit the Moment of Truth. Players are encouraged to ask for whatever they need to give themselves the *chance* of meeting their character's Destiny. It is a collaborative effort, and all should be interested in every player's success.

If the player fails, he must choose a new Destiny. If he succeeds, then his character is retired. The story is over.

Something More

Should completing your Destiny not be enough for you, you always have the option of choosing a second one and continuing with the same character. Simply strike out the completed Destiny and write in a new one. Sometimes it can be hard to let a beloved character go before you are ready. So, starting him on a second adventure is the perfect way to keep enjoying everything you've come to love.

Modifying the G.A.M.E. System

The G.A.M.E. System is freely available for anyone to modify and publish-even commercially- so long as attribution to its original creator (Troy Costisick) is made. Each section of this game is designed to be modular and customizable. Designers should take time to consider what they would want play to look like using the G.A.M.E. System as a foundation, and then begin their design process from there.

I highly recommend that designer first and foremost consider attaching a proper setting to the GAME System beyond the simple Situation creation rules in the GM section. Settings give an RPG context. It makes the characters' actions more meaningful both to the game world and to the players. Without a strong or evocative setting, it may be difficult for the players to know what is an acceptable Destiny and what is not, what their likely enemies and allies are and aren't.

After nailing the setting down, designers may want to consider creating their own Heritages, Trades, Abilities, Skills, Powers, Spells etc. that would be appropriate for their games. These are minor tweaks that can make a big difference in the enjoyment and engagement players feel when playing a game using the G.A.M.E. System. Remember, this entire book is up for modification, so don't hold back!

Starting Play

After everyone has made characters and the GM has had some time to create the Situation and integrate the characters' Destinies, everyone should take some time to discuss their goals and hopes for the Campaign. Let everyone in on your character's Destiny. GMs, tell the players what you want to get out of the Campaign and what parts you consider to be fun. Players, do the same for the GM. The more open everyone is with their communication, the more likely everyone is to get what they want.

Good luck!

Appendix: A-C

Sample Combat Abilities

- Shield- All hits taken by target character for this scene go to you instead. Use only once per session.
- Sunder- You may attack your opponent's weapons. Non-magic weapons have 2 hits, magic weapons have 4, artifact weapons have 8. Use only one per session.
- Parry- Prevent all hits from target opponent on his next turn. Use only one per session.
- Stalk- Your character moves totally unnoticed to within 1 foot of a target person or area. Use only once per session.
- Courage- +2 to your Influence Barrier, +1 Die # for your Weapon for the rest of the session.
- Alert- Gain +1 to your Initiative, cannot ever be surprised in combat. This lasts the entire session.
- Misdirect- Target foe attacks another person on their next turn. Use only once per session.
- Escape- Character can free himself from any bonds. Use only once per session.
- Take Risk- Your Dmg Barrier drops to zero, but your Weapon gains +1 Die Number and deals 2 Extra Dmg for as long as you are engaging your current opponent(s). Use only once per session.
- Fight With Honor- Each time you beat an opponent on your own without using any Abilities, Powers, or Spells you gain 1 bonus AP. This lasts the entire session.
- Backattack- Your weapon deals double damage from behind. This lasts the entire session.
- Sideattack- Your weapon deals double damage from the flanks. This lasts the entire session.
- Dual Wield- You gain Dice from two weapons so long as you are holding both. This lasts the entire session.
- Aim For the Eyes!- Add +2 to your opponent's Dmg Barrier. If your next strike is successful, he loses all actions for the rest of this combat. Use only once per session.
- Motivate- All other player-character weapons within earshot of this character gain +1 to all their die Numbers for the rest of this scene. Use only once per cycle.

Sample Mystical Abilities

- Shatter Shout- Removes any Spells with a duration on target person or item. Use only once per session.
- Direction Sense- Character knows all four major directions at all times (North, South, East, West). This lasts the entire session.
- Zoom Sight- Character can see up to a mile away as if it were very near. Use only once per session.
- Pain Other- Deals 2 Hits to a target. This cannot be prevented by armor. Use only once per session.
- Destroy Projectile- The next solid projectile that targets this character is destroyed before it hits. Use only once per session.
- Detect Item- Character knows the general location of any specific item he or she can describe. Use only once per session.
- Detect Person- Character knows the general location of any specific person he or she can describe. Use only once per session.
- Detect Location- Character knows the general location of any specific location he or she can describe. Use only once per session.
- Darkvision- Character can see perfectly in utter darkness. This lasts the entire session.
- Inspire- All play characters within eyesight of this character gain +1d8 to all rolls. This lasts the entire session.

Aura of Pain- Each time a foe strikes this character with a Hit, he or she takes 1 hit himself. This lasts the entire session.

Enchant Weapon- Weapon gains +1 dice to its Number. This lasts the entire campaign and cannot be repeated on the same item.

Sustained Sleep- Target unconscious person is held in that state for 1 hour. Use only once per session.

Create Light Source- Target object projects a narrow (2' diameter) beam of light for 10 hours. Use only once per session.

Create Fire Source- Target object becomes flammable. It must still be lighted. Use only once per session.

Sample Spiritual Abilities

Mesmerize Animal- Target Animal will take no action until this character's next turn. Use only once per session.

Spiritual Familiar- Character can magically summon a minor spirit (3d10 dice pool, 4 dmg weapon) to fight for him. Once this combat is over, the spirit dissipates until summoned again. Use only once per session.

Simulicrum- All Hits taken by all other player-characters in this combat are instead dealt to this character until he or she cancels this affect. Use only once per session.

Communicate with Spirits- Character can talk to and understand all spirits within earshot, but he or she must close his or her eyes to do so. This lasts the entire session.

Interpret Dreams- This character (through the player's imagination) can interpret the dream of any other character and have it come true (in some form decided by the GM). Use only once per session.

Spirit's Blessing- Target character gains +1 to his Weapon Die #, Dmg Barrier, and Initiative for the rest of this session. Use only once per session.

Out of Body- The character's invisible spirit leaves its body and may fly to and fro as the character desires. This ability lasts as long as the character chooses. The spirit may return to the body immediately from any distance. Use only once per session.

Plant Mastery- Character can force a target plant to fully heal, fully grow, or contort into any shape he wishes. Use only once per session.

Wither Plant- Character may cause any plant he can touch to immediately die. This lasts the entire session.

Charm Animal- Target animal will treat the character as a trusted friend. Use only once per session.

Non-threat Aura- Animals will not attack this character unless provoked. This lasts the entire session.

Sense Spirits- This character is aware of all spirits within 50' for the next 6 hours. Use only once per session.

Sense Living- This character is aware of all living things within 50' for the next 6 hours. Use only once per session.

Spirit Form- For the next 2 hours this character can walk through walls. Use only once per session.

Waterbreating- Target character can breath under water for the next 6 hours. Use only once per session.

Sample Social Abilities

Command- Target person will obey any single order you give so long as it does not cause him physical harm or violate any laws of his land. Use only once per session.

Tracking- Character can designate what kind of tracks he is looking for and then be able to see and follow even the slightest hint of such tracks until they end. Use only once per session.

Charm- Target person treats this character as a good friend or romantic interest. Use only once per session.

Reputation- This character will not be attacked by people unless he provokes them. Use only once per session.

Intimidate- Target character has all his dice reduced to d4s for the rest of the session. Use only once per session.

Celibate- Character is immune to all Skills and Abilities involving charm, romance, seduction, etc. for the rest of the session. Use only once per session.

Luck- You may reroll all the dice you rolled for your character this turn. Use only once per session.

Far Ear- Character can hear conversations perfectly that are within eyesight for the rest of the scene. Use only once per session.

- Eye Charm- As long as this character keeps eye contact with target person, the target is totally under his control. Use only once per session.
- Brag- When in the company of strangers, this character tells a story about himself. Roll all dice from a single mental stat. If you beat a Default Difficulty of 12, your character earns 3 APs. If you fail, he is attacked by one of the strangers. Use only once per session.
- Dupe- Target character will believe anything you say. Use only once per session.
- Romance- Target character falls in love with you for 24 hours. Use only once per session.
- De-escalate- All persons engaged in combat immediately stop. They will only begin again if someone provokes a new fight. Use only once per session.
- Talk to Sleep- This character tells a story that takes at least an hour. At the end of the story, one target person falls asleep (player's choice). Use only once per session.
- Sniff- This character can discern who or what has passed by a particular spot just by smelling it. Use only once per session.

Sample Technical Abilities

- Crack Code- This character is able to decipher one single code or coded message. Use only once per session.
- Technobabble- Any technological glitch or system error is immediately resolved. Use only once per session.
- Write Simple Program- This character creates a simple program that performs one or two functions in less than a minute provided the proper tools are at hand. Use only once per session.
- Genius- Target character gains +1 to all Mental Stat die numbers for the rest of the session. Use only once per session.
- Write Complex Program- This character creates a simple program that performs any number of functions in less than 1 hour provided the proper tools are at hand. Use only once per session.
- Tinker- This character can permanently improve the efficiency or add one additional function to any program or device. Use only once per session.
- Create Schematic- This character can draw an accurate schematic of any system in less than 5 minutes. This lasts the entire session.
- Jury-rig- Target malfunctioning or broken device will immediately function properly for 1 hour. Use only once per session.
- Memorize- This character gains a perfect memory of what he or she is currently looking at. Use only once per session.
- Overload- Target mechanical or electronic system suddenly malfunctions. Use only once per session.
- Brilliance- Target character has the die Size of all his or her Mental Stats increased by 1. Use only once per session.
- Modify Weapon- Target weapon permanently gains 1 of the following: +1 Die Number, +1 Die Size, +1 Initiative, +1 Hits, or a 50% increase in range. This may not be repeated on the same weapon for the rest of the campaign. Use only once per session.
- Recover- This character is able to recover all data from any source regardless of the damage. Use only once per session.
- Recollection- Target character is able to recall any memory he or she desires. Use only once per session.
- Modify Armor- Target armor permanently gains 1 of the following: +1 Die Number, +1 Die Size, +1 Initiative, +1 damage prevention, or a 50% decrease in weight. This may not be repeated on the same armor for the rest of the campaign. Use only once per session.

Sample Advantages

- ❖ Safe Haven- The character has a secret hideout where he and up to five other guests will be hidden and safe. Only he knows of its existence.
- ❖ Ally- The character knows a person who can give him basic information or help him in a pinch once per session.
- ❖ Nemesis- There is an NPC out there who is actively hunting the character. Defeating him grants the character 7 APs.
- ❖ Law Enforcement Credentials- The character is a recognized law enforcement officer in any country/region/sector he travels.
- ❖ A Small Ship- The character gains a small ship that can crew/house up to 30 people.

Sample Spells

(each may only be used once per session)

- ❖ Light- Target object glows with light. The caster can direct it to be as dim as a candle or bright as a bonfire. This lasts the rest of the session.
- ❖ Fireball- Instantly deals 5 Hits to a target.
- ❖ Stat Buff- +2 Die Number to any Stat of target character. This lasts the rest of the session.
- ❖ Stat Enhancement- +1 Die Size to any Stat of target character. This lasts the rest of the session.
- ❖ Read Languages- Can read any language on a single item or location.
- ❖ Sense Heading- Caster knows direction to any place he wants to go.
- ❖ Barrier Buff- +2 to any Barrier. This lasts the rest of the session.
- ❖ Hold Person- Target character is immobilized until caster's next turn.
- ❖ Levitate- Target can move up or down at his will for the next 6 hours.
- ❖ Portal- Creates a magical opening in a wall that is 5' high and 5' wide for the next 6 hours.
- ❖ Create Food/Drink- Creates 5 meal's worth of food and water. These last until eaten.
- ❖ Calm Storm- Winds cease, clouds dissipate, and the rains stop.
- ❖ Rope Trick- As long as one end of a rope is held by the caster, it will move and contort according to his wishes.
- ❖ Flair- Target is distracted by the light and sound of this spell. He may only take one action on his next turn.
- ❖ Leaping- Target can jump up to 30' up and 20' out on his next turn.
- ❖ Camouflage- Target will be invisible as long as he doesn't move.
- ❖ Holy Light- Target evil creature takes 2 Hits and loses 2 dice from his pool next turn.
- ❖ Draining Darkness- Target good creature takes 2 Hits and loses 2 dice from his pool next turn.
- ❖ Unlock- Target non-magic lock comes undone.

SAMPLE SKILLS

Acrobatics	Geology	Swipe
Acting	Glass Blowing	Tackle/Grapple
Animal Handling	Grappling hook	Teaching
Animal Training	Heraldry	Tell Jokes
Apply Poison	Herbalism	Throw Object
Appraisal	Hunting	Torture
Argue	Hypnotism	Use Ancient Ability
Bargaining	Insult	Use Combat Ability
Bend bars/Force doors	Interrogation	Use Item
Biology	Jewel Crafting	Use Lg Weapons (melee)
Blind fighting	Juggle	Use Lg Weapons (range)
Bowmaking	Leather Working	Use Med Weapons (melee)
Brawling	Lie	Use Med Weapons (range)
Brewing	Listen	Use Mystical Ability
Bribery	Major Surgery	Use Sm Weapons (melee)
Calligraphy	Memorize	Use Sm Weapons (range)
Carpentry	Metallurgy	Use Social Ability
Cartography	Military Strategy	Use Spiritual Ability
Carving	Minor Surgery	Weaponsmithing
Cast Spell/Use Spell	Mounted Combat	Whaling
Caving	Move Silent	Wiring
Cheating	Navigation	_____ Lore
Combat Drilling	Parry	
Compliment	Pathfinding	
Compose Song	Perception	
Cooking	Pick Lock	
Dance	Pick Pocket	
Detect Emotion	Play Lute	
Detect Faction	Poetic Improv	
Detect Lie	Repair (anything)	
Diagnose Disease	Research	
Diplomacy	Riding	
Disarm Foe	Rope Making	
Disarm Trap	Rope Working	
Distilling	Seamanship	
Dodge	Set traps	
Drug Tolerance	Sewing	
Duping	Shield Bash	
Engineering	Silent Kill	
Etiquette	Singing	
Experiment	Skinning	
First aid	Spell Artistry	
Fletching	Story Telling	
Foraging	Surveying	
Forgery	Survival	
Gaming	Sweet Talk	
Gem cutting	Swimming	