

A woman with long black hair, wearing a black dress and black boots, is floating in a dreamlike, ethereal space. Her hair is blowing in the wind. The background is a soft, hazy mix of light and dark tones, suggesting a misty or dreamlike atmosphere. At the bottom of the frame, a large, ornate key is visible, with its shaft extending upwards towards the woman's feet. The overall mood is surreal and mysterious.

REALIZATION DAWNING

a roleplaying game alpha, in twenty-four hours
for the **ronnies** games design competition



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MAYBE ANGELS

The GM | The Players

PLAY

Prologue | Approaching Midnight | After Midnight

Early Morning | Epilogue

Conflicts

UNFINISHED

SCAN OF ORIGINAL NOTES

CREDITS

MAYBE ANGELS

Realization Dawning is a game about angels, or at least about individuals that believe they are angels. They experience life like never before in the early hours of the morning through to the first rays of light. When the dawn comes they will realize whether they are, or are not, angels in the truest sense of the word.

A game of **Realization Dawning** is set in somewhere that at least one of the participants knows well, but I recommend it's not necessarily where you live. Find somewhere that could exist in a chaotic and romantic half-light, a sodium-glare after midnight. I favour a sense of the old and new, the baroque and the surreal, and of carnival lights and discarded cigarettes.

For you it may be Berlin or Edinburgh's Old Town, or perhaps San Francisco or Atlantic City.

DÜSSELDORF

For me, it would be Düsseldorf on the Rhine. Ah, Düsseldorf, with its narrow cobbled streets of the Altstadt, its TV tower, the Königsallee and the Turkish streets around the Hauptbahnhof.

Find the sort of place where angels might wander around in the early hours of the morning. Where, on wings of desire, they would meet troubled souls and search for meaning in their life.

THE GM

Realization Dawning is a role-playing game that has a single GM, with the following responsibilities.

The GM must marshal the fates against the Characters (building resources, providing twists in the fiction, and judging circumstances) and set a strong backdrop for play.

The GM mostly opens and closes scenes, much like the director of a film.

The GM should also have a sense for the world, enriching it with colour, scent, sound, people and places.

The GM should link play, listen to the players and make use of recurring themes.

THE PLAYERS

Everyone else taking part in a game of **Realization Dawning** is a player. They all play at least one Character in the game. I intend the game to work for between 1 and 4 players.

The game is played in a number of game sessions (as few as one, perhaps as many as six). Not all players need to be at every game session.

Players should create a Character, or Characters, open to change. Yes, you are an angel. You believe it to be so, but when realization dawns in the morning you must be open to the possibility that it is not so. And the reverse too, you must be open to the possibility that you are indeed an angel.

Players will portray their Characters, much like an actor and writer of a film. When they speak you tell us what they say. When they act tell us what they do. Immerse yourself in your Character.

Players will build resources for their Characters and interact with the world around them.

Players will establish desires for their Characters and follow them, building them and reacting to changes in circumstance.

PLAY

PHASES OF PLAY

Play in **Realization Dawning** is split into distinct phases:

Prologue

Where the GM introduces the world and Leitmotifs, and Characters are introduced

Approaching Midnight

Where Characters are built, Leitmotifs are strengthened, Desires are revealed, and People and Places are introduced

MIDNIGHT

When the rules change; triggered when two Leitmotifs each have more Motes on them than there are Players

After Midnight

Where morning has begun and Characters are immersed in chaos and conflict, resources are built by both the Players and the GM

DAWN

When the rules change again; triggered ... somehow ... a limit break on PC resources

Early Morning

Where the GM now expends the resources available and attempts to winnow down the PC's resources, building towards a resolution of the PC's Desires.

Epilogue

When the GM is out of Motes the fates and Desires of the Characters, People and Places are resolved

TIME TO PLAY

The Prologue and Approaching Midnight phases should last for a single games session of 3 or 4 hours. I aim for the After Midnight phase to last for 1 to 3 sessions of play. The Early Morning and Epilogue phase of play should last for a single session.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PLAY

The following things are needed for play:

1 GM

1-4 Players

50 or so beads or coins to represent Motes in play

Index Cards or Post-It notes to record Characters, People, Places, Leitmotifs and Desires

Pens or Pencils for recording information on the cards

A table to play around

A handful of, say 6, six-sided dice

THE PROLOGUE

GM

To open the Prologue the GM sets the scene. The game begins before midnight, 9 or 10 pm is a good time. It is now dark and we meet our world and the Characters. The GM gives a brief overview of where the game is set and writes down up to one Leitmotif every player present. The Leitmotif is written on an index card and placed in front of the GM where everyone can see it. During the game the players and the GM will look to re-incorporate the Leitmotifs into the story.

At least one Leitmotif must be introduced from the following list:

Wings | Gold | Circus | Steeple | Cobbles

Robert is the GM and there are four players. Robert can initially write down up to four Leitmotifs. He looks at the list and decides that he will write out 3 Leitmotifs from the list: Wings, Steeple and Cobbles. He adds a fourth, not on the list: Rain.

Robert then introduces the game. “We are in Düsseldorf, the giant Rheinturm, a tower that is also the world’s largest digital clock, looks down on the city below. The red tail lights of cars zip into tunnels and the throb of an aircraft passes overhead. The clock switches to 9 pm.”

Robert looks to the players. Dario looks like he is eager to begin. Robert says, “Dario, do you want to start?”

ADVICE FOR THE GM ON LEITMOTIFS

Make your Leitmotifs resonant of the feel you want the game to have, but also watch for which ones ring best in play. These will be the Leitmotifs that the players use most and which seem to naturally fit the story best.

Don’t be afraid to start with just a few Leitmotifs (say 2 or 3 when the rules allow you to have up to 4) as you can add more Leitmotifs later in play.

Look to the list above for inspiration for Leitmotifs. One word is simplest and best.

PLAYERS

In the Prologue phase each player in turn introduces their Characters. The order is unimportant. Think of it as a short ten-second clip of film at the start of the credits. Establish a name and a feel for your Characters, write this on an index card and place it in front of you. You can introduce more than one Character on your turn if you so wish.

At the end of your turn in the Prologue place a single Mote on one of your Characters. A Mote can be represented by a glass bead or a coin.

If you mentioned something that is a Leitmotif you may place an extra Mote on one of your Characters. If you do so then also place a Mote on the relevant Leitmotif. You may use each Leitmotif up to once in the Prologue if you wish.

Dario places an index card on the table and writes on it "Ariel". He then puts "A girl, a runaway, begging for change outside a fast-food joint."

He then describes Ariel's prologue:

"Outside the McDonald's restaurant where the Heinrich-Heine-Allee meets the Altstadt sits a girl. Scruffy, maybe in her late-teens, she wears a worn, puffy jacket and sits in the rain on a piece of sodden cardboard. She looks up at the people making their way into the McDonalds and pulls a feather from the back of her jacket. She stares at it, turning it in her hand.

He then places one Mote from the central pool on Ariel. Dario also places another Mote on both Ariel and the Rain Leitmotif. He finally places yet another Mote on both Ariel and the Wings Leitmotif.

Ariel now has 3 Motes on her card, while Rain and Wings have one Mote each.

When all players have taken their turn the Prologue ends.

ADVICE FOR PLAYERS ON LEITMOTIFS

Look to the Leitmotifs for inspiration for your scenes, but don't use them if they don't fit. Use the ones that naturally fit the story best.

Don't be afraid to use just one Leitmotif as you can use more, and will have the use of more, Leitmotifs later in play.

APPROACHING MIDNIGHT

In the Approaching Midnight phase of play the GM sets scenes and the players act in them, building up their Motes and introducing Desires.

SCENES

The GM can pick and choose which Characters appear in scenes. Players can suggest or clarify where their Characters are in the story and request scenes. The GM should watch and listen to the players, make links between the various story threads and help the Players explore the world.

It is a good idea to have Characters meet or have their paths cross, especially where the actions of one will affect another. Characters should talk to each other as if they can sense the “other worldliness” of each other.

In scenes Approaching Midnight Players should immerse themselves “in character” and give and take the fiction easily. Follow each other’s lead and build upon the story collaboratively.

These scenes can be used to gain Motes for the Characters, gain Desires and place Motes upon them, as well as introduce People, Places and reinforce Leitmotifs.

When the scene is losing steam the GM should close the current scene, and then proceed to make another one.

MOTES

I use small plastic or glass beads to represent Motes. Coins work just as well too. These Motes will be used for rolling and re-rolling dice, winning conflicts and seizing control of fictional events. They will also need to be carefully marshalled so that your Characters will achieve their Desires in the Epilogue.

OWNERSHIP OF ELEMENTS

Leitmotifs belong to the GM, they can be exhausted in play. When there are none left then the game ends. People & Places also belong to the GM, though they can be won by Players in the Early Morning.

Characters belong to their Players throughout play. Desires belong to Players but can be taken away by the GM in the Early Morning.

ELEMENTS IN PLAY

At the end of a scene the GM should check with the Players about any elements introduced or developed in the scene. This is how the GM and Players build resources during this phase.

DESIRES

Desires are outcomes that a Character hopes to achieve by the Early Morning. All Characters must reveal at least one Desire in the Approaching Midnight phase of Play.

Each player can't claim more than one Desire in a scene. Introducing, voicing, acting upon, or following a Desire in a Scene allows you to add a Mote to it.

When you do so the GM also takes a Mote from the central pool and allocates it to an element of their choosing. This can be People or Places that tie to the Desire.

Example Desires are: Save the life of Linus, the tramp; Marry the circus trapeze artist; Defeat my enemy Lukas; Find Love; Fly like an eagle.

PEOPLE & PLACES

These are significant elements that emerge in the story. The GM plays them and controls the Motes that are on them.

There are two ways that People & Places are created or have Motes added to them.

If a Character expresses a Desire that names someone or somewhere then they become an element in the game. Put a Mote on the People or Place index card as well as a Mote on the Desire. You can only create a single Person or Place along with creating a Desire.

Each Player and the GM can also create or improve a single People or Place element per scene.

Players get a Mote to place on one of their Characters in return for creating the element. The GM must move a Mote from a Leitmotif onto the newly created element.

Why move a Mote? Strong Leitmotifs bring about the end of this phase, so it is useful to use the Motes on Leitmotifs to build up the Motes on People and Places instead.

Example People & Places: Linus; The Coffee House; Isa, the trapeze artiste.

CHARACTERS

In each scene Approaching Midnight each Player present can increase the Motes on one of their characters by 1 by using a single Leitmotif. Add one Mote to the Leitmotif and one to the Character of your choice.

If a Player brings in People or Places they also gain a Mote. By doing so the GM gains a People or Place element with a Mote on it, or adds a Mote to an existing element.

LEITMOTIFS

In each scene Approaching Midnight each Player and the GM can bring in a single Leitmotif. For a Player this increases the Motes on one of their characters by 1. For the GM it adds 1 Mote to the Leitmotif that they brought in.

You can bring in new Leitmotifs, simply write up the element and place the Mote on it.

MIDNIGHT STRIKES

Midnight strikes when the number of Motes on any two Leitmotifs exceeds the number of players. The game moves into its next phase. It is now After Midnight.

AFTER MIDNIGHT

The After Midnight phase of play is about Conflicts, and twists in the story. Players are building up Motes on their Desires and Characters. For the GM it is about making choices hard for the Players and to marshal more resources, i.e. increase the Motes for their People, Places and Leitmotifs. Players no longer gain Motes from using Leitmotifs.

DAWN BREAKS

The Sun rises and the rules change again. I need to figure out the trigger for this. Should it just be thematic? The GM feels it's Dawn? The screw has been turned hard and it's time for the Early Morning phase? Or should I find a mechanical trigger (I'm wary of this mechanization)? Perhaps I can find things to watch for, to signal a move to Dawn.

EARLY MORNING

This phase is about wearing down the Leitmotifs, People and Places of the GM. The Players use their Desires and Character Motes to get dice for Conflicts (each die costs a Mote). This bleed Motes out of the GM's pool of resources. Successes by the Players allow them to buy control of People and Places. Leitmotifs are exhausted and any Desires with Motes remaining on them are successfully achieved. Characters with Motes remaining are Angels. Characters reduced to 0 Motes are destined for a downbeat end.

THE COFFEE HOUSE

Robert sets the scene: “The bell in the clock-tower chimes 10 o’clock and a couple run from the U-bahn station into a coffee house. The rain is getting heavier.” Robert puts a Mote on the Rain Leitmotif. (He has now taken his Leitmotif Mote for the scene.)

“Inside the coffee house there is a warmth, a smell of coffee and perfume.”

“Ariel, you are in the coffee house, and so is Octavian.” Robert points at Dario, playing Ariel, and Oliver, playing Octavian.

“On the other side of the street a stream of people come and go from the McDonalds. What are you two doing? How long have you been here?”

Dario takes up the story: “I’ve been here for the last 10 minutes. Since Octavian offered to buy me a coffee. I put my cardboard seat in the trash can and followed him in. I pointed at hot chocolate on the menu and it’s now sitting in front of me cooling. I’m still playing with the feather in my hand. A marshmallow bobs up in my drink. Then sinks again.”

Dario puts a Mote on the Wings Leitmotif and takes a Mote, placing it on Ariel’s Character card. (He has now taken his Leitmotif Mote for the scene.)

Oliver now speaks: “I put my cup down and the clink of cup on saucer gets Ariel to turn towards me.” “You know he won’t come back for you.” “I look deep into her eyes. Octavian has the eyes of a man who has lived a thousand years. His hair is white and short. I guess he looks to be in his late forties or fifties. Almost old enough to be Ariel’s grandfather.”

“I’ll find him, you’ll see, says Ariel.”

“Well, at least you’re now talking to me, Ariel, retorts Octavian.”

The Players and GM talk some more until Dario decides that Ariel runs out into the rain.

The GM Robert asks if there are any elements yet to be grabbed. Oliver asks for a Leitmotif: Coffee. He puts a Mote on it and adds a Mote to Octavian’s character card.

Dario takes the Desire: Find Linus. Robert puts a Mote on Linus, while Dario puts a Mote on Ariel. Oliver doesn’t add anything more from this scene.

CONFLICTS

BEFORE MIDNIGHT

If there are conflicts in the Approaching Midnight phase of play then the GM should consider the circumstances and fairly judge the outcome.

If a Player wishes to change this outcome then they must take a Mote from one of their Characters and pass it to the GM. The GM may then allocate the Mote to their Leitmotifs, Places or People as they wish.

No more than 1 Mote can be expended by any Player on a Conflict.

AFTER MIDNIGHT

When a Conflict occurs in this phase of the game dice are rolled. You roll as many dice as you wish (up to the number of Motes on a single element).

GM removes a Mote from relevant elements for each die to roll. Player(s) removes a Mote from relevant elements for each die to roll.

The dice are rolled. Highest is best. Whoever has the highest die wins.

Count the successes. Each die higher than the opponent's highest die is a success. Tied high dice cancel and are removed to find the winner.

If the winner is a Player then each success is a Mote that is gained by that Player. They also win the conflict in the fiction.

If the winner is the GM then the GM can choose to win the conflict. If they do so the Player(s) they beat gain a number of Motes equal to the number of successes. For multiple Players split the successes between them.

Or if the winner is the GM the Player(s) can choose to win the conflict, with a twist introduced by the GM. The GM then gains a number of Motes equal to the successes and places them on elements related to the twist.

ARIEL AND LUKAS

Ariel throws her jacket over the spiked fence and tries to vault from the cobbles into the churchyard. Lukas, hot on her heels, tries to grab her.

Dario expends 3 Motes from Ariel and 1 Mote from her Desire to get revenge on Lukas. Dario will roll 4 dice.

Robert expends 1 Mote from Lukas, 1 from Rain and 1 from Cobbles. So the GM will roll 3 dice.

The result is that Dario rolls 6,4,4,2 and Robert rolls 6,4,2. The winner is Dario with 1 success (his second 4 beats Robert's 2).

Dario gains a Mote for Ariel and she escapes, minus jacket, into the Churchyard. Lukas slips on the cobbles in the rain and knocks himself out.

THE EPILOGUE

Each Character gets an Epilogue.

A Character with no Motes on them at the end of the game has a downbeat ending.

A Character with Motes on them gets an uplifting ending. More than 3 Motes indicates they were an Angel and they can have a fantastical ending narrated for them.

A Character with any Motes on a Desire gets that Desire. The more Motes on the Desire the more successful it is.

If A Player has control of any Places or People then the Player narrates their ending too.

The GM narrates a suitable Epilogue to the game, describing what happens to the other People, Places and whether any unfulfilled Desires affect the world.

AN ENDING

Ariel leaps from the steeple. Her gold dress, soaked. Her black hair swirling in the wind.

She disappears from view.

No body is ever found.

A single white feather drifts slowly down in the morning light and lands on the statue of Goethe.

A bell rings, almost beyond the range of human hearing.

REALIZATION DAWNING

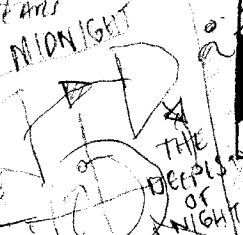
TITLE FROM
R.A. O'HARA

MARILLION

...AND IT WAS MORNING, AND I FOUND MYSELF LOOKING FOR A CHILD, THAT I THOUGHT HAD DISAPPEARED.

WINGS
WINGS
WINGS

ABOVE ALL THE OTHERS WE'LL FLY
THIS BRINGS TEARS TO MY EYES.
MY SACRIFICE



THIS CAN BE SEVERAL SESSIONS

DICE
GOOD TO BE HIGH OR LOW

HIGH	+3
	+2
	+1
	0
	-1
	-2
LOW	-3

OK
HAVE TO DO STUFF OR GET KICKED TO MOVE

WINGS

AFTER MIDNIGHT REVELLING IN CHAOS
BUILD RESOURCES & OPPOSITION

~~EARLY~~
MORNING

THIS CAN BE SEVERAL SESSIONS

YOU ARE ANGELS OR AT LEAST DEWIDED TO BE CONVINCED OF THIS...

APPEAR AT MIDNIGHT - BUILDING CHARACTER.

COMING DOWN

GM WIELDS OPPOSITION AND WINDS DOWN P.C.S

...THEN I LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW, AND I SAW THE SHADOW OF THE MAGPIE...

DAWN REALISATION AND CLIMAX

~ 15 mins

CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION - SELF-WORTH + MEANING REFINED

CREDITS

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Fallen, Lynne Hardy
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Ordinary Angels, Andrew Kenrick

Legal:

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For:

My sister, and her love of Berlin and Wim Wenders
Thorn, and her wings

Thanks:

Robert Andrew O'Hara, for the title, though he doesn't know I've taken it
Ron, why did you put those words up? They made me do it.

Mea Culpa:

Sorry, I ran out of time.