

UNWRITTEN

...

A Story From Three Simple Cues

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Introduction

Why unWritten?

I made unWritten so that I can enjoy a game that creates an engaging story through play. I want the stories it produces to emulate those found in most film and literature, I want the stories to allow players to discover the details and nuances of the games story in ways similar to that of an audience to a movie or the reader of a book. I want the players to get excited, worried, or whatever for the story's protagonists as they deal with the challenges that they face. And, like the back cover of a book or the information given in a movie trailer, I want the game to be able to be played with minimal preparation. unWritten does these things.

Collaboration

In order for this game to work the players must collaborate. In fact, it is rule number one. Throughout the game you'll be interacting with each others protagonists and elements from the story. As such, you'll need to clearly express your expectations to each other. That means, you'll need to say what you want, what your happy with, what your not happy with, and what you don't want. This also means you need to be aware of each others wants. Some people are better than others at expressing themselves. This doesn't mean you shouldn't try. Honor each other. Ask questions. Engage. Look for ways to make each other's game fun. Now, if someone makes a request of you, you don't have to comply, but you do have to consider it and work with that player. Be nice to each other, the game is much more fun that way...

Here's the cool part about collaborating in unWritten. Though collaboration is required between the players, it is not necessary between the protagonists. In fact, you can go so far as to have the protagonists be enemies or rivals of some sort or other. In some stories, the protagonists may never even interact with each other or know that they exist. See what happens.

What You'll Need To Play

The game requires relatively few things to play. You'll need:

- 2 to 4 pencils, not pens.
- 2 to 4 players: More then that and the game bogs down.
- An Archive: One for the whole group. These are used to record the story's changing details (aka the Cues).
- An Index: One for each player. These are used to record the details that make up your protagonist (name, Role, Drive, and Means).
- Storymarks (tokens, coins, rocks, etc.): You'll need four per player. Finally...
- 5 six-sided dice: Each of a different color or size. It is preferable that each player have their own set.

What Does Play Look Like?

If the game is supposed to create stories like those found in books and movies, then the experience should be a kin to that of reading a book or watching a movie. It isn't exactly

that, but that is part of my goal. So, what happens at the table? The players create a basic idea of the setting. That is, you (all of the players) come up with three simple lines that describe the setting, or you can take the time to develop a rich setting, rife with all kinds of excitement and intrigue. Obviously, or if not, I'm making it obvious now, this is all done collaboratively. Once you've got the setting, then you'll create basic, very basic, protagonists; one for each player. Then, you begin the story. The player's themselves will have two Roles. One player will be the Lead Player, while the rest take the role of the Support Players for the duration of a scene. Once a scene ends these roles switch.

unWritten is played out in scenes, each of which revolves around the Lead Player's protagonist. The Lead Player will set the stage for the ensuing scene. Then the Support Players will engage the Lead Player with their own protagonists or elements from within the scene. They'll be adding color, detail, and creating adversity for the Lead Player. Through the interaction between the Lead Player and the Support Players, the Lead Player will focus on a particular challenge pushed by one of the Support Players. These challenges will, more often than not, lead to a pivotal conflict that gets resolved with the dice. Once the conflict is resolved the scene ends and the player to the right of the current Lead Player becomes the new Lead Player, the previous Lead Player then becomes a Support Player.

One of the more interesting aspects of unWritten is that all of the protagonists are the leads in their own story, while still being a supporting character in the story of the other protagonists. This allows the players to have their protagonists be central to the story they are telling, while still supporting the goals and interests of the other players.

During the first few scenes there won't be so much as a story as there is exposition. The Opening Cues give you a premise, but they don't really give a plot. As you play the plot will coalesce as you're guided by Journey Questions. So, just enjoy the color and the exposition that emerges through play and discover what the story is all about.

The Game Sheets

The game sheets are going to help you play the game. They'll guide you and give you the needed space to record the various elements of the game. There are three sheets that you need to be aware of, one of which is optional. They are the Archive, the Index, and the Log.

The Archive

The Archive is used to record the elements of the game that will guide, and help you build the story. These elements are the Cues, loose ends, and story seeds.

The Index

The Index is used to record your protagonist's name, Role, Drive, and Means. On it is also a list of questions, called Journey Questions. The questions are used to focus each scene. Additionally, the Index has three "conflict" squares at the center of the page that are used to resolve pivotal conflicts.

The Log

This sheet is optional. It is used to record each scene. If you use it, absolutely, do not go into any detail. Just write a quick summary of the scene. At the very least you might want to use the log to record the names and major details of a scene.

Synopsis: Part 1

Before the story gets started you need to figure out what the story is going to consist of, that is, what is the concept that will lead you to the story that you are going to play out. Begin with a discussion between all of the players to determine the story's genre, the details of the setting, the situation that is going to kick off the story, and the story's pacing. Below are a series of questions that will help you in figuring these things out. You're not looking for specific answers to the questions, their main purpose is to guide the discussion. Also, make sure that all of the players are present for the discussion. This ensures that everyone is not only on the same page, but that they all had an opportunity to express their wants, needs, and ideas.

Discussion Questions

(This sounds SO academic)

1. Are there themes or ideas you'd like to examine? What's a good way of expressing them? Is there anything you'd like to avoid?
2. Is there a mood or aesthetic you'd like to invoke? A genre you'd like to explore?
3. Are there any books, movies, or TV shows that inspire you? What is it about these books, movies, and TV shows that you like? Why?
4. What types of circumstances do these things invoke? What types of situations can you engineer?
5. What length of story do you want to tell? A novella, short and to the point; cinematic, medium in length with character and plot development; or literary, long with in-depth character and plot exploration?

The Discussion

This discussion can last anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour or more. Before I go on, I'll have you know that this part of the game can be really fun if you take it there. Now then, when approaching these questions throw out as many ideas that you can, jot them down. Don't hesitate, one pea-brained idea can blossom into something quite spectacular when there's multiple people mulling it over. Ultimately, what you want is an interesting situation that will initiate the story and that will guide you through a compelling "journey" as the story's protagonists address the situation in their way.

Situation

The situation you come up with for your story should be a set of circumstances that one or more persons will need to deal with in order to avoid some outcome.

When you have a situation come up with two or more factions that oppose each other in the resolution of the situation. The factions can be anything: people, organizations, natural phenomena, concepts, or any combination of these.

At this point you shouldn't be working on the story's protagonists, that comes later (though sometimes it's inevitable).

Cues

Cues are short phrases that represent plot devices and story elements. They will define

the setting and propel the story. A Cue can be persons, places, things, or concepts. In fact, whatever Cues you come up with, they will define the mood, aesthetic, and genre. Additionally, they will inform the scenes and guide the story as it unfolds.

The Three Opening Cues

You'll make three Opening Cues. they will carry the story at the start of the game and set the mood, feel, and direction that the story will take. Thus they must be written like a statement and not so much like a list. You are going to distill them from the discussion, and they must each fulfill one of the following three things:

Opening Cues should tell you...

1. ... where the story takes place.
2. ... what situation has lead up to the beginning of the story.
3. ... what major parties are involved.

The key to creating these Opening Cues is that they get laced with words and ideas that express the type of story that you want to play. Remember those notes you jotted down earlier? Well, incorporate them in the Opening Cues if you can.

If you want a creepy kind of story, then make sure the Opening Cues are full of words that invoke creepiness and such. If you want a heartwarming tale about a broken family that comes together during a time of crisis, well then, use words that that invoke heart-warm-y-ness and whatnot.

Once everyone is satisfied with the three Opening Cues, then write them down on the first three lines of the Archive.

Finally, regardless of how many players there are, you will always make three Cues. Never more, never less.

The Opening Cues Should Tell You...

Each Opening Cue should hit the following points. Keep in mind that some overlap will occur. That's cool, in fact, it's awesome, Dick Awesome!

1. ... where the story takes place.

The first Opening Cue should introduce the environment that your story will take place. It can simply consist of an existing environment such as "the Mohave Desert," or one that exists in popular literature, "Middle Earth." Though these are easy enough to come up with, they aren't always the best Opening Cues. Basically, they lack detail and panache. You want to make sure they include words that represent the genre your after. Also, make them as clear as you can. If you want the story to take place on an island, don't refer to multiple islands or an archipelago. Here are some examples of the first Cue for games I've come up with in the past:

- "Supernatural western,"
- "Tall castles looking over deep forests,"
- "Far future, multicultural intergalactic civilizations,"
- " 1970's spy vs spy," and finally
- "Intelligent rats in a post-human world."

As you can see, they're pretty cut and dry. However, some imply elements that can direct the story, such as how the "Tall castles looking over deep forests" Cue implies that those who live in the castles take care of the forests. The game didn't end up going in that direction, but it very well could have.

2. ... what situation has lead up to the beginning of the story.

The second Opening Cue describes a situation that the (not yet defined) protagonists will have to deal with. This situation doesn't need to be of any particular scale (i.e. personal or epic). Additionally, it can either be internal or external. More examples from some of my own games:

- "Missing town found elsewhere" (ooh, cryptic),
- "Green Hollow is under siege by Duke Farbullen,"
- "The Centimani, long believed dead, return to reclaim "Their" territory,"
- "Missing sub with nuclear warheads,"
- "Rats at war over sustenance and resources."

3. ... what parties are involved.

The third Opening Cue introduces parties that have a vested interest in addressing the situation. There should be at least two parties that oppose each other in some way. The opposition can be one-sided or covert or whatever. More Cues:

- "Unwanted strangers in a town of the lost,"
- "A noble magical bloodline that threatens to splinter,"
- "The I.C.A. Go to mediate a conflict between the 'Benefactors' and the 'Primitivists,'"
- "Who's the T.R.I. double agent?,"
- "Did the gods gift this to us or abandon us?"

Pacing

Finally, determine how long you want the game to last. You have three options:

- Novella: each player answers 1 Journey Question from chapters 2, 3, and 4. With this pacing you hit the ground running. It

probably shouldn't be the first game that you play.

These games are about 3 to 4 scenes per player, and last about 1 hour per player: 2 players: 2 hours, 3 players: 3 hours, and 4 players: 4 hours. Simple.

- Cinematic: each player answers 1 Journey Question from each chapter.

These games are about 6 to 8 scenes per player, which means the game last about 1½ hours per player: 2 players: 3 hours, 3 players: 4½ hours, and 4 players: 6 hours.

- Literary: each player answers a different amount of Journey Questions per chapter.

Chapter 1: 2 questions, in any order

Chapter 2: 1 question

Chapter 3: 3 questions, in any order

Chapter 4: 1 question

Chapter 5: 1 question

Epilogue: 1 question

These games take about 10 to 12 scenes per player. These games last about 2 hours per player: 2 players: 4 hours, 3 players: 6 hours, 4 players: 8 hours.

The compiled Opening Cues

The following are the compiled Opening Cues from the above example as we played them.

Sample Opening Cues

Missing Town Found Elsewhere

"Supernatural western,"

"Missing town found elsewhere,"

"Unwanted strangers in a town of the lost"

Splintered Families

"Tall castles looking over deep forests,"

"Green Hollow is under siege by Duke Farbullen,"

"A noble magical bloodline that threatens to splinter"

Far Future

"Far future, multicultural intergalactic civilizations,"

"The Centimani, long believed dead, return to reclaim "Their" territory,"

"The I.C.A. Go to mediate a conflict between the 'Benefactors' and the 'Primitivists'"

Spy vs Spy

“ 1970’s spy vs spy,”
“Missing sub with nuclear warheads,”
“Who’s the T.R.I. double agent?”

Rat

“Intelligent rats in our post-human world.”
“Rats at war over sustenance and resources.”
“Did the gods gift this to us or abandon us?”

The Premise (optional)

If you have trouble coming up with the Opening Cues then develop the story’s premise. Then, extract the Opening Cues from that premise. A premise is a line or three that gives a brief description of the story’s setup.

Missing Town Found Elsewhere

A town that doesn’t seem to exist in any one place captures its victims and moves on. But will a pair of unwanted strangers find their way out of this mysterious town as its inhabitants try keep them from escaping?

And from you might get...

“Supernatural western,”
“Missing town found elsewhere,”
“Unwanted strangers in a town of the lost”

If you’re having trouble with the premise fill in the following lines, then extract the Cues from them.

[_____],
Situation

[_____]
Group A

[_____].
The goal

But will
[_____]
group A

succeed when
[_____]
group B

provides opposition?

Define what is happening in the setting [the situation], then define who [group A] is, as

they try to deal with that situation, and what their [goal] is. Finally, define who [group B] is, as they try to, directly or indirectly, stop [group A].

The groups do not need to be single entities, they can be multiple groups or organizations, they can be animals, mystical beasts, ideals, forces of nature, etc. What matters is that it is clear that [group A] opposes or will be opposed by [group B].

Once you’ve extrapolated the Cues from the premise, don’t fret if the story ends up being different than what the premise assumes. You can’t know what will happen in play, the premise only serves the purpose to get your Cues.

The Protagonists

Finally, you get to start on the protagonists. Create one protagonist for each player. Each protagonist is made up of three components: their names, their Drives, and their Means. Coming up with a name is easy enough, use the [Story-Games Name Project Book](#). The Drive, and Role, less so.

The Opening Cues will determine who the protagonists will be. By drawing them from the Opening Cues you can be sure that they will be central to the situation that's developed.

For example

"Supernatural western" identifies the types of characters you'll be playing. You've got a western milieu broadened by the supernatural. So, you might have undead gunslingers, magic slinging hucksters, or demon possessed cattle barons. The Cue "unwanted strangers in a town of the lost" contextualizes the characters. You'll either be a stranger or one of the lost. Keep in mind, that there isn't anything saying that all of the protagonists must be from the same faction. Thus, you can have some that are strangers and some that are of the lost.

When you're working on the protagonists, make sure that they are made together. Give each other ideas, and build off of each others creations.

The Role

Once you have an idea for the possible types of characters that will be in your story, each player then defines their protagonist's Role. The protagonist's Role represents her upbringing, training, fields of study, and/or social status.

Sample Roles:

The character types in the previous example are all potential Roles: undead gunslinger, magic slinging huckster, demon possessed cattle baron.

The Role will define the protagonist's basic Means as the story begins. Note that each sample Role is preceded by a descriptor of some type. This descriptor further details something about the protagonist.

Sample Names and Roles

Missing Town Found Elsewhere

Vira Clink, Steady Supernatural Bounty Hunter

Shank Willits, Murderous Outlaw Gunslinger

Splintered Families

Euclid Bastanchury, Earnest Heir of the Bastanchury line

Katela Bastanchury, Studious Noble Blooded Mage

Basque Bastanchury, The Playful Captain of the Guard (cousin to the heir)

Sir Vren Atone, Tired Knight of the Court

Far Future

Ian Velmore, Secret Agent of Last Resort

Hayden Yusuf, Stubborn Independence Organizer

Min Vertablin, Dedicated ICA Field Agent

Spy vs Spy

Edward Stone, Infiltrator

Charles Raines, "James Bond" spy

Rat

Watcher, Seeker of new skies (scout)

Wind, Guardian of High Places

The Drive

The last thing you'll need to come up with for your protagonist is her Drive. The Drive is made up of two parts: the Aspiration and the Inclination. The Inclination describes who the protagonist is, or how she acts, and the Aspiration describes who she wants to become, or how she wants to act. Generally, the Aspiration is something that the protagonist is trying to achieve, whereas, the Inclination is their starting point.

When creating the Aspiration and Inclination, make sure that they contrast each other in some interesting way. Drives

should be written in one or two words, usually adjectives that describe mannerism or behaviors. They are both guides on how to play your protagonist as well as characteristics that define her personality.

During the game the protagonist's Drive will change, sometimes for the better, sometimes for worse. Conflicts will force your protagonist to evolve. If your protagonist's Aspiration repeatedly wins out, then she will grow. If her Inclination wins out then, as a person, she will decay. This process is further explained in chapter XX.

Sample Drives

Missing Town Found Elsewhere

Vira Clink

Aspiration: Settle down

Inclination: Aloof

Shank Willits

Aspiration: To find a home

Inclination: To run

Splintered Families

Euclid Bastanchury

Aspiration: Noble

Inclination: Self serving

Katela Bastanchury

Aspiration: Independent

Inclination: Maternal

Basque Bastanchury

Aspiration: Objective

Inclination: Blind loyalty

Sir Vren Atone

Aspiration: Valiant

Inclination: Disinterested

Far Future

Ian Velmore

Aspiration: Maintain my humanity

Inclination: To Win

Hayden Yusuf

Aspiration: Professionalism

Inclination: Make things personal

Min Vertablin

Aspiration: Get the job done

Inclination: Analyze all recourses

Spy vs Spy

Edward Stone

Aspiration: By the book

Inclination: Get it done

Charles Raines

Aspiration: Opportunist

Inclination: Compassionate

Rat

Watcher

Aspiration: To find answers

Inclination: Retreat

Wind

Aspiration: Protect others

Inclination: Seek mysteries

Role and Drive

Make sure that the Role and Drive are tied together in some interesting way. If you are having trouble coming up with your protagonist's Role and Drive consider the following questions:

1. Where does my protagonist stand relative to the situation? Why has she taken this position?
2. How do you want to play your protagonist? What is her personality like? What are her mannerisms?
3. What relationships matter to her? Why does she care about them?

Assign the Dice

The final thing that you need to do before you start the story is to assign the dice to the various die categories. Each category on the Index has a line labeled "Die Color." On each line write each die's unique color. If you have two dice that are different sizes but the same color, red perhaps, you might write "big red" and "little red."

Means

Means are player defined qualities that further define the protagonist and that are used when rolling dice. They represent abilities, persons, items, favors, vows, etc. that the protagonists can perform, use, call upon, etc. during the game.

Means fall into four categories: Role, social, mental, and physical. Except for Role, each category can have up to three Means, additionally, the social, mental, and physical means are created during play. When you create them they should be written as single words or short phrases that describe how you want them to be used in play.

Throughout the game you'll be able to reconfigure your protagonist's means to better refine your idea of her. However, when you do create your protagonist's means, do not get too hung up on "perfection."

Role Mean

As you already know the protagonist's Role is a mean that describes a general group of skills or abilities. For example, if your protagonist's Role is a "Hot Shot Rookie Cop" she would be able to shoot a gun, intimidate people, and do preliminary crime scene investigations. However, she probably wouldn't be able to perform DNA analysis of blood found at the scene of a crime or schmooze up to the detective in order to get into the evidence room. Unless, of course, she had the right Means...

Social Means

Social Means describe the protagonist's social skills; her finesse; her je ne c'est quoi; basically, her ability to affect others in social situations.

Former trusted advisor to the king
Zealous Leader
Negotiator

Mental Means

Mental Means are sets of skills, realms of knowledge and education, etc. that require dedication, training, and a high level of understanding. They're used in situations where some type of non-social, non-physical specialization or skill is required.

Willful
ICA procedural code and directive
I know this land

Physical Means

Physical Means are any ability, quality, or possession that relies on physical capabilities, or that have some type of physical affect. Basically, they're used in situations where action is required.

Able Horseman
Assassin (The protagonist has access to an assassin, not that he is an assassin.)
Crack Shot

Summary!

Discuss what you want out of the story: themes, genre, pacing, etc.

Then, come up with three Opening Cues that will get the story rolling. Each Opening Cue should tell you one of the following things"

1. ... where the story takes place.
2. ... what situation has lead up to the beginning of the story.
3. ... what major parties are involved.

Now, from the Opening Cues create the protagonists: name, Drive, and Role.

Finally, assign the dice.

The Players:

Part 2

Now that you've created your story's foundation, let me explain the player Roles: The Lead Player and the Support Player. The Lead Player, one player, stages the scenes in such a way that it revolves around her protagonist. The Support Players, everyone else at the table, introduce complications to the scene that the Lead Player's protagonist will have to deal with. The complications will be their own protagonists or some aspect from the setting. The purpose for the complications is to challenge the Lead Player by pushing her into a pivotal conflict. Scenes will have many conflicts, but, it is the pivotal conflict that informs the story and alters the setting and the protagonists. However, not all scenes have pivotal conflicts.

Each scene is about one protagonist, but this doesn't mean that the other player's protagonists can't get something out of the scene. It means that everyone is trying to get the Lead Player to resolve or address some issue. That is the priority. Support Players can address their own issues, often their own issues will be intimately tied to that of the Lead Players. Just remember, that the scenes are about the Lead Player and her protagonist. The limelight must be on her.

Scenes End When...

Before I get to how scenes work, let me quickly tell you how they end and what happens when they end. They end when the Lead Player resolves a pivotal conflict, for better or worse, or, when the scene gets

buttoned. When a scene does end, the player to the right of the Lead Player becomes the new Lead Player, and the previous Lead Player becomes a Support Player. The next scene then revolves around the new Lead Player's protagonist.

Buttoning a Scene

The term "button" is a movie term that relates to a scene that ends on a final witty line or expressive action. That is, a scene ends when the scene's main issue is addressed with some action, event, or piece of dialogue that closes it out. Buttoned scenes can end on a cliffhanger, or they can nicely wrap up the scene's focus. So, a buttoned scene doesn't reach pivotal conflicts but the main issue does get addressed in some meaningful way.

Example Button

Imagine, if you will, a scene in which Sir Vren Atone, the "tired knight of the court" is acting treacherously. He is being spied upon by another protagonist, Basque Bastanchury.

The scene has been building quite nicely when another player introduces a new complication, a raven flies into Sir Vren's tent. The scene plays out a bit longer, then Sir Vren looks up at the raven and says, "Queen Bastanchury." Basque's player smirks, then says, "That's a button." Everyone else sighs as tension is released...

So, why did that one line merit a buttoned scene? Because, from the start of the game the Queen has been thought to be dead by, not only all of the protagonists, but by all of the players as well. When Sir Vren's player said that, the game changed directions. In fact, I was that player and when I said that, I

didn't realize how I shifted the game. The scene thusly ended.

Now, it's up to the Lead Player if her scene gets buttoned or not, because, once a scene is buttoned she won't be able to do some of the things that comes with resolving a pivotal conflict, such as creating new Mean.

Why would anyone want to button a scene?

Storymarks

Storymarks are unWritten's currency. They allow players to jigger their die results. When a pivotal conflict is resolved the Support Player that instigated the conflict gets a storymark. However, if a scene gets buttoned, both the Lead Player and the Support Player that buttoned it get a storymark. If the Lead Player buttons her own scene, like what occurred in the previous example, then only she gets a storymark.

The Lead Player

If you're the Lead Player the scene will revolve around your protagonist. To do this you'll need to set the stage. Then the Support Player will introduce complications that your protagonist will have to deal with based on how the stage is set.

Picking the First Lead Player

To start the game simply select the first Lead Player. Either, by picking someone at random, drawing straws, or playing "Rock, Paper, Scissors."

Setting The Stage

Setting the stage is a four step process that allows the Lead Player to determine what issues the scene will be about and how those issues will be presented.

1. Choose a Journey Question and a Cue
2. State the scene's time and location, and the protagonist's immediate actions.
3. State whether you want the scene to be: dramatic, internal, or action oriented. (optional)

The Process

1. Choose a Journey Question and a Cue

The first thing you do is choose one question from the Journey Questions that are listed at the top of the Index and one Cue from the list of Cues on the Archive. The questions will focus the scene by giving the players something to work towards. The Lead Player will be looking for the answer to the chosen question, the question must be from the chapter that the player is currently in. The Support Players are just pointing her into some direction that they feel the answer lies.

The Cue will provide the starting context for what will be in the scene and what to expect from it. It will also determine what types of complications to introduce to the scene. It is from the scene's Cue that the Support Players will draw their inspiration.

2. State the scene's time and location, and the protagonist's immediate actions.

Next, you're placing your protagonist in the scene. State where she is (location), what time it is (time), and what her immediate action are. The first two parts are pretty simple, keep it that way. The third part should also consist of very little detail. You're just going to say what your protagonist is doing, which may or may not include someone or something that she is interacting with, including one or more of the other protagonists if you wish. However, the pivotal conflict cannot directly come

from whatever it is that she's initially interacting with.

For example

You might place your protagonist on the deck of a ship, at midday helping her shipmates fight off some pirates.

This is a great example, because it hits each point quickly and succinctly. You immediately know what the protagonist is doing and where she's doing it. A clear picture is laid out in just a few words. However, the pivotal conflict cannot be whether the pirates are fought off or not, something else will need to come out of the scene that will inform the story. However, whether the pirates are fought off or not can still be dealt with during the scene, just not as a pivotal conflict.

The set up cannot result in the pivotal conflict, otherwise you'll have scenes that last seconds and lack depth.

3. State whether you want the scene to be: dramatic, internal, or action oriented.

The third step is the Lead Player indicating how she wants the scene to play out. Do you want dramatic problems that need to be dealt with on a social level, with intrigue and melodrama? Perhaps you want to deal with internal conflicts, such as things that deal with personal issues that the protagonist is struggling with, or maybe, she is faced by some especially egregious dilemma, puzzle, mystery, research quandaries, etc. And finally, action oriented scenes consist of charging rhinos, characters swinging from vines or chandeliers, flying monkeys etc. Action oriented scenes require little more than a fuse and a match.

All of this said, the Lead Player can choose an internal scene, but then turn around and

start interacting with it like it's action oriented. This is up to her. You never know why people do the stuff that they do. As a Support Player you need to just roll with the punches.

This step is optional, it is mostly used by players that are new to the game or to each other, such as at conventions or ones that are new to this style of play.

For example

For the question I choose, "Who or what do you care about or value?" And for the Cue I'll choose, "A noble magical bloodline that threatens to splinter." Sir Vren is in the throne room as the king and the heir to the throne argue.

This preceding is a staged scene. It's very simply laid out, and the player (me) has placed one of the other protagonists into the scene, Euclid Bastanchury, the heir to the throne. What will happen in this scene? No one knows, in fact, Euclid's player doesn't even know what Euclid is arguing about with the king.

Support Players

The Support Players are going to introduce complications to the Lead Player's scene, complications that the protagonist will need to deal with. They will, essentially, add color and detail to the scene and, hopefully, cause the Lead Player's protagonist a fair bit of trouble. The purpose of complications, and the Role of the Support Player, is to make the Lead Player's protagonist as awesome as possible through the complications. The complications should reflect the story's genre and aesthetic. follow these points:

Complications...

1. ... must be drawn from the chosen Cue.

2. ... must be directed towards answering the selected Journey Question.
3. ..., once introduced, are facts within the scene.
4. ... are controlled by the Support Player that introduced it.

You're using the complications to help the Lead Player answer her questions, and make her protagonist shine. As far as answering the question goes, you don't have to have an idea of what the answer is. However, what you are doing is pushing her into a corner, forcing her to make a decision. It is up to the Lead Player to decide if she's in a corner or not, but once she is, a pivotal conflict ensues. The Support Player that got her there, then becomes her Adversary, and is rewarded with a storymark.

Complications...

1. ... must be drawn from the chosen Cue.

A complication can be anything: a protagonist, a protagonist's "unintended" actions, non-protagonist characters, inanimate objects, forces of nature, ideas, etc. Take the concept and images that the chosen Cue invokes and populate the scene with those ideas. Have them do and say things that will affect the protagonist. Push her into a corner. Have them actively interfere with the Protagonist's goals or introduce dilemmas. If you're having trouble with coming up with a protagonist, then ask yourself, "what is the worst possible thing that could happen to the Lead Player's protagonist right now?"

Whatever the complication is, it must represent the Cue, in both its actions and aesthetics. That said, be attentive to the Lead Player, if she's not liking where you're going with the complication then go somewhere else with it, or drop it. This is key!

2. ... must be directed towards answering the selected Journey Question.

The actions and dialogues that the complications take must be directed towards the selected Journey Question. However, You're not answering the question, that's the Lead Player's job. You are trying to use the complication to force the Lead Player to answer the question.

3. ..., once introduced, are facts within the scene.

Once a complication has been introduced to the scene it becomes a fixture of that scene. Something that anyone can refer back to at any point. It's there, it happened. It can then be dealt with or ignored. The only caveat is that you must adhere to the genre, mood, and aesthetic that everyone originally agreed to. Don't be a dick.

4. ... are controlled by the Support Player that introduced it.

For the sake of continuity, peace, love, and happiness the player who introduces a complication controls it for the duration of that scene. If anyone has an idea for it, then by all means they should make a suggestion. Just make sure you don't interrupt someone else's groove. Especially if the Lead Player is in the middle of interacting with said complication.... This does not mean other complications cannot be introduced. Just be conscientious about how they are introduced.

Don't hijack each other's scenes and don't turn your complication into your scene at the expense of the Lead Player.

For example:

Euclid's player says, in character and in hushed tones, "Father, their is a traitor

among your advisors.” Another player takes the role of the king, “Sir Vren, you have hand chosen each of my advisors. Do you believe this accusation? Who could it be?” He then bellows, “More wine!” Then glaring at his son, “Perhaps you have poisoned my trusted allies against me.”

In this example two complications were introduced, one where the advisors are cast in doubt, of which Sir Vren is one, and one in which the heir’s loyalties have been cast in doubt. Now, as Sir Vren, I could take those complications and, suddenly, decide that I am a traitor and go from there. Or, I can work against the heir, another player, with the assumption that he is the traitor...

Narrative Flow

Through this process the scene develops and the story evolves in unexpected ways. However, sometime the Support Players introduce complications that the Lead Player doesn’t want to deal with or isn’t interested in, complications, that once introduced become permanent fixtures of the scene. What is a Lead Player to do?

In order to allow the Lead Player to deal with the things she is interested in and avoid those things that she isn’t, I’ve developed the “Yes, and...” and the “Yes, but...” rules. These rules are ripped straight from my extremely limited understanding of improv.

“Yes...”

When a complication is introduced the Lead Player acknowledges it by saying, “Yes...” she accepts that it has been introduced, thereby validating the Support Player’s contribution.

“...and...”

If she chooses to interact with the complication, she engages with it so long as

the Lead Player maintains interested in the complications she should and will continue to interact with it.

For example:

“Yes King, I believe that their is a traitor among us.” With a glare in his eyes Sir Vren turns his head to the heir and continues to speak to the king, “Perhaps one of your most trusted advisors should be watched carefully.”

“...but...”

If a complication has been acknowledged but the Lead Player doesn’t want to interact with it, or if she’s been interacting with it, but decides the scene is no longer going in the direction she wishes it to go, the Lead Player can “narrate passed” the complication. This means the Lead Player acknowledges that the complication has been introduced to the scene, but then “diverts” it in some way that doesn’t have to do with the Lead Players scene, not directly anyway.

In some cases the Lead Player should be rather explicit in the use of the “Yes, but...” rule, because some times some people (not me) just don’t get it.

For example

Let’s say you’re playing Hypatia, she’s studying in a library, and a Support Player sends acolytes to usher her out of the library before she finds out the librarians dirty monk’en secrets. You don’t want the pivotal conflict to be a physical struggle, you want it to deal with researching those secrets. But, this other player keeps sending acolytes over to your Hypatia, until it gets to a point where they are actually trying to forcefully get her out of the library. But you are Hypatia, the good witch from the past, and this is your scene. You can either say, “Listen, I don’t want to deal with this type of conflict right now...” or you can say, “**Yes**, they begin to harass me, again, **but**, because I’m a great witch, I banish them to the other side of the city, and they no longer bother me...” In this latter situation you’ve maintained continuity acknowledged the other player’s

contribution, and narrated passed the complication, something you didn't want to deal with. In either case you get what you want, it's just that the "Yes, but..." treatment is much more satisfying.

Guiding Play

The "Yes, but..." rule allows the Lead Player to introduce story elements and direct the scene into an area that she wants to go. In a word, it allows the Lead Player to be proactive in her scene. However, anything introduced in this manner cannot become the pivotal conflict. These things are arrows to the Support Players that point them into new directions.

The Support Player's "Yes, and/ but..." trick.

Here's the trick, you need to be sensitive to what the Lead Player is looking for, even if she doesn't really know what that is. Use the question and the Cue or the answers to the Journey Questions to figure out how to maneuver the scene. Get to know each other's play styles. If you're unsure of how to approach something, ask!

Conflicts

Conflicts are what makes a story interesting. They result in the development of both the protagonists and the story. A good story are rife with conflict.

Pivotal Conflicts

Pivotal conflicts are the significant conflicts that actually affect and change the story. They occur at a marvelous juxtaposition where a Support Player's complication has done something that makes the Lead Player decide that this conflict should move the story forward. So, that said, you must understand that it is completely up to the

Lead Player to determine which interaction should be the pivotal conflict.

There are five steps to managing pivotal conflicts:

1. Define the protagonist's intent.
2. Select the dice for the Mean that the protagonist will be using, then grab the appropriate dice.
3. Roll and place up to three dice on the conflict square.
4. Narrate the conflict's outcome.
5. Perform the conflict square tasks to end the scene.

The Pivotal Conflict

1. Define the protagonist's intent.

A pivotal conflict occurs when the result of an interaction between the Lead Player's protagonist and a complication is something that the Lead Player wants to avoid, fight, or resist. The Support Player has stated what the result of the conflict was, this is also what happens should the Lead Player fail the pivotal conflict. The Lead Player states what the result of the conflict will be should she succeed.

2. Select the dice for the Mean that the protagonist will be using, then grab the appropriate dice.

The Lead Player, having decided what she wants to do, then selects, from the die categories, which of her means, and which Cue will best help her accomplish her goal. She's limited to one Mean per die category.

Note here that the Cue your roll need not be the same Cue that you started the scene with. Kapisch?

3. Roll and place up to three dice on the conflict square.

Once you've selected the dice, roll 'em! Then take up to three of the dice and place them each on a different conflict square. You're placing the dice to determine who will narrate the conflict's resolution (the Lead Player or the Adversary), which aspect of the protagonist's Drive wins out (Aspiration or Inclination), and finally, whether you completely succeed, partially succeed, or completely fail at your given intent. If you've rolled less than three dice, well, place what you've got. Any empty squares are considered to have a one.

And yes, you can intentionally leave a conflict square empty. In some cases you'll find that you don't want to succeed. Perhaps it doesn't fit the story, or maybe you want to see where the story goes should you fail in some way. The choice is yours.

4. Narrate the conflict's outcome.

After the dice have been placed, the player with narration, narrates the conflict's resolution according to how, and which, dice where placed. So, if a particular mean was placed on one of the conflict squares, that mean should, somehow, be included in the narration.

A complete success and a complete failure are pretty much laid out in the beginning. However, a partial success must be some sort of compromise between the two, success and failure. The compromise is up to the player that narrates. However, she should consider any suggestions from the peanut gallery.

5. Perform each conflict square's task to end the scene.

Finally, the last thing you need to do is answer a Journey Question and perform the tasks that each conflict square has for the Lead Player.

Answer a Question

Based on the events of the scene answer a question from the chapter your in. This means that you don't have to answer the question that you chose when staging the scene. Any question will do, so long as it IS from the same chapter and that it makes sense to the scene.

When answering the question make sure that the answer is short and succinct. Do not spend too much time on it, just answer it and move on.

The Narration Square

If a 5 or a 6 is placed the Lead Player creates a new Mean and a new or rewritten Cue. Each should be related to the conflict in some way. The +1 value next to the new Mean and Cue get circled. If you're rewriting a Cue, then its value is increased by 1.

If a 3 or a 4 is placed, the Lead Player creates a new Mean and the Adversary creates a new Cue or rewrites an existing one. Each, still, must be related to the conflict. However the values of either the Mean or the Cue are not affected.

If a 1 or a 2 is placed the Lead Player creates a new Mean and the Adversary creates or rewrites the Cue. Each, Mean and Cue must be related to the conflict. However, in this case the -1 value gets circled. If the Adversary is rewriting a Cue then its value is decreased by 1.

The Drive Square *

If a 5 or a 6 is placed, your protagonist acts in accordance to her Aspiration and you must check one of the Aspiration boxes. Then, if a Mean was placed in any of the conflict squares its value increases by 1. At this point you can also edit the Mean that had its value increased in some beneficial way if you choose, so long as it reflects the scene.

If a 1, 2, 3 or a 4 is placed, your protagonist acts in accordance to her Inclination and you must check one of the Inclination boxes. Then, a Mean, related to the scene, must have one of its values reduced by one. This is true whether you placed a Mean or not. And again, you have the option to edit that Mean with the lowered value. However, this time, the edit must be negative in some way.

If all three boxes are checked on the either one of the Drives then the protagonist becomes a better person, or decays... this is explained below in the section called "Character Betterment or Decay?"

The Success Square

If a 5 or a 6 is placed, your protagonist succeeds at her intended goal and you must increase the value of a Cue that is related to the scene by one. The Cue doesn't necessarily need to be the one that was chosen for the scene or the one that was placed.

If a 3 or a 4 is placed, you partially succeeded. The narrating player then must devise some compromise between the success and failure. No other actions are done to any of the Cues.

If a 1 or a 2 is placed, your protagonist fails at her intended goal and you must decrease the value of a Cue that is related to the scene

by one. Again, the Cue doesn't necessarily need to be the one that was chosen for the scene or the one that was placed.

Pass The Archive Around

Once the scene is complete pass the Archive around the table to all of the players. This will allow for the Adversary to make what ever changes he needs to make, for the players to see what changes have been made, and to add any loose ends.

Creating a New Cue or Rewriting an old One?

When you are performing the task by the Narration Square you will be asked to create a new Cue or rewrite an existing one. Well, which is it? The Journey Question chapter you are in determines whether you create a new one or rewrite an old one. If the question has a [] in the Cue column this means you create a new Cue, whereas an O means you rewrite an existing one. When doing so, the Cue must be relevant to the scene.

If you're creating a new Cue you'll just write it down, quickly, on the Archive. DO NOT go into the same detail as you did when creating the Opening Cues. If you're rewriting a Cue the new version must be thematically the same as its previous one, while still incorporating elements from scene. But, still, don't spend too much time on this either!

Character Betterment or Decay?

Once all of the boxes have been checked in one of the Drives, Aspiration or Inclination, that Drive has won over the protagonist's character and she then has become a better person or decayed into a worse one. If your protagonist's Aspiration wins out then move it down to the Inclination and write a new better Aspiration. She has achieved her

Aspiration and is now a better person for it. However, if the Inclination wins out then you do the opposite. Move the existing Inclination up to the Aspiration line and write a new, worse Inclination. You're protagonist has just decayed as a person and is now worse off for it.

Once you've moved the Drives around and created the new one then clear all of the boxes next to both the Aspiration and the Inclination. This process is starting over.

This change in your protagonist reflects the choices that she has made and the events in the story. Events that through her actions, or lack there of, have forced her to change WHO she is and HOW she approaches things.

Example Change

Sir Vren Atone began...

Aspiration: Valiant

Inclination: **Disinterested**

Sir Vren Atone became...

Aspiration: **Disinterested**

Inclination: Corrupt

So, you have a situation were the protagonist becomes a "better" person when her Aspiration wins out, or she decays into a "lessor" person if her Inclination wins out.

The X Value

If the X value is reached, then the X'ed Mean or Cue can't be used until its value has been increased to, at least, a -2. If all of the Means within a die category have been reduced to the X value then the Lead Player is forced to retire her protagonist, this is called "forced retirement." The protagonist's next scene must be her final scene. See the Epilogue on page XX for instructions on how to run your final scene, and Forced

Retirement on page XX for instructions on what this means for your protagonist.

Monkeying With The dice

There are many things, well four, that you can use to fiddle with the outcome of the dice: values, storymarks, loose ends, and Lending Dice. Some are good, some aren't. Here you go!

Values

The values are the numbers listed to the left of each Mean and Cue, X -2 -1 0 +1 +2. These numbers represent the Mean's and the Cue's thematic impact on the story. That is, when you're rolling the die for a Mean or Cue with a +1 or a +2 value circled, then you get to increase the die's result by the circled number. If you're rolling a Mean or Cue with a -2 or a -1 you decrease the die's result by the circled number. This is why you can only use one Mean or one Cue per die category when resolving a pivotal conflict. Keep in mind that the dice can't be increased beyond 6 or lowered below 1. So, when you're dealing with a changed value, rotate the die as soon as you can, to the new die result.

Storymarks

Storymarks are cool tokens that, not only help keep the Support Player's on the same page as the Lead Player, they also help the Lead Player resolve her conflict when she's in a bind (aka, poorly rolled dice). Their use creates a nice feedback loop, in that, when you're a Support Player you want to play to the Lead Player's interests to earn storymarks, so that you can use them when you're a Lead Player. There are two ways of earning storymarks:

1. Being the Support Player that controlled the complication that lead to the Lead Player's conflict. When this is the case, the Lead Player grabs a token from the center of the table and tosses it to the Support Player that earned it.
2. Being the player who buttoned the scene. Both the Lead Player and the buttoning player get a storymark. If the Lead Player buttons her own scene, then only she gets a storymark (just one).

Players can have a maximum of 4 storymarks, and they can spend them whenever they want. I recommend doing so after you've rolled. I also recommend using them as often as you can... as Josh once wisely intoned, "It does you no good hanging on to them." Storymarks are used in the following three ways:

1. Spend 1 storymark to insert your protagonist in the scene at the point of rolling to grant a Lending Die. However, in order to do this it must fit the scene, this can be vetoed by the other players.
2. Spend 2 storymarks to rotate a rolled die up by 2 (except for Hindering Dice).
3. Spend 3 storymarks to increase the value of a Mean from X to -2.
4. Once your protagonist has reached the end of her character arc you will have the opportunity to act as a permanent Support Player until the game ends. When this happens you can spend 1 storymark to grant a Lending Die.

PS In the novella pacing each player starts out with a storymark.

Loose Ends

Loose ends are a mechanism that allow the players to take advantage of elements in a scene that are seemingly uninteresting or unrelated. When something is introduced to a scene that one or more players like, but

that doesn't seem to be relevant to the scene (think Yes, but...) then that thing, or some aspect of it, can be turned into a loose end. Simply, write a brief description of that thing in the Loose End section of the Archive.

Now, whenever a Lead Player is in a pivotal conflict, she can invoke the loose end and get a free +1 to anyone of her dice. However, that loose end must make sense to the scene and it must be included in the conflict's narration. Once a loose end is used it must then be stricken from the Loose End section of the Archive. Thus, loose ends can only be used once.

Ultimately, loose ends give you an opportunity to maintain continuity and to create interesting elements from seemingly unrelated or awkward story elements.

The Lending Dice

Lending Dice are the Support Players' own dice that are used to affect the Lead Player's conflict, for better or worse. All Lending Dice must be lent before anything is rolled.

The Helping Die

A Helping Die comes into play when one of the protagonists is in a position to assist another protagonist in a pivotal conflict. The helping player hands a Mean die to the Lead Player in the conflict before she rolls her dice. The Helping Die must be from a Mean that can actually help in the given situation. Additionally, only one die can be lent in this manner during a conflict, regardless of how many protagonists there are ready and willing to help.

Keep in mind, that there is risk in offering a Helping Die. Because, whatever the Drive outcome is the Mean associated to the

Helping Die suffers the same consequence if she actually places your die. You better hope that the Lead Player chooses to support her Aspiration. That way your Mean's value increases by one. If she supports her Inclination, well, your Mean is decreased by one.

The Hindering Die

The Hindering Die is used in situations where two or more protagonists are at odds, and a conflict arises, such as a fight, an argument of some type, arm wrestling, or whatever. This is cool. When it occurs the player rolling the dice is the only player that actually rolls any dice, the competing player(s) don't just sit around and watch the her roll her dice. Each competing player can hand the rolling player a Hindering Die, that **MUST** be rolled and **MUST** be placed. Only one die can be imposed on the rolling player in the conflict per competing player. So, if the Lead Player is going up against three other players she might as well not roll any of her own dice, should they each give her a Hindering Die. The Hindering Die, like the Helping Die, must adequately represent the actions that the competing protagonists are taking against the rolling player's protagonist. Thus, the competing protagonist(s) must be present in the scene.

Additionally, any values associated to the Hindering Die are reversed. So, if a Mean has a +1, it becomes a -1 to the player who is rolling it. Additionally, Hindering Dice cannot be affected with storymarks or loose ends

FYI, it's best to give a Hindering Die if the Lead Player is rolling three or more dice, otherwise your just helping her out. Don't do that. No, never that.

The Journey Questions:

Part 3

This Is The Protagonist's Story

Given my goals for this game, I needed some structure that would allow the emulation of film and literature. So I took the 5-act structure and the hero's journey, tools designed specifically for the creation of stories, and I smashed them together to create the Journey Questions. The result is a series of questions that lead the players through the various "chapters" of a story. These chapters are organized in a way that allows your protagonist and the setting to grow and evolve based on the choices and interactions that the players make and create. The end result is an individual character arc for each of the protagonists that demonstrates some type of character growth or evolution. In the overall story each protagonist is the central character of his or her own story, while still being a supporting character in the story of the other protagonists. This is true even if none of the protagonists never meet.

Each question provides direction to the players for their scenes, whether they are acting as the Lead Player or the Support Players. They help set the stage for the various scenes as well as direct the story's development in a way a kin to popular film and literature. In order to best use the Journey Questions keep in mind the following points:

1. The questions are used by the Lead Player to generate an initial direction for her scene and, to a lesser degree, direction for the Support Players when they are introducing and directing the complications.
2. When answering a question, after the pivotal conflict, you don't have to answer the same question that you selected at the beginning of the scene. You can choose a different one if there is one that better suits the scene.
3. When answering the questions, DO NOT spend too much time on the answer. Just answer it and move on. Don't use more than three words to answer it. Finding the perfect wording will only slow down the game.

The Game Lengths

1. If your playing in a novella length game only answer 1 question from chapters 2, 3, and 4. Because of this the focus of the story will be on the impact that the protagonists have on the setting, more so then on their own journey, or development. The result is a faced paced game, so each player starts out with a storymark.

The Drive in novella length games function differently then in the others. Once you have answered the last Journey Question the protagonist's Drive with the most checked boxes wins out and switches if you wish to play a sequel.

2. If you're playing a cinematic game only answer one question per chapter. This allows the story to be punchier, like those found in theaters today.
3. If you're playing a literary game, answer the Journey Questions like so:

- Chapter 1: Answer any two questions
- Chapter 2: Answer one question
- Chapter 3: Answer any three questions
- Chapter 4: Answer one question
- Chapter 5: Answer one question.
- Epilogue: Dénouement: Attempt to answer one question

(The questions in chapters 1 and 3 can be answered in any order.)

Literary games allow you to develop long and involved stories that explore the different facets of the story and the protagonists.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 is about the players getting to know the protagonists and the story. In it you'll find out what the protagonists care about, value, are capable of, and what they are afraid of. Create new Mean and Cues upon answering any question in this chapter. If you are playing in a literary game, select any two questions in any order.

Who or what do you care about or value?

How has this scene demonstrated to you your protagonist's concerns? Is there someone or something, either positive or negative, that Drives your protagonist forward? It can be anything, a person, a place, a thing, a concept, an ideal, a desire, etc.

What are you capable of?

What grand or unique things has your protagonist demonstrated that she is capable of doing? Is she gifted with "moving oratory," or capable of committing "murder."

What are you afraid of?

Everyone is afraid of something. This scene has touched on some of your protagonist's deepest fears. What is your protagonist scared of?

Chapter 2: Central Conflict

Chapter 2 reveals your protagonist's central conflict, which may or may not be the same as that of the other protagonist's central conflict. Create a new Mean and Cue upon answering either question in this chapter. Answer one of the following questions.

How have you, or that which you care about or value, been threatened?

How has this scene demonstrated a significant threat to your protagonist or those she cares about? We're talking about people, animals, or things.

What internal struggle must you come to terms with?

Your protagonist is being forced to reevaluate something about herself. What is it? Is her integrity in question? What core beliefs does she have that are being cast in doubt? Does she need to come to terms with her changing world or environment? Or does she need to change something about herself because the things around her aren't as she thought?

Chapter 3: Rising Action

In chapter 3 tension mounts, momentum builds, and we begin to understand what's really at stake. Create a new Mean and rewrite a Cue upon answering any questions

in this chapter. If you are playing in a literary game, select any three questions in any order to answer.

Who or what is the apparent cause of your issue?

Who or what is threatening your protagonist or that which she holds dear? Who has earned her ire? Are they aware of her? Is it a whole group, a single person, or an ideal that is being threatened? Or that is doing the threatening? Perhaps she has been made aware of her own foibles? What are the shortcomings of her belief system? Was she truly attacked to the values that she held so deep?

What have you gained that will help you in your cause?

Mystical items? Insight? Favors? The chance for revenge? What? Did your protagonist learn something new about herself, or something she possesses?

How have you prepared yourself to address your issue?

Is resolving it as easy as finding a magic ring and tossing it into the mouth of a volcano? Does she need to collect a cadre of assistance and implements? From who? How? What?

How are you incapable of dealing with your issue?

Where does she fall short? How has she failed herself or that which she cares about or values? Is there really anything to fight for?

Chapter 4: Climax

It is in this chapter that your protagonist faces that which has been plaguing her during the course of the story. Is she ready?

Create a new Mean and rewrite a Cue upon answering this chapters question.

What have you gained by addressing your issue?

Regardless of the outcome, your protagonist has gained something. Confidence? Answers? The Holy Grail? This question doesn't assume that she succeeded in her quest. Only that she gained something for having attempted it.

What have you learned about yourself by addressing your issue?

The events of the story up to this point have taught your protagonist something about herself. What is it that she now knows that she didn't before?

Chapter 5: Falling Action

Examine your protagonist's actions up to this point. Are there any doubts about her deeds? Were they morally questionable? Consider the whole story, not just this scene. Ultimately, you want to know if the protagonist can handle the responsibility of her actions and decisions. Is she a hero? Or not? Only answer one question, upon answering it create a new Mean and rewrite a Cue.

Have the ends justified the means? Really? Why? Why not?

What sacrifices were worthwhile in addressing your issue?

What sacrifices were made during the story that, though lamentable, the protagonist believes were worth her goals.

What sacrifices were NOT worthwhile in addressing your issue?

Which weren't?

Epilogue: Dénouement

Your protagonist has reached the end of this journey. Her dénouement is at hand. As a player this means that you must weave together the various strands of your story, perhaps symbolically. These scenes can take place immediately after the bulk of the story or they can take place a significant time later. Mechanically, the epilogue functions similar to most other scenes, however, once this scene is done a question gets answered whether the scene ended with a pivotal conflict or a button.

The answer to the final question results in the creation of a story seed.

Story Seeds

Story seeds are like Cues, but it is from these seeds that the new Opening Cues will come. They cannot be used as Cue if the other players have not yet concluded their arcs. Thus, once they are created they cannot be changed. They are a legacy that the protagonists leave on the setting as a result of their journey. When you are ready to create the Opening Cues for the new next story base then on the story seeds. See sequels in the next part.

What has come of your efforts?

Did your protagonist succeed? Fail? Did she ride off into the sunset with the prince? The princess? Both? Is the land at peace? Left in chaos? What? Perhaps she's more trouble than what came before. Perhaps, she's exactly what was needed? However you

answer this question, make sure that it reflects the final scene square.

What's next?

Perhaps, all of this, the whole journey, has been a staging ground for what's to come. Perhaps, it's over.

End Game: Part 4

Ending The Arc And Sequels

Permanent Support Players

Once a player completes her Journey Questions the player becomes a “permanent” Support Player until the last player completes her protagonist’s final question. Permanent Support Players can grant Lending Dice to other players who are attempting to resolve a pivotal conflict at the cost of three storymarks for one Lending Die. However, the Lending Dice at this point don’t have to represent the protagonist. They can represent the actions and affects of a complication.

Permanent Support Players earn storymarks normally.

Sequel?

Once all of the players have completed their protagonist’s Journey Questions the book completes and the story ends. The players can then choose to begin new story, or a sequel. If you choose to start a whole new story, well go back to page three.

However, if you wish to embark on a sequel then the process is similar to starting a new story, with the discussion, the Opening Cues, and so on. However, the new Opening Cues must come from the story seeds that were created at the completion of each of the protagonist’s dénouement scene.

After you have the new Opening Cues ready you can continue your protagonist on a new journey, or create a new protagonist. The new protagonist must come from the Opening Cues as if it were new story. However, if you choose to start a new journey for your existing protagonist then you must start a new Index with unanswered questions and all. Transfer a revised version of the protagonist’s Drive, Role, and one Mean to the new Index, and empty all of the Drive boxes. The revised Drive, Role, and Mean must reflect the things that the protagonist has learned about herself from her previous journey. What that is, may be up to you.

Storymarks

All storymarks are transferred with the player regardless of whether the player is continuing to use the previous protagonist or creating a new one.

The Archive

When making a sequel start a new Archive. You can transfer loose ends from the previous Archive as well as create new ones, one new loose end per player, that may come up during the discussion.

Forced Retirement

You’ve suffered three X’s in one die category, and now your protagonist must retire. She can’t come back. She’s done with. Finis. How this final scene wraps up her story is up to you. The only caveat, is that

her finale must reflect the category that was X'ed. Your next and final scene must be from the Journey Question's Epilogue.

Social Mean that were X'ed require some sort of social retirement, exile perhaps. If the mental Mean were X'ed, then she must have some sort of mental retirement. Perhaps she went back to school or got Alzheimer's, or something. And finally, physical retirement probably means she died, broke every bone in her body, or is training for the Olympics.

Continuing Play

Once you've retired your protagonist you can remain as permanent Support Player or create a new protagonist. The new protagonist can be drawn from any available Cue, she doesn't need to be created from one of the Opening Cues. When the last original protagonist has concluded her dénouement scene the story ends.

If all original protagonists were forced to retire, then the story ends with the last original protagonist's final scene...

Greater Ideas:

Part 5

Using just the rules you've read so far, unWritten as-is is a great game. With it you can tell most any kind of story from high adventure to heart wrenching melodrama. However, you can do much more with it than what has been introduced so far...

Secondary Conflicts

So, pivotal conflicts are, by design, meant to support and build, both the Lead Player's protagonist and the story. However, this doesn't mean that the Support Players can't have their own conflict within the Lead Player's scene. So, Support Players can have support conflicts in the Lead Player's scene, so long as the scene, in some way, supports the Lead Player. This can mean the support conflict is setting something up for the Lead Player to deal with, or it is a support conflict that directly results from the Lead Player's pivotal conflict.

Mechanically, secondary conflicts function largely the same way as pivotal conflicts. The Support Player must decide whether there is a conflict, she rolls dice in the same way, and, most importantly, she **MUST** answer a question once the conflict is resolved. The question must be one from the chapter that she's in. Secondary conflicts are different in that no players involved are awarded a storymark. This ain't your scene baby!

Additionally, each Support Player can only have **ONE** secondary conflict per scene.

Have an example where the SP's protagonist drops something important, this is the lead up conflict that leads to the Lead Player's protagonist having her own pivotal conflict where she tries to catch what was dropped.

Proxy

Each scene is about the journey that your protagonist is on. However, this doesn't mean that the Lead Player's protagonist must be in every scene. But, it does mean that every scene must have some "thing," a character, location, item, or whatever you can dream up, that represents the protagonist's interests. This "thing" is called a proxy. It functions the same as if it were the protagonist except that it isn't your protagonist. The Lead Player controls it exactly as she would her own protagonist.

Proxies allow insight to the setting, and give windows on what is happening when the protagonists aren't around, while still having narrative impact on the story. Unlike exposition scenes...

Exposition Scenes

Exposition scenes allow for the further development of the story without the direct involvement of the protagonists. They demonstrate the effects of the protagonist's actions on the setting. However, unlike the use of a proxy, all of the players are involved equally, however, these scenes only generate loose ends.

Each player, in turn from the Lead Player to the right, introduces a single element to the scene: a piece of color, detail, action, or event. Each element must, in some way reflect something from the protagonist's Index: the protagonist's name, an answer to a question, the Role, or a Mean. Subsequent players build onto the previous player's contribution.

So, you might say, "It's raining," then the next player says, "The villain is standing, patiently, waiting on the corner." The next player then goes, "A car Drives up, hands him a piece of paper, then Drives off."

What you're trying to do is create loose ends and expand the story. These scenes don't have conflicts, they get buttoned. The Lead Player gets a storymark, for setting up the scene, then the player who buttons the scene, after the first round of details also gets a storymark. If the Lead Player buttons the scene then she gets a second storymark.

When the scene is done, you should have as many loose ends as there are players.

Parallel Scenes

Parallel scenes have multiple protagonists dealing with one central issue. However, they are all not necessarily trying to achieve the same goal. You could, potentially, have each player pulling in different directions. The Lead Player selects which protagonists will be in the scene, each player whose protagonist is in the scene then places her protagonist.

For example

There might be four protagonists struggling to gain control over the same magical MaGuffin. Or, you might have all of the protagonists working together; one finding the dragons weakness, one fighting the dragon, one keeping the fighter alive, and one finding the secret treasure! Tricky tricky...

Essentially, parallel scenes are made up of sequences that allow each protagonist to acts towards their own goal. Each protagonist is a temporary Lead Player while they are in their sequence. The scenes transition from one sequence to the next when a series of actions has been completed.

A series of actions is a statement, actions, events, or an interchange between the Lead Player's protagonist and a complication. This can be something that further defines the issue or something that brings the protagonist closer to actually dealing with the central issue. Dealing with the issue means you go to conflict or your protagonist gets buttoned out of the scene. While a player is acting as the temporary Lead Player, the rest of the players introduce complications in the same manner, but they should be more focused on the central issue. Thus each sequence should hit high points in quick successions.

Conflicts and buttons work normally. However, when a conflict is resolved successfully a Helping Die is granted to subsequent players. A failed conflict imposes a Hinderer Die. These dice continue to get passed on until the final protagonist has acted in the parallel scene. So, if there are four players in a parallel scene then by the time the final player is resolving her conflict she will, potentially, have three Helping Dice, three Hinderer Dice, or some combination of the two. Careful.

Parallel scenes are staged a little differently than the primary scenes that were described in part 3.

1. Pick a question and a Cue... like normal.
2. Select the protagonists that will be involved. There can be no secondary

conflicts with protagonists that were selected to be in the scene.

drop the shields that protect the Death Star, which will allow Lando to attempt his attack.

Once the scene begins, there are three steps to a parallel scene...

1. Switch to the next sequence after a single series.
2. Complications, conflicts, and buttons occur normally.
3. Conflicts that end successfully grant a Helping Die, and those that fail impose a Hindering Die to subsequent conflicts.

Sample Parallel Scenes:

The scenes in Star Wars: A New Hope and Return of the Jedi, when Luke and company are destroying the Death Star are perfect examples of what this looks like.

During A New Hope you have a scene where Luke is actively trying to destroy the Death Star. The Lead Player, obviously framed the scene around Luke's. Then you have Princess Leia's player place her on the surface of the planet giving ground support. And you have Han Solo's player placing Han Solo in a position to give air support. This was one scene with multiple characters all working together in different ways to achieve the same goal.

In Return of the Jedi you have Lando Calrissian trying to perform a direct assault on the newly constructed and fully operational Death Star. Then there's Luke in the Death Star trying to defeat the emperor, who, through the force is affecting the battle. Then there's Han and Leia on Endor trying to

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