

One More Hour

A Main Course RPG of Temporary Reprieves
an Iron Game Chef Entry for 2006

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Forward

One More Hour is the fourth RPG in the Full Course of Love and Death, coming between the second main course of The Marriage of Persephone and the last, That Oh So Little Death. You play the same team as you did in The Marriage of Persephone, except due to the favor you received in that game, you have been given a chance to come back and right the wrongs of your untimely death. Unfortunately, your strand has already been cut, so you have only an hour to make that difference. After One More Hour, That Oh So Little Death acts as a ending for the entire full course, but will likely involve at least one hero from the team. Like all games in this Full Course, One More Hour is intended for five players.

As a game designed for Iron Game Chef 2006, it is necessary to discuss the allotments made for that contest. Indeed, for the theme of time, One More Hour fulfills 8 hours requirement, spread among any number of sessions. And it uses the following contest terms: Glass, Law, Steel, and Team.

A Second Chance

In the last hour of your life, what is it that matters? Is it what you can do? Is it who you love? Is it your legacy? And what would you sacrifice to do what is most important to you?

In One More Hour, you face exactly this question. You play a hero, a member of a team of elite masters of their fields. Nothing is beyond your grasp, if only you have the time. But now that has all changed, death isn't something you can escape. In no uncertain terms the team has only one hour left to live. And in that time they must decide whether to die as heroes or as real people.

In a life of adventure and glory, little things get neglected. Heroes tend to put off mundane concerns, love, family, forgiveness, these can be seen to once the world is no longer in peril. But time runs out for everyone. And for your heroes, it just did. Knowing their fates, the heroes find themselves laden with second thoughts and might have been, and suddenly success is anything but certain. Now the lofty heroes must struggle with the mundane and the earth shattering, and balance the two in their last hour on earth.

Eating Away at You

One of the themes of One More Hour is that time is always vanishing. Reflecting this is a bowl of snacks or candies, which is reserved solely for the game. At the beginning of the game the bowl should be filled with approximately sixty of a candy or snack food which is amenable to all the players. If no single food qualifies, then the bowl can be filled with a mixture.

As the game continues, you will eat the last minutes of the heroes' lives. And what's more, barring the intermissions, this bowl contains the only food which you may eat. Beverages are not constrained, but no food is permitted at the table other than the bowl. Hunger can be an important part of One More Hour, but this should not be taken to excess. This limitation is removed when an intermission occurs and the bowl of minutes are covered and put away.

A Note on Setting

One More Hour is intentionally vague about the setting. This gives the you the option of being fantasy adventurers or technothriller superspies. All that matters is that the players agree on the basics, and the rest will be developed as you introduce and overcome obstacles.

This flexibility also extends to the reason that the team knows its fate. It could be divine intervention which gives them an extra hour, or a prophecy which has come to pass. It could be a poison or a curse. It could be an implanted bomb which was triggered when their masters were killed. Or it could simply be a realization, a subtle note of dread that comes with the certainty of your own death. Only two things matter: the heroes know they will die in an hour and they know that there is nothing they can do to stop it. Anyway to do that is fine, as long as all the

players agree.

At The Top of Your Game

Like any team, the heroes have different specialties, which complement each other. The first step in making your hero is to decide what three specialties he or she has. These can be drawn from anywhere appropriate to the decided setting. In a technothriller, the specialties might be guns, computers, or disguise artist. In fantasy they might be sorcery, swords, or stealth. Specialties are broad areas, and the different specialties should delineate the responsibilities of the team.

For that reason the first specialty of each team member should be distinct from the others. Later specialties may be shared, but it should be clear who the best choice among the team is for most major tasks. For this reason creating heroes should be done as a group activity.

After specialties are determined, each player should then decide on three obligations. These are personal matters which the hero has neglected on his or her many adventures. An obligation is something that weighs on the hero during these final minutes, so it should be something important to the hero. Good obligations are to family members or romantic interests, to retired team members, or the like. Perhaps you must say good bye to your daughter and apologize for never being there. Perhaps you must make sure that your crippled husband will be able to be cared for when you go.

Obligations don't require awesome abilities to meet, only basic humanity. If anything, obligations should strongly contrast the high-powered world of the hero, by the simplicity of human emotion and daily life. The obligations go in descending order, with the first being the easiest to perform, while the last is only possible at that final moment

when the world hangs in the balance.

Once each hero has three specialties and three obligations, the last step before starting to play is for each player to add an obstacle, and then for all the players to agree on a final obstacle, which is the ultimate threat or challenge they must overcome. Normal obstacles are threats, dangers, or simply problems that the team must overcome before reaching the final obstacle. For each obstacle roll a d4, and list the result as the tries needed to overcome it. The final obstacle is not rolled now, as it cannot be tried until the final moments, when the team finally has the chance to overcome it and save the world. Record all of these on the first obstacle sheet, although for most games two obstacle sheets will be needed, as obstacles are overcome and new ones appear.

When the final obstacle is determined, you must also determine what is at risk. This is what will happen if that final obstacle is not overcome. This outcome must be unacceptable to the heroes and extreme. There should be no doubt that the heroes actions can save many people if they succeed on their mission.

Saving the World

Once the initial and final obstacles are decided, the actual game play begins. The basic structure of playing One More Hour is a rotating narration, starting with the team leader and passing to the right. When it is his or her turn to narrate, every player has a choice between two laws. On one hand, the law of steel helps to overcome the obstacles to victory, but risks consuming the minutes remaining. On the other, the law of glass helps to salve the obligations of mundane life, but adds new obstacles to be overcome. In either case, you narrate the actions of your character and their outcomes. Success is automatic, instead it is the cost that is uncertain.

Obstacles: The Law of Steel

The law of steel is simple. You attempt to overcome an obstacle. This counts as one try against that obstacle. If the accumulated tries equals the number needed, then that obstacle is overcome and your narration describes this. The risk with the law of steel, is that you may need to take some of your team's valuable time to accomplish your goal.

Once you describe what you are doing and what specialty you are using, roll any dice listed next to your unresolved obligations. For each of these which rolls above the number next to your specialty you must consume a minute. These dice represent the hero hesitating due to the weight of his or her obligations. The only way to remove these dice is to resolve obligations using the law of glass.

For example, if you have resolved your first obligation, but not your second, and you attack the cybernetic iguana hordes with your swordfighting specialty (with a number of 7), you would roll a d8 and a d10, but not a d6 because your first obligation is resolved. If the d8 rolls an 8 you consume a minute and if the d10 rolls an 8 or higher, you consume a minute. If they both roll that high, you consume two minutes, one for each. In any case, you add an extra try to the cybernetic iguana hordes, and if the total tries equals the needed ones, you defeat the hordes with your swordfighting, otherwise you push them back, but don't eliminate them.

If you ever consume the last minute, then finish describing your action and on the next player's turn the final moments begin.

Obligations: The Law of Glass

The law of glass allows you to move toward resolving your obligations. Only the first two obligations can be overcome in this manner, the last one can only be resolved by taking your last action to do so. For those first

two obligation you describe how you are making progress in resolving that obligation and record an additional try. Then describe how your preoccupation has allowed another obstacle to arise. Add this obstacle, and roll a d4 for the number of tries it requires.

For example, if your obligation is to send a letter to your aged father, telling him who you really are and apologizing for failing to attend your mother's funeral, then you may take a law of glass scene to compose the letter, struggling to put the words down as bullets fly over head. But you are so preoccupied that you don't watch the rear as you were told, and tank begins to roll down the street toward where your team is holed up. You roll the d4, indicating that the tank will require three tries to overcome.

Intermissions

If a player ever ends his or her turn with no non-final obstacles left, then the players may take an intermission. This is a break of any length and, most importantly, allows the players to eat normally. When the intermission ends, or even immediately if the players elect to not take an intermission, play continues with the next player, and each player

must use law of glass for their next action, as the heroes as well as the players take advantage of the sudden calm.

At The End of The World

When the last minute is consumed, the final moments begin. Immediately any remaining obstacles are reduced to one try. Also, the final obstacle is rolled, with a d4, indicating the number of tries needed to defeat that last threat. Then, starting with the next player in line, each player may add one try to any remaining obligation or obstacle for each obligation resolved before these moments. This may resolve the third obligation and the final obstacle, however the final obstacle can only be tried if no other obstacles remain.

When each player has had their chance, if the final obstacle is overcome, then the world has been saved. If not, whatever was put at risk has been lost. In either case, the players get one more narration, this time describing the death of his or her hero.

The final moments are when everything comes together, or everything falls apart. Each team member must decide what to do on their own. And ultimately, they must live and die with the consequences.

Hero Sheet

Player Name: _____

Hero Name: _____

First Specialty (7): _____

Second Specialty (5): _____

Third Specialty (3): _____

First Obligation (3 tries - d6): Tries: _____

Second Obligation (5 tries - d8): Tries: _____

Third Obligation (last try - d10): Tries: _____

Obstacle Sheet

Final Obstacle: _____

At Risk: _____

Tries Needed: _____

Tries So Far: _____

Obstacle: _____

Tries Needed: _____

Tries So Far: _____

Obstacle: _____

Tries Needed: _____

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