

Heroine



WRITTEN *by*
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A STORYTELLING GAME

LET'S TELL THE STORY OF A BRAVE TRAVELER...

Pulled through a portal to a strange land, our traveler overcomes deadly challenges with daring, cleverness, and kindness. With a few quirky, new companions our protagonist saves the land from terrible ruin. Unlike in many stories, our brave traveler is a girl.

Heroine is a storytelling game that helps you and your friends tell tales of a young heroine in another world. Each time you play, a heroine meets new companions, faces terrible dangers and a fierce antagonist, and struggles to overcome all sorts of heroic challenges.



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CHAPTER ONE

How to Play

Heroine is a storytelling game about a young girl with an unusual chance to be heroic. Inspired by movies like Jim Henson's *Labyrinth* and Victor Fleming's *The Wizard of Oz* and by books like Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, this game creates stories about protagonists who are not powerful killers or well-educated spies. Rather they are young women from the real world who find themselves somewhere strange.

When you play *Heroine*, at least three people tell a story together using the rules in this book. Together you create the story of a young heroine who travels to some other world where she meets new companions, faces terrible dangers and a fierce antagonist, and struggles to overcome each Challenge in a daring, clever, and kind manner.

To play *Heroine*, first you will need three to six players, this book, two dice, and a pile of fourteen counters. Pennies or poker chips work well.

Now, choose a role for each player. One player is the Heroine Player, who plays the young girl at the center of the story. The other players take turns being Companion Players and being the Narrator. The Narrator describes the world around the heroine and her companions. The Companion Players take on the roles of one of the heroine's quirky new friends from the Other World. Which one of you wants to be the Heroine Player? Who wants to be the Narrator first? What sort of quirky new friends do the others in your group want to play?

You are ready to tell your story together, beginning with an introduction in the heroine's regular world. After the introduction you play through several chapters in the Other World, before finally giving your story a conclusion.

DECIDE PLAYER ROLES

Any player may choose any role, though one player controls the heroine through the whole game, and one player is the Narrator until another player replaces him. If no one has a strong preference, then the youngest player plays the heroine, and the oldest player starts as the Narrator. You may want to skip to reading the chapter about your role before you read the rest of this chapter.

One player performs as the **HEROINE PLAYER** for the duration of the game. The heroine is a troubled young lady whose obstacles in both the regular world and a magical other world threaten her growth from a child to an adult. She may be tempted with shortcuts and dishonesty, frightened by great dangers, or confused by the unknown. The Heroine Player's primary goal is to exhibit the heroine's tension while she attempts to overcome her obstacles with kindness, daring, and cleverness. This player should read *Chapter Two: Heroine*.

One player begins as the **NARRATOR**. The Narrator is in charge of describing the world and controlling all characters other than the heroine and her companions. Among these other characters is a very special one: the antagonist, a powerful being whose actions oppose the heroine and her companions. The Narrator should read *Chapter Three: Narrator*. Eventually, this player will probably take a turn as a Companion Player, so he or she should also skim *Chapter: Four Companion*.

The other players begin as **COMPANION PLAYERS**. These Companion Players may choose to take over as Narrator later in the game, but for now, they each play one of the heroine's companions. The companions are denizens of the Other World who offer support to the heroine while also making her life a bit more complicated. These players should read *Chapter Four: Companion* and skim *Chapter Three: Narrator*. The beginning of Chapter Three gives some guidance on the different kinds of Narrators and what kind of companions they might want to play. Chapter Four gives the rules for playing a companion.

Jo is the youngest player, but she would rather play the Narrator. Fear isn't as familiar with the rules, so he decides to play a companion. He wants to play a softhearted monster. He decides to be a troll policeman named Officer Rocks. Adam agrees to play the heroine. He wants to play a sixteen-year-old who is angry at her parents' divorce. He names her Alexandria, and tells Jo and Fear that it's important that Alexandria is a horseback rider.

TELL YOUR STORY

Now that each player has chosen a role, you are ready to tell your story. You need an introduction, at least three chapters, and a conclusion. The steps for each are below.

The Heroine Player is in charge of narrating the beginning of the introduction. Narrating means describing the scene and making choices for all of the characters other than the heroine and her companions. The Narrator does this during the chapters, while other players control only their individual characters. During the conclusion, there are special rules to determine who narrates.



INTRODUCTION

The Narrator sets the scene for each chapter of the story, but the Heroine Player sets the scene in the introduction. The Heroine Player's goal in the introduction is to narrate some aspect of her normal life, especially some problem she faces at school or at home. The Companion Players' goal is to give suggestions that supernatural elements are starting to appear in the background of the heroine's daily life. These suggestions are also hints to the Narrator about what kind of Other World interests the Companion Players.

The companion characters might not make an appearance during the introduction. This is fine. In the next section, there are suggestions for when to introduce companions in a chapter. The Narrator's goal during the introduction is to find out what kind of story the Heroine Player and the Companion Players want to tell. The Narrator may want to make notes about what seems to be important to the heroine, so she can bring those things up again in later chapters.

Adam, the Heroine Player, introduces the story with Alexandria, the heroine, at her horseback riding lessons. She is so angry at her parents' breakup that she takes her horse and rides to the circus. At this point, Adam asks the Narrator, Jo to narrate the rest of introduction. Jo narrates that it is the middle of the day, so the circus isn't open.

Alexandria ties up her horse, sneaks in, and finds that the tiger is missing from its cage. She sees a large trap door lying open next to the tiger cage. Adam decides that Alexandria goes down into the trap door. Jo narrates that Alexandria falls down a ladder, and when she wakes up, she is in some sort of a park, surrounded by a dozen talking kittens. (This is the heroine's first glimpse of the Other World.)

Fear, the Companion Player, wants his companion can appear in the introduction, even though most companions appear during a chapter. Everyone agrees that this would be fun. Fear describes Officer Rocks, the companion, chasing some of the kittens and yelling at them, 'You fuzzy truants. I'll take you back to school if I have to drag you the whole way!' (This is Fear introducing his companion.)

- ❧ **The Heroine Player Sets the Scene in her regular world. Answer these questions:** Where does the heroine live? How does she look? How old is she? (Choose an age between 8- and 18-years-old.)
- ❧ **The Heroine Player chooses herself or another player to narrate a conflict typical to the heroine's life in the regular world.**
- ❧ **Before this conflict is resolved, however, the Narrator chooses one of the following and describes the heroine's trip to the Other World:**
 - * **Accidental Whirlwind:** The heroine accidentally passes through a hidden gateway to the Other World. The magic of this strange, new land is her first clue that she is no longer in her own world.
 - * **Rabbit Chase:** The heroine follows a creature through a gateway. This magical creature speaks with her, introducing her, intentionally or not, to the workings of this new place.
 - * **Magical Threat:** Something threatens the heroine's regular life. A magical creature has committed a crime in the heroine's world or a magical force threatens the heroine and her loved ones. She goes through a gateway in search of a solution.
- ❧ **The Narrator describes the heroine's first glimpse of the Other World.** The introduction ends, and the Narrator begins the next chapter by Setting the Scene.



CHAPTERS

The bulk of your story is told in chapters. The structure of the Chapter is fairly simple: The Narrator **SETS THE SCENE**, the Heroine Player and Companion Players respond, the Narrator uses special moves to make the story dramatic and well-paced, and then the Narrator **CHALLENGES** the Heroine Player.


The Narrator chooses to start the scene exactly where the last chapter ended. (The Narrator sets the scene by describing who is in the scene, where it is taking place, and what has happened right before the chapter begins. When the Narrator chooses to set the scene immediately following the action of the previous chapter, this description is simplified.)

Officer Rocks explains to Alexandria that he is taking the kittens back to their fourth grade class. Alexandria agrees to help. (Fear decides to Get In Trouble, and describes how some of the kittens actually steal his shoes.)

After being scratched by Tom, the bad boy kitten, Alexandria succeeds in helping Officer Rocks collect all the kittens. (This is the Heroine Player's and Companion Player's initial response to the scene. The Narrator doesn't have any drama points yet, so she can't Injure or Divide the heroine. She can't Injure or Divide a companion until chapter three.)

Meanwhile, Jo tells Fear that all these kittens are orphans, and that their school is actually a home for orphans. Fear decides that Officer Rocks explains this to Alexandria on the way to the orphanage.

*Once the characters reach the orphanage, Jo announces the **CHALLENGE** of this chapter: Miss Wendigo, the orphanage manager, demands that Alexandria either prove she has parents or come live in the orphanage.*

 **The Narrator chooses a chapter from Appendix One (or flies by the seat of his pants), and Sets the Scene (See the Narrator Chapter).** The Heroine Player and Companion Players make their first response to the scenario of the chapter, describing what their characters do first. (A player, whose companion has yet to be introduced, may request an introduction any time before the Challenge. It is best to introduce all the companions during the first few chapters of your story.)

- ❧ **The Narrator keeps the pace of the story going forward by describing** events, offering choices, inflicting Injuries and Divisions, featuring the antagonist, and generally encouraging the players to add to the story (See the Narrator Chapter). The players continue to describe what their characters are doing. Be sure to offer praise and helpful ideas to each other and the Narrator. At any time before the Challenge (see below) has been resolved, each Companion Player chooses whether to **GET IN TROUBLE** or **HELP THE HEROINE** (See the Companion Chapter).
- ❧ **The Narrator announces the Challenge, some dangerous event that** might Tempt, Frighten, or Confuse the heroine. Challenges are moments of conflict in the story when the heroine may succeed or fail and be heroic or not. Follow the steps below to resolve the Challenge and end the chapter. The Narrator then either begins a new chapter or announces the conclusion.



THE CHALLENGE

The Narrator describes the conflict or obstacle the heroine faces and announces that a Challenge has arrived. If a Companion Player whose character has been introduced has not yet chosen **GET IN TROUBLE** or **HELP THE HEROINE** during this chapter, the Companion Player does so now. Companion Players collaborate with the Narrator to decide how their move choices naturally affect the tension of the Challenge.

In one chapter, Tully's companion character, Woodshadow, Gets In Trouble, by picking a fight. In the next chapter, he Helps the Heroine, Jennifer, by catching the deputy who is sabotaging Jennifer's boat. In each chapter, once Tully has picked his move, he tries to build on the scene set by the Narrator at the beginning of the chapter.

The Heroine Player announces whether she is using **BE SUCCESSFUL**, **BE HEROIC**, or **TAKE A CHANCE** and then **ROLLS 2D6** (see Heroine Chapter). If any Companion Players have chosen to **HELP THE HEROINE**, they grant the Heroine Player a bonus to this roll, +2 for the first helper and +1 for each additional helper. If any Companion Players have chosen to Get in Trouble, they **ROLL 2D6**. Those who roll 8 or lower give the Heroine Player a penalty to her Challenge roll, -2 for the first troublemaker and -1 for each additional troublemaker.



Compare the total of the Heroine Player's dice to the description of her Move. This determines whether she succeeds or fails and whether she behaves heroically or not. The Heroine Player describes how her character responds to the Challenge.

The Narrator can pay 1 drama point to describe how one of the companions suffers some Division or Injury (See Narrator Chapter).

The Companion Players describe how their characters behave during the Challenge. A Companion Player can pay drama points to **REMEMBER A WAY OUT** or **BECOME THE NARRATOR**. (See Companion Chapter)

The Challenge is resolved. The Narrator describes the results of the Challenge, collaborating with the Heroine Player and the Companion Players to incorporate their characters' actions. The Narrator then announces the end of the chapter.

Adam chooses to Be Heroic and rolls two dice. Fear Helped the Heroine this chapter, so Adam adds two to his roll. He rolls a six, which means his total is eight. That means he is not only heroic, but also successful in overcoming the Challenge of the chapter. Adam describes how the heroine responds both heroically and successfully to the Challenge, though he doesn't narrate the results of the heroine's actions.

Jo could spend a drama point to inflict an Injury or Division on Officer Rocks, but she doesn't have any drama points yet. Fear describes Officer Rocks' involvement in the Challenge but doesn't have enough points to Become the Narrator.

Jo narrates the results of the Challenge, asking Adam for input about how he wants the heroine's success to happen, then she announces that the chapter has ended.

CONCLUSION

After at least three chapters, the Narrator can announce at the end of the chapter that the story is moving to conclusion rather than beginning a new chapter. A Companion Player who has just Become the Narrator can also announce the conclusion instead of narrating a chapter.

The **CONCLUSION** shows the consequences of the heroine's choices and draws the story to a close. As your group concludes the story, remember that the more heroically the heroine has behaved, regardless of success or failure, the more the people of the Other World respect her. If she has been immature throughout the story, they may not even like her, much less respect her. On the other hand, the more successes she has had in her Challenges, the greater her victory over the antagonist should be. Whether or not she has been heroic, a successful heroine manages ultimately to overcome the antagonist and save the Other World.

To conclude your story, first decide based on the heroine's response to Challenges whether the heroine has been immature, somewhat heroic, or very heroic. There are no numeric rules for making this decision. The groups should come to a general consensus. If necessary, the Heroine Player has the final say on this decision.

Second, decide if the heroine has been unsuccessful in stopping the antagonist and saving the Other World, somewhat successful, or very successful. The players should come to a general consensus based on how the heroine has acted during the Challenges. If necessary, the Narrator has the final say on this decision.

Third, and finally, narrate the conclusion: count each player's drama points after the last chapter. If the Narrator has the fewest drama points, the story ends with the Narrator's Conclusion below; if one of the Companion Players has the fewest drama points, that player will close the story with the Companion's Conclusion; and in the case of a tie, the Heroine Player decides who will narrate the story's conclusion.

COMPANION'S CONCLUSION

One of the Companion Players narrates how the heroine manages to return home safely from the Other World. We see the heroine using what she has learned in the Other World to help solve a problem in her regular life. We may see reflections of her companions in regular world characters, but we don't see any magic once the heroine leaves the Other World.

- ❧ **The Companion Player summarizes the state of the Other World** when the heroine is about to depart it. Be sure that this summary of the Other World reflects how heroic and how successful the heroine has been. Is the antagonist defeated? Are the companions going to be okay? Will the people in the Other World miss the heroine?
- ❧ **The Companion Player narrates the heroine's return to her regular world.**
- ❧ **The Heroine Player narrates one, final conflict in regular world. This is** a conflict typical to the heroine's regular life. Because of the things she has learned in the Other World, the heroine is both successful and heroic in overcoming this obstacle. To end the story, the Heroine Player describes a final image of her character.

Tully, the Companion Player, describes how Jennifer, the heroine, defeats the antagonist with the power of hope and returns to the regular world through a cloud. He describes how the people of the Other World are not all sad to see her go, because some of them still remember her early cowardice. However, she was successful in defeating the General, so life in the Other World is much better than it used to be. Anessa narrates that Jennifer stands up to the bully, TJ. The principal catches TJ punching Jennifer, who smiles, knowing what she has gained through confidence and bravery.

NARRATOR'S CONCLUSION

The Narrator describes the heroine's return home. The heroine is finally home, but some characters or magic from the Other World travel back with her.

- ☞ **The Narrator describes the heroine's last glimpse of the Other World.** Has she been successful? Will the people of the Other World miss her? What happens to the antagonist? What happens to the companions? Any important unresolved questions should be addressed, but not necessarily resolved, by the end of the conclusion.
- ☞ **The Narrator explains how the heroine returns to her regular world.**
- ☞ **The Heroine Player narrates one, final conflict typical to the heroine's daily life, but we now see characters and magic from the Other World seeping into the heroine's non-magical world.** She overcomes this conflict successfully and heroically due to her experiences in the other world. The Heroine Player closes the story by detailing a final, reflective scene about her character.

Jo describes how Alexandria has defeated the child slavery ring and how the kittens have all been given mothers and fathers. Then she narrates Alexandria returning to her mother's apartment, where she submits to her mother's punishment for misbehaving. Adam narrates that Alexandria unpacks her backpack in her bedroom and discovers that Tom and Julie, two of the talking kittens have stowed away in her pack. They begin exploring her room and talking about how nice her mother sounds. Adam describes Alexandria chasing the kittens and put them back in her pack before her mother opens the door.





CHAPTER TWO

Heroine

“Now, let’s look at what you have. A sphere. Hmmmmph.” The Structure Queen wrinkled her nose at the glowing ball. “Not my favorite. But I suppose it suits you.”

“What’s wrong with a sphere?” The girl suddenly felt very protective of the ball and reached out to get her hands safely around it.

“Nothing, nothing. It’s a fine shape. It’s just...you can’t really build anything on it, can you? It won’t stay. Not like a square, or a rectangle. You place spheres on top of things. Spheres are for finishing touches. You start with a sphere and, well,” the Queen gave an elegant shrug. “Well, you’ve already finished, haven’t you?”

The girl looked down at the ball, ran her fingertips over its smooth surface. “It’s all that I have.”

“Empires have been built with less,” The Structure Queen gave a half-hearted smile and rose to her full, impressive height. “But not by much. If this isn’t prying, could you be so kind as to tell me where you got that sphere?”

“I...I don’t know,” The girl looked down at the floor. “It came out of me. Like it wasn’t solid. Or I wasn’t. Like it came right from my heart...”

“My dear child, forgive me, but I may have been hasty. I don’t think that’s a sphere at all. That may, in fact, be an egg,” The Structure Queen leaned in close. “If that’s the case, that’s quite the hatch you’ve plotted.”

— “You Start with a Sphere”|
from *Kingdom of Carrion* by Jared Axelrod

You've decided to play the heroine. Awesome! As the Heroine Player, you control the beginning of the story by narrating the introduction, where the heroine struggles with some real issue in her regular life. You may find yourself cheering your character on and hoping nothing bad happens to her, but the most interesting stories are about problems that the main character can just barely overcome. Remember that your main goal is to help all the players, including yourself, have a good time by telling an interesting story.

The heroine is a troubled young lady whose obstacles in both the regular world and a magical, Other World threaten her growth from a child to an adult. She may be tempted with shortcuts and dishonesty, frightened by great dangers, or confused by the unknown. The heroine tries to overcome her obstacles by displaying kindness, daring, and cleverness.

HOW TO CREATE THE HEROINE

You, the Heroine Player, decide the heroine's personality, appearance, and age (between eight and eighteen). You will show how she is clever, daring, and kind but also how she struggles with selfishness, fear, and naiveté. You decide how her immaturity conflicts with her potential heroism. You may even choose to explore struggles you have personally experienced. Perhaps you will choose to tell a story about a young woman who is:

- ❧ **Isolated by Her Intelligence**
- ❧ **Embarrassed about Looking Different**
- ❧ **Angry at Her Parents' Divorce**
- ❧ **Jealous of Another Child**
- ❧ **Grieving a Lost Parent**
- ❧ **Desperate to Escape Poverty**
- ❧ **Craving Attention from Adults**
- ❧ **Ashamed of a Secret**



HOW TO PLAY THE HEROINE

Your goal in playing the heroine is to enjoy yourself by exploring the character of this heroic young woman. The best way to do this is by making decisive, interesting choices about her behavior. During the introduction, offer the other players a sense of your heroine's strengths and weaknesses. You might not show them everything about her, but demonstrate one of her talents as well as a source of suffering in her life.

During the chapters, whenever the Narrator offers you a choice, don't assume that there is one good option and one bad option. It's the Narrator's job to offer you interesting choices without clear answers. It's your job to bring the heroine to life by making choices that fit her personality and motivations, blending wisdom and foolishness in a way that makes the character feel real to you.

FACING A CHALLENGE

At the end of every chapter, the Narrator presents you with a Challenge, which is some sort of big conflict that gives the heroine a chance to act. The Narrator will tell you what the Challenge is and then tell you to roll the dice. When facing a Challenge, choose **BE HEROIC**, **BE SUCCESSFUL**, or **TAKE A CHANCE**.

General Rattan, the antagonist, has poisoned all the bamboo in the Pandali Empire. The heroine and her companions have convinced all of his guards to let them into his secret chamber. What happens when they capture the General?



BE HEROIC

If you choose to **BE HEROIC**, the heroine does something admirable, but she still may not triumph over her problem: **ROLL 2D6**. On a 7 or lower, the heroine fails to overcome the Challenge, but still manages to behave heroically. Describe her noble, but doomed attempt to defeat the problem in front of her. If the total is 8 or higher, the heroine succeeds in overcoming the Challenge. Describe the heroine responding to the Narrator's Challenge in a clever, daring, or kind manner. (If you chose to **BE HEROIC** for both of the last two chapters, you must choose to **BE SUCCESSFUL** or to **TAKE A CHANCE** during this chapter.)

Two men have kidnapped Alexandria's new friend, Peter. (The Narrator has inflicted a Division on Peter the companion.) What happens during the next chapter when Alexandria and her companions approach the van by the suspension bridge? Adam decides to be Heroic and rolls two dice. Since his total is 4, he describes Alexandria leaping onto the van and reaching inside to pull Peter out. However, on the other side of the bridge the van begins to enter a low-ceilinged tunnel, and Alexandria must jump off the van at the last moment. The drivers escape with Peter.



BE SUCCESSFUL

If you choose to **BE SUCCESSFUL**, the heroine overcomes the problem she faces, but it's a struggle for her to be honorable: **ROLL 2D6**. On a 7 or lower, the heroine still manages to overcome the Challenge, but behaves with child-like confusion, fear, or selfishness. Describe the heroine overcoming the Narrator's Challenge but in a regrettable manner. If the total is 8 or higher, describe the heroine overcoming the Challenge in a clever, daring, or kind manner. (If you chose to **BE SUCCESSFUL** for both of the last two chapters, you must choose to **BE HEROIC** or to **TAKE A CHANCE** during this chapter.)

Drea's heroine, Liz, has agreed to officiate the goblin doctor's wedding, even though she does not speak the goblin language. Since the cooperation of the goblins in the Locust War hinges on her success, Drea chooses to Be Successful. She rolls a total of 10, which means she not only successfully officiates the wedding, but she looks heroic doing so. Drea describes how Liz cleverly chooses the silent wedding ceremony of the red goblins and officiates the wedding without speaking word of Goblinese.

TAKE A CHANCE

If you choose to **TAKE A CHANCE**, the heroine throws caution to the wind and acts either brilliantly praiseworthy or dangerously foolish: **ROLL 2D6**. If the total is 6 or lower, the heroine fails to overcome the Challenge and behaves out of confusion, fear, or selfishness. Describe her awkward and regrettable action. On a 7 or higher, describe the heroine succeeding heroically.

What happens when Anessa's heroine, Jennifer, is Challenged to befriend the General's bratty daughter, Wicker? Anessa doesn't have a strong idea whether she wants to be successful or heroic, so she decides to take a chance. She rolls 6, so she describes Jennifer eating all of Wicker's saltwater taffy while trying to convince her how much they have in common. Jennifer is both selfish and unsuccessful in convincing Wicker to be her friend.

PLAYING A GREAT HEROINE

The rules above are all you need to know in order to play a heroine. If you have experience with *Heroine* or other storytelling games, you may also use the following advice in order to contribute to an even great story for the whole group.

Remember that kids are not stupid, nor are they bad at judging people's intentions. Most of the time, kids think just like you do, but with three differences. They don't have as much patience as some adults do, so they address problems right away; they think more concretely than adults do, so they view decisions as black and white, right and wrong; and they don't have as much information as adults do, so they have to make guesses about things that you learned in school or through experience.

As you are making choices for your heroine, remember what it was like for you to be a kid. What things scared you? What things impressed or intrigued you? Use these memories to influence where your heroine chooses to go and how she reacts to people.

As you face the Narrator's Challenges, don't think in terms of winning or losing the game. Think about your heroine's story. Is this a moment of weakness when she overcomes the Challenge but might be afraid, ignorant, or selfish? Or is this a moment of strength when she takes a heroic stand by being daring, clever, or kind, even if doing so doesn't end up solving her crisis? Let your answer to this question guide whether you choose to **BE HEROIC** or **BE SUCCESSFUL**. If you have no strong answer, **TAKE A CHANCE** and let the dice inspire you. When the Narrator inflicts an Injury or Division on the heroine, remember that these are temporary limitations on your character that make the story more interesting. Don't think of them as burdens but as opportunities to find more creative solutions to the heroine's problems.

Above all, remember that your goal is the same as every other player: to help everyone have a good time by telling an interesting story together.





CHAPTER THREE

Narrator

“I am the Rook, child. I am cobwebs and steel and feathers. I am comforting and dangerous. Like a forgotten place. Like a blade. Like hope. And I am Lord of this realm.”

“But the Troll King...the Structure Queen...” she began to say, but the Rook cut her off.

“Look around you,” The Rook spread out his arms, his voluminous cape opening like wings. “Their kingdoms are lost. Withered. Rotting. Does this land look worth saving? As if it could be saved.”

She looked at the crumbling tomb that was once a palace, a grand hallway that was now little more than moldering walls. Whatever this place was, it was far from that glory now.

“Your cause is dead, darling. And it is upon the dead that I dine. Your companions, they may rule, but I feast! Would you dine with me? Would you crack through that shell of yours, and sit at my right claw? I can offer you so much, child, if only you have the strength to take it.”

She felt the sphere in her hand warm, echoing the anger in heart. “I may not be much,” she said. “But I am no child.”

— “They May Rule, But I Feast,”

from *Kingdom of Carrion* by Jared Axelrod

You've decided to be the Narrator. Good for you! The Narrator usually does more talking than the other players, because he sets the scene and introduces events outside the other players' control. He describes the world and controls all characters other than the heroine and her companions. These other characters controlled by the Narrator include the antagonist, the main opposition or villain to the heroine and her companions.

As the Narrator, you will have more time in the spotlight than the Companion Players, but less than the heroine Player. You may become a Companion Player in a later chapter, but while you are Narrator, you will have the opportunity to describe what's going on around the characters and to paint a picture of a wondrous and threatening Other World. Remember that your main goal is to help all the players, including yourself, have a good time by offering interesting, open-ended scenarios.

Before the story begins, chat briefly with the other players about what kind of happy ending they want their characters to fight for and what they are willing to risk to get that ending. This will help you narrate more successfully to your fellow players. You would narrate a story about finding the missing royal dog before the prince is grounded very differently from how you would narrate the interplanetary mystery of the heroine's missing mother and murdered father. The rules for either kind of game are the same, but the tone and theme of your narration should fit the expectations of players.



HOW TO PLAY THE NARRATOR

Your duty as Narrator is to craft the Other World. You describe locations, offer compelling choices to the Heroine Player, and build the conflict in each chapter toward a Challenge, a moment that tests the heroine's ability and resolve.

Even though narration is a speaking job by definition, you have a large responsibility to listen to the other players. During the introduction, carefully absorb and consider the heroine's merits, flaws, and issues the Heroine Player wishes to explore. Let these factors inspire you to choose a theme with which you will challenge the heroine and her allies.

Sometimes choices will be simple decisions to pursue one storyline or another. If you wish to establish the theme of *Confusion*, make choices more difficult by making the results less obvious. Unpredictable outcomes make the heroine question whom she can trust and force her to outsmart enemies without getting lost in a convoluted, magical realm.

Establish the theme of *Fear* with choices about escaping to safety or braving certain trouble in pursuit of a cause. Present challenges that threaten danger and torment, and are overcome by conviction and force rather than cleverness and cooperation.

Establish the theme of *Temptation* through choices between personal goals and the needs of others. Present scenes that feature feuding tribes to befriend, scarce resources to manage, and compromises with enemies that threaten to corrupt the heroine through power and allegiances. Challenges of temptation will frequently be conquered by sacrifice, teamwork, and charity.

Let these three themes inform each of the steps below. Whether the other players know it or not, keep a theme in mind as you test the heroine and bring the other world and the antagonist to life.

NARRATING THE CHAPTERS

Narrating a chapter has three steps: **SETTING THE SCENE**, **BEING DRAMATIC**, and **CHALLENGING THE HEROINE**.

SETTING THE SCENE

The Narrator describes the location at the beginning of the chapter and which characters are present. (The heroine and all companions who have been introduced will be in the chapter). Don't resolve any problems, instead load the situation with interesting conflicts and choices. When setting a scene, answer questions like the following:

- ☞ **In what awe-inspiring place does the heroine find herself?**
- ☞ **What irritating or eccentric person is talking to the heroine?**
- ☞ **What dangers are the companions in right now?**
- ☞ **What beautiful, terrible thing just appeared?**

Elf knights are harassing Cort's companion character, the Viking priest. The heroine is nearby, but the knights haven't spotted her yet.

CAN THIS CHARACTER DO _____ ?

If one of the players describes an action for his character, you may wonder whether to allow that action. In this game, determining whether something is possible is a shared responsibility and not the Narrator's job alone.

The heroine's success during the Challenge is determined by her move and her roll. Otherwise, each player determines what his character does, and the Narrator narrates the results of that action. If another player questions whether a certain action is possible in the Other World, then...

Does the action fit the genre? If the action involves magic or the supernatural, the Narrator decides whether that effect fits with the setting.

Does the action fit your group's story? All the players determine whether the action could possibly happen in the story.

Is the action fair to the other players? All the players whose characters would be affected by the story determine whether the action would steal too much of attention or narrative control from the other players. Can the other players suggest a fair alternative?

BE DRAMATIC

After setting the scene and before the Challenge, the Narrator gives the other players plenty of opportunity to describe their characters. The Narrator's action during this part of the chapter is called Being Dramatic. There are four ways to be dramatic: offering choices, introducing events, inflicting Injuries and Divisions, and featuring the antagonist.

CHOICES

Throughout the chapter, the Narrator drives the story forward by offering the players choices about what to do next. While Challenges present the opportunity to succeed or fail, a **CHOICE** is an opportunity to select between at least two options with uncertain results. The player with a choice must balance the possible consequences of each option. Does he accept the king's invitation or the carpenter's? Does she drink the truth serum or go thirsty? Does he hide under the table or run for the door?

Never offer a choice between something good and something bad; rather choices are between good and possibly great, or between bad and possibly worse.

Never narrate a problem for the group that doesn't have at least two possible solutions, and be sure to help any player who is unsure what to do with her character. You can help by hinting at a few alternate solutions and by asking questions about the character's strengths and talents.

Will Liz choose to find the magic cauldron or to use Old Tom's trumpet first?

OFFER THE HEROINE PLAYER A CHOICE BETWEEN:

- Two good-looking options
- Two bad-looking options
- Three unknown allies
- Two forks in the road that both seem dangerous
- A safe, mediocre reward and a grand but risky one
- A painful medicine now or a debilitating disease later

OFFER CHOICES ABOUT THINGS LIKE:

- What Path the group should take
- Which magic object the character pursues
- Whom to help
- How soon to move on from an oasis
- Whether to attack someone or attempt to befriend

During a chapter, you may offer one choice or several before reaching a Challenge. Choices are the Narrator's main tool during the chapters for discovering what the heroine and companion characters want to do.

EVENTS

An **EVENT** is a beneficial turn of events for the heroine or one of her companions. Use an event to help to move the story forward when another player is distracted or unsure what to do with his character. Events are not roadblocks for the players. They are more the opposite of Injuries and Divisions, which are described below.

Once you have set a scene, the players will often have plenty of ideas for their characters, so you don't need an event in every chapter. Events are the Narrator's tool for giving the characters (and players!) something fresh to work with.

The crusty old horse trader gives Alexandria advice about magic saddles and a place to sleep.

INTRODUCE EVENTS LIKE:

- A path toward their goal
- An explanation of the object they need
- Specific advice from an ally
- A place to rest

The best way for you to move the story forward is to keep things simple. If the players are making interesting choices, keep doing what you are doing. If the players are wary or hesitant, give them time to react, and then, if necessary, present them with specific choices or an event. Don't overwhelm them with information, but make sure they always have at least two different directions they can pursue.

INJURIES AND DIVISIONS

For each chapter after the first two, the Narrator can inflict an Injury or Division on the heroine. Use Injuries to give one player a more complicated path to his goal, and use Divisions to make life more difficult for the whole group. (During the Challenge, the Narrator can also spend drama points to inflict an Injury on a companion. If the Narrator Divided a companion during the last Challenge, he cannot Divide any companions during the current Challenge. There is no such limit on Injuries.)

An **INJURY** temporarily stops a character from doing one particular thing. This lasts until the end of the next chapter. Also, if the heroine is Injured, the Heroine Player has -1 to her roll during the Challenge at the end of this chapter.

Steven spends a drama point to inflict an Injury on Josh's companion character. He tells Josh that the little goblin was punched in the nose, which means he can't track people until his nose is feeling better.

A **DIVISION** splits one character from another. It doesn't give any penalties to rolls, but it means that from the time it is inflicted until the end of the next chapter, these two characters are in two different physical locations. Any other players must then choose which group their character is in.

Cort Divides Hapsburg, the loyal pig guardian companion, from Jennifer, the heroine. He tells the players that Hapsburg is on a piece of ice that breaks away from the main iceberg. The other Companion Players may choose whether their characters were on the piece with Hapsburg or on the main iceberg with Jennifer.

Two chapters later, Cort Divides Woodshadow from Hapsburg. (Cort likes inflicting Divisions, but the rules only allow him to inflict Divisions on companions once every other chapter.) He describes how Wicker, the antagonist's daughter, places incriminating documents in Woodshadow's pack, and then has him arrested. Hapsburg can't enter the jail, because he is a pig. Will Jennifer go with the guards arresting Woodshadow or stay with Hapsburg? Will she believe that Woodshadow is guilty? Anessa, the Heroine Player, will decide the answers both these questions.

Use Injuries and Divisions that match the theme with which you are narrating in this chapter. (See “How to Play the Narrator” above). Inflict Injuries or Divisions that you think will make a player’s current plans more difficult, but not impossible, to implement. On the other hand, never inflict an Injury or Division that will leave a player with nothing to do. Always give players active choices to make for their characters. If they are Divided in a prison, they should have interesting people to negotiate with or experimental magic to escape with, for example.

You don’t need an Injury or Division in every chapter, but they’re fun! Injuries and Divisions are the Narrator’s tools for making life more difficult for the heroine and companion characters. If you inflict one of these on a character and the player seems to be struggling with what to do next, offer suggestions or ask for input from the other players. Injuries and Divisions are tools for encouraging creativity from the other player, not discouraging it. If necessary, you can always change an Injury or Division to something with which the other players feel more comfortable.

SAMPLE INJURIES

- Food Poisoning - The character cannot eat or drink any food.
- Blind - The character can only see things within ten feet.
- Hobbled - The character cannot run.
- Exile - The character cannot enter the town, or, if already in a town, cannot leave the town through the main gate.

SAMPLE DIVISIONS

- Tunnel Collapse - One character is cut off from another by falling debris.
- Closed Gate – A portcullis, drawbridge, or other gateway has shut between the characters.
- Side Mission – A mentor or employer commands one character to perform a task somewhere else.
- Man Overboard – A character has fallen out of a moving vehicle that another character is driving.
- Teleportation – A sorcerer magically transports one character to his secret lair.

FEATURE THE ANTAGONIST

The antagonist is an influential figure in the Other World, whose plans and actions oppose the heroine. The antagonist himself often appears in the story to Tempt, Confuse, or Frighten the heroine. As the heroine and her companions explore the Other World, the antagonist and his forces repeatedly block the heroine's path as they work toward their own goal. Almost anything the heroine wants might interfere with the antagonist's plans.

When the antagonist is active in the story, bad things tend to happen. The Narrator can pay 2 drama points to **FEATURE THE ANTAGONIST**, this character spends the chapter "on stage," where the other characters can see him, and he actively works against the heroine's best interests. Mechanically, this also means that the Narrator can inflict both an Injury and a Division on the heroine. (Normally, beginning in chapter three, the Narrator may choose to inflict an Injury OR a Division on the heroine.)

Here are a few ideas for possible antagonists:

- ❧ **King of Monsters**
- ❧ **Handsome Brute**
- ❧ **Tempting Prince**
- ❧ **Merciless Wizard or Witch**
- ❧ **Treacherous Rival**
- ❧ **Hungry Beast**
- ❧ **Mad Queen**

Steven likes the idea of a King of Monsters and decides the mechanical locusts have a giant queen who is committed to growing her hive. During the fourth chapter, Steven pays 2 drama points to bring the antagonist actively into the scene. The Locust Queen grabs the heroine with her mandibles and flies back to her lair in the Crystal Wastes. There she releases the heroine but she has hidden a parasitic egg in the heroine's wrist. The heroine is now Divided from her companions and has an Injury that makes her Gravid. Steven explains that a Gravid person cannot willingly harm a Locust soldier. (Divisions technically separate the heroine from one other character, Steven should specify one companion who remains behind and give other companions the chance to come along with the heroine.)

CHALLENGING THE HEROINE

The choices, questions, and events of each chapter build to a climactic moment when the Narrator Challenges the heroine. The **CHALLENGE** is the moment in which the heroine might succeed or fail and might be heroic or immature. As each chapter develops toward a Challenge, keep in mind three guiding factors: the heroine's goal, the antagonist's plans, and your current theme.

Heroine's Goal: The Challenge should be some crisis where failure will cause a delay or hindrance to the heroine's goal.

Antagonist's Plans: The Challenge should also potentially advance the antagonist's plans. Essentially, failure for the heroine means a little bit of success for the antagonist.

Theme: The theme of your story should determine what harassment the heroine will face if she is unheroic during this Challenge and what flavor the Challenge might take.

The Challenge works as follows:

- ❧ **The Narrator announces the Challenge: some dangerous moment that might Tempt, Frighten, or Confuse the heroine, but that demands she take some action as a response.**

Cort, who is the Narrator in this chapter, has offered the players a choice of whether to climb the Ladder of Abandoned Tails or to search for a way to cross the Bridge of Hot Coals. They chose to search for a way across the bridge. Now Cort announces the Challenge, a saleswoman tempting Jennifer with invisible, fireproof shoes in exchange for her family sword.

- ❧ **Companion Players collaborate with the Narrator to decide how their move choices naturally affect the tension of the Challenge.**

Woodshadow has Gotten In Trouble earlier in the chapter. He is in a nearby tree, collecting honey, despite his bee phobia. Tully chooses to ask for a suggestion from Cort, the Narrator. Cort suggests Woodshadow could somehow interrupt the saleswoman, or could be attacked by bees. Tully doesn't have to take either suggestion, but he decides he want Woodshadow to be stung, and he suggests to Cort that the saleswoman offer to lend Jennifer the shoes in order to rescue Woodshadow from the rest of the bees.

- ❧ **The Heroine Player rolls dice. For each Companion Player who has chosen to **HELP THE HEROINE**, the Heroine Player has a bonus to her roll, and for each Companion Player who has chosen to Get in Trouble, the Heroine Player may have a penalty to her roll.**
- ❧ **Compare the total of the Heroine Player's dice to the description of her Move.** This determines whether she succeeds or fails and whether she behaves heroically or not. The Heroine Player describes how her character responds to the Challenge.
- ❧ **The Narrator can pay 1 drama point to describe how one of the companions suffers some Division or Injury (See Narrator Chapter).**
- ❧ **The Companion Players describe how their characters behave during the Challenge.** A Companion Player can pay drama points to **REMEMBER A WAY OUT** or **BECOME THE NARRATOR**. (See Companion Chapter).

Tully announces that he is paying 4 drama points to become Narrator. Cort will finish Narrating this chapter, but Tully will begin narrating by Setting the Scene in the next chapter.

- ❧ **The Challenge is resolved. The Narrator describes the results of the Challenge, collaborating with the Heroine Player and the Companion Players to incorporate their characters' actions. The Narrator then announces the end of the chapter.**

DRAMA POINTS

At the beginning of the game, place fourteen tokens where everyone can reach them. These drama points are the currency of the story. The Companion Players and the Narrator earn and spend drama points on different moves, but these points always exert control over the narrative and create drama for the heroine.

Players take drama points from the pile when they earn them and return them to the pile when they spend them. If the pile is empty when a player earns a drama point, he takes it from the player with the most. If there is a tie, he may choose which of them to take from. Whichever player has the fewest drama points after the last chapter gets to take charge of the conclusion of the story.

At the beginning of the game, the first Narrator has 0 drama points. A Companion Player who becomes the Narrator keeps any drama points he had as a CP. The Narrator gains 1 drama point whenever a companion chooses to **HELP THE HEROINE**. (The Narrator can gain at most 3 drama points this way in the same chapter.) The Narrator gains also 1 drama point whenever the heroine rolls a 7 or lower on a Challenge roll.

The Narrator can spend 1 drama point during the Challenge to describe how one of the companions suffers a Division or Injury, which lasts until the end of the next chapter. No one suffers from Divisions or Injuries during the conclusion.

The Narrator can spend 2 drama points at any time before the Challenge in order to bring the antagonist into the chapter. The Narrator describes the antagonist somehow being directly involved in that chapter. Using the antagonist in this way gives the Narrator the chance to inflict a Division and an Injury on the heroine. Normally, the Narrator must choose either an Injury or a Division for the heroine.

PLAYING A GREAT NARRATOR

The rules above are all you need to know in order to play a Narrator. If you have experience with Heroine or other storytelling games, use the following advice to contribute to an even greater story for your group.

Your mission as the Narrator is to guide the story from the Heroine Player's introduction to the conclusion. Can you craft a Challenge that reflects the feeling of fear, selfishness, or confusion that the heroine displayed in her regular life? Can you give the heroine opportunities to help the companions with problems similar to or exactly opposite from her own?

Your first step is to build off of the Heroine Player's introduction. Is there an important threat the heroine faces in her regular life? What would an over-the-top fantastical version of it look like? Maybe a girl being bullied can face a xenocidal dictator. Does the heroine feel something is missing from her life? How might getting it complicate her relationships? Maybe a girl with poor body image must help an invisible prince regain his normal body.

Drea's heroine, Liz, wants desperately for adults to take her seriously and stop treating her like a child. When she becomes the sole arbiter between two warring tribes, however, she must choose her words and actions very carefully, because everyone around her now takes her very seriously.

When the other players ask you about the Other World, be creative, but be especially clear about the rules of magic. The others will look to you to judge what is possible in the Other World, though you can certainly ask for their input. Is the heroine a superhero there, who can shoot lasers and fly? Or is she just a regular kid? Does the antagonist kill people? Are the companions helpless without the heroine around? The other players need to make informed choices for their characters, so you need to help them see how the Other World works. Never narrate a scene in a way that makes another player feel helpless.

Above all, remember that your goal is the same as every other player: to help everyone have a good time by telling an interesting story together.



CHAPTER FOUR

Companion

She nestled her weary body in his powerful arms, searching for refuge from the chill. “If you’re king,” she began, trying to phrase her question delicately as possible. “If you’re king, then you should be ruling all over this land, right? Because you’re king.”

“I do,” said the Troll King. His powerful steps fell in to a soothing rhythm. “I am king of the under places, and the ones above. Those who would look at a bridge and see a roof are my subjects, as are those who would look at a roof and see a bridge.”

“Do you have many subjects?” she said, a yawn obscuring most of her words.

“Too many to count. I rule over the forgotten, the misplaced, the unexpected. All those who do not fit, fall under my rule. Which makes my kingdom very large, indeed. I have been traveling it since I became king and I have yet to see the end.”

“How did you become king?” she asked.

“The usual way.”

“Was your father king?” The Troll King laughed at that, a rumbling like an avalanche of boulders underneath his waistcoat.

“No, Little One. My father was not king. He and my mother drowned in dirt and dust all of their lives. Nobility is not a birthright,” The Troll King looked down at the brave girl in his arms, her eyes lidded with sleep. “But I imagine you know that, don’t you?”

— “King of the Under Places”

from *Kingdom of Carrion* by Jared Axelrod

You've decided to play a companion. Great! Companion Players don't receive as much time in the spotlight as the Heroine Player, but companions add an important depth to the story by making the other players laugh at, empathize with, or despise your character. Not only do you have the power to give the story depth by making the heroine's journey untidy, you also have the opportunity to become the Narrator later in the game, if you wish. Remember that your main goal is to help all the players, including yourself, have a good time by telling an interesting story.

HOW TO CREATE A COMPANION

Companions are people in the Other World who offer the heroine support and who make her life a bit more complicated. You, the Companion Player, are free to create your companion character's appearance, personality, and back-story; and you are free to narrate the character's actions and speech during the chapters. At some point in the game, you should reveal the following about your character to the other players:

- ❧ **What is one thing that your character is really good at?**
- ❧ **What is one flaw or weakness the character has?**
- ❧ **Is there an obvious reason why the companion immediately likes the heroine?**

During the story, you'll generate more texture for the world and tension for the heroine by helping her and by getting in trouble, so pay attention during the introduction in order to play off the Heroine Player's ideas. Perhaps your companion represents or contrasts one of the heroine's strengths or weaknesses. Perhaps your companion is a skewed, fantastic version of someone from the heroine's regular world. No matter what you choose, your companion must be a native of the Other World who immediately allies with the heroine. Here are a few suggested companion types:

- ❧ **Mechanical Man**
- ❧ **Talking Animal (Rodent, Bird, Cat, etc.)**

- ❧ **Softhearted Monster**
- ❧ **Fae (pixie, brownie, leprechaun, etc.)**
- ❧ **Magic Creature disguised as a Human (Dragon, Werewolf, Genie, etc.)**

Fear decides to play a softhearted monster who shares the heroine's love for animals. He describes his companion as a troll and a police officer. He names his character Officer Rocks.

HOW TO PLAY A COMPANION

INTRODUCE YOUR COMPANION

During the introduction or, more likely, during one of the first chapters, declare to the other players that you'll introduce your companion. Sometimes you may choose to hear the Narrator set the scene in order to decide how your companion will appear, but it can also be helpful to tell the Narrator how you intend to introduce your companion so that she can set the scene with that in mind. Some Narrators prefer one option over another, so work together for the best results. If you haven't already told the other players much about your character, be sure to answer the following questions:

- ❧ **What does the companion look like?**
- ❧ **What kind of trouble is the companion currently in?**

Work together with other Companion Players to coordinate introducing the companions. You may want to introduce your companions in the same chapter – even together, or you may each choose to spotlight your companion's arrival in separate chapters. You'll be able to have more impact on the story if your companion is introduced early on, but that isn't always on option, especially for Narrators who later become Companion Players.

In the first chapter, Fear introduces Officer Rocks as a bulky gray man in a British police uniform. Rocks is rather clumsy, but he is very strong and kind and immediately likes Alexandria because she is wearing a kitten t-shirt, and the trolls love cute animals.

Once you have introduced your companion, choose for him or her either to **GET IN TROUBLE** or **HELP THE HEROINE** sometime during each of the following chapters. Use your answers to the questions above to guide how you describe your companion's behavior. For each chapter, some time after the narrator sets the scene but before the Challenge, each Companion Player can choose to do one of the following:

GET IN TROUBLE

Describe the companion doing something awkward, dangerous, or otherwise troublesome in the current scene. **ROLL 2D6**. If the total is 8 or lower, you gain 3 drama points and tell the Heroine Player that she has a penalty to her roll during this chapter's Challenge. (The penalty is -2 if you are the first Companion Player to **GET IN TROUBLE** during this chapter, and -1 if you are one of the next three to do so.) Your companion has caused some problem that does damage to someone or something in the scene. For example, you hurt someone's feelings, you break something that doesn't belong to you, or you use up a limited resource that the other characters need. If the total is 9 or higher, you and the heroine player cooperate to describe how the heroine helps your companion avoid causing any real damage: the heroine player receives no penalty from you on her Challenge roll, and you gain 2 drama points.

Kris chooses for her companion, The Repair Lady, to Get In Trouble. Kris rolls a 5, so she tells Drea to subtract two (-2) to her roll during the Challenge at the end of this chapter. Kris then describes the Repair Lady sneaking into the locust cave for more healing oil. The goblin doctor catches her and bans her from his wedding.

HELP THE HEROINE (1 DRAMA POINT)

Pay 1 drama point to **describe your companion helping the heroine**, and tell the Heroine Player she receives a bonus to her Challenge roll this chapter. (The bonus is +2 for the first Companion Player per chapter who Helps the Heroine, and +1 for each additional helper in that chapter.) The Narrator also gains a drama point when you use this move.

In the next chapter, Kris chooses for The Repair Lady to Help the Heroine. She tells Drea to add +2 to her Challenge roll, and she tells the Narrator that he gets 1 drama point. Then Kris explains how The Repair Lady builds a special megaphone for Liz to use when she addresses the two armies. (When the Narrator Challenges the heroine to keep the human chieftain from attacking the goblin chief at the beginning of the meeting, Kris suggests that the megaphone helps Liz shout so loudly that the human is unable to sneak up on the goblin. Kris asks that if Liz is successful, either because she chooses Be Successful or because she rolls well, the megaphone be one of the reasons for her success.)

CAN A COMPANION SIT OUT A CHAPTER?

Once a Companion Player's character has been introduced, that player must choose to **Help the Heroine** or **Get In Trouble** during each chapter. However, when the heroine has more than one companion, the Companion Players need not always describe elaborate actions for their characters. They may choose to **Help the Heroine** or **Get In Trouble** and then briefly describe their characters' actions. The Companion Players add complexity to the story by solving or creating problems for the heroine. However, Companion Players don't need to hog the spotlight. Sometimes a brief description is best, especially if the heroine has multiple companions.

Whether you choose to **GET IN TROUBLE** or **HELP THE HEROINE**, continue to describe what your companion is doing throughout the chapter.

After the Narrator has Challenged the Heroine Player, and dice have been rolled, you have the option to spend drama points in order to **REMEMBER A WAY OUT** or **BECOME THE NARRATOR**.

REMEMBER A WAY OUT (2 DRAMA POINTS)

When a Heroine is unsuccessful during a Challenge, you may pay 2 drama points to help minimize the terrible consequences when a Heroine Player fails her roll during a Challenge. (You may only **REMEMBER A WAY OUT** during a chapter in which you did not Get in Trouble and then roll 8 or lower.) Right after a Heroine Player fails her **BE HEROIC** or **TAKE A CHANCE** roll during a Challenge, but before the Narrator narrates the results of the Challenge, describe an escape route, a tool, or a hidden ally that allows the group to avoid part of the consequences of failing the current Challenge. Avoiding part of the consequences means that the heroine is still unsuccessful or immature (or both, in the case of a failed **TAKE A CHANCE** roll), but things don't turn out quite as badly as it seems they were going to. This move cannot be used during the conclusion.

“**REMEMBER A WAY OUT**” is the move that the companion uses when the heroine is unsuccessful at overcoming the Challenge. Of course, the companion may offer the heroine a way to escape from a tough situation as part of his **HELP THE HEROINE** move earlier in the chapter. Don't be confused by the name. **HELP THE HEROINE** is the move you can use before the Challenge. **REMEMBER A WAY OUT** is a move you only use after a Challenge roll.

Even though Alexandria failed to convince the bandits to leave the town alone, Fear chooses for Officer Rocks to Remember a Way Out. He decides that Officer Rocks knows where Alexandria and her companions can borrow a wagon for the orphans, and he knows how get the wagon out of town before the bandits burn everything to the ground. The town will still burn, but the orphans will be safe.

BECOME THE NARRATOR (4 DRAMA POINTS)

At the end of a chapter, you may pay 4 drama points in order to take over as Narrator, starting with the next chapter. If multiple Companion Players attempt to use this move at the same time, let the youngest player go first. The other Companion Players keep their points and may use this move at the end of the next chapter. If you become the Narrator, your companion character becomes just like any other character controlled by the Narrator. It's a good idea to let these inactive companions fade to the background of the story. They are less important than the heroine and the other player's companion characters. The previous Narrator becomes a Companion Player and may introduce a companion in the next chapter.

DRAMA POINTS

At the beginning of the game, place fourteen tokens where everyone can reach them. These drama points are the currency of the story. The Companion Players and the Narrator earn and spends drama points on different moves, but these points always exert control over the narrative and create drama for the heroine.

Players take drama points from the pile when they earn them and return them to the pile when they spend them. If the pile is empty when a player earns a drama point, he takes it from the player with the most. If there is a tie, he may choose which of them to take from. Whichever player has the fewest drama points after the last chapter gets to take charge of the conclusion of the story.

At the beginning of the game, Companion Players each draw one Drama Point. A Narrator who becomes a Companion Player keeps any drama points he had as a Narrator. Companion Players only earn drama points by using the **GET IN TROUBLE** Move. (If you and another companion both **GET IN TROUBLE** in the same chapter, you cannot take drama points from each other. Take them from the pile if you can, then from the player with the most drama points who isn't Getting In Trouble.)

A Companion Player can spend drama points to **HELP THE HEROINE**, **REMEMBER A WAY OUT** or **BECOME THE NARRATOR**.

PLAYING A GREAT COMPANION

The rules above are all you need to know in order to be a Companion Player. If you have experience with Heroine or other storytelling games, you may also use the following advice to make the story even better.

The best companion is not one that hides completely in the background of the story. Nor is it one who steals attention from the heroine. The best companion borrows just enough of the spotlight to send the story down some unexpected angle, and then places the heroine firmly back in the center of attention. Your description of how you **HELP THE HEROINE** or **GET IN TROUBLE** may sometimes be quite short, while in other chapters it can be elaborate or goofy. You may choose sometimes to do almost nothing, and in other chapters you will steal drama points from other players, roll dice, and pay to Remember A Way Out in order to save the heroine from total failure. That's great! As long as all the players are having fun, you are playing your companion well.

Some players struggle with making choices when their companions are Divided from the heroine. How do you **HELP THE HEROINE** or **GET IN TROUBLE** when you are miles apart? Feel free to think of your own solution, but here are three quick and dirty ways I solve this problem.

First, your companion can't be there himself, so you send a friend to help—some character who may not have been introduced in the story so far, but who can help (or trouble) the heroine on your behalf. As long as you don't derail the Narrator's scene too much, it is perfectly fine for you to introduce another minor character. I call this approach, "Meet my friend, Pete the Ninja."

Second, your companion may help the heroine in spirit. Describe a flashback scene in which your companion privately tells the heroine something encouraging—or discouraging in the case of **GET IN TROUBLE**—but that the other players are only now hearing about. Describe the heroine remembering your companion’s words, even though the Heroine Player is hearing them for the first time. I call this approach, “And then I told you the secret password. Remember?”

Third, I recommend you describe what your character is doing, and then think of an elaborate chain of events that would cause that to affect the heroine. Perhaps you are fighting a wolf, who howls, which startles some cattle a few miles away that stampede, which in turn disrupts the heroine’s showdown at high noon miles away from you. Your actions help or trouble the heroine, even though a great distance stands between you. I call this approach, “Kiss a butterfly to cause a flood.”





APPENDIX ONE

Chapter Templates

This appendix is for Narrators who want a little more guidance on creating a chapter. If you use these chapter templates, ignore any elements that do not make sense for your story. For example, do not use an outer space location if you are telling a purely fantasy story.

Every chapter has the same basic structure. First the Narrator **SETS THE SCENE**, then the other players describe how their characters respond to the situation. Then the Narrator offers the players choices about what to do next and describes Events if the heroine's circumstances start to seem too stressful. During this part of the chapter, new companions may be introduced. Before the Challenge, previously introduced companions choose either to **GET IN TROUBLE** or **HELP THE HEROINE**. When the Narrator decides that the players have had a chance to explore the scene and make at least one important choice, he presents the heroine a Challenge. The heroine chooses a move and roles the dice. If the heroine is unsuccessful against the Challenge, Companion Players may choose to **REMEMBER A WAY OUT**. They may also choose to become Narrator for the next chapter. The current Narrator then narrates the results of the Challenge.

If you would like some inspiration for building a chapter, use the templates below. Each of these templates includes a one sentence description, examples for the opening location in which you **SET THE SCENE**, a list of characters you might introduce, and some suggested Challenges with which to end the chapter.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

The heroine has her first chance to explore the Other World.

- ☞ **Opening Location:** Maze, giant garden, hollow glacier, outer space, a castle
- ☞ **Characters Introduced:** companions, Other World inhabitants, antagonist's minions
- ☞ **Challenge:** Is the heroine terrified by the task of fighting the antagonist who rules the Other World? Is she tempted to hide and avoid everyone? Does she recognize the safe place to rest?

TROUBLE WITH A COMPANION

One of the heroine's companions is in danger, and the heroine can help. This danger is more serious than when a Companion Player chooses to **GET IN TROUBLE**.

- ☞ **Opening Location:** Jail, a pit, the dragon's belly, a battlefield
- ☞ **Characters Introduced:** companions, Other World inhabitants, antagonist's minions, antagonist
- ☞ **Challenge:** Will the heroine overcome her fear and rescue her companion from danger? Can she determine whether a companion is truly trustworthy?

INNOCENTS SUFFER

The antagonist or his minions are hurting people that have done nothing wrong.

- ☞ **Opening Location:** Village, city, prison, inhabited forest, refugee caravan, someone's house
- ☞ **Characters Introduced:** Other World inhabitants, antagonist's minions, antagonist
- ☞ **Challenge:** Does the heroine rescue the innocents from danger? Does she choose the easy way out, even though it may cost her later? Does she recognize how to equip them to defend themselves?

FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES

A wild, dangerous creature offers the heroine some useful advice or a needed tool.

- ❧ **Opening Location:** An inn, the sacred grove, the space station's hospital
- ❧ **Characters Introduced:** A new ally, Other World inhabitants, antagonist's minions, antagonist
- ❧ **Challenge:** Does the heroine accept help from a frightening new friend? Does she recognize which offer of help is genuine? Is she kind to the ally in disguise?

MINIONS PURSUE

The antagonist's minions are chasing the heroine, hoping to capture her.

- ❧ **Opening Location:** Corn field, the village, hunting grounds
- ❧ **Characters Introduced:** Other World inhabitants, antagonist's minions, antagonist
- ❧ **Challenge:** Does the heroine find a safe path away from those who pursue her? Can she resist accepting help from an untrustworthy source?

THE DARK PLACE

The heroine and her companions must travel a dark or dangerous path.

- ❧ **Opening Location:** A dangerous place that is not easily traversed or escaped, such as a maze, forest, dream world, dungeon, difficult mountain pass, the Fire Swamp
- ❧ **Characters Introduced:** Other World inhabitants, antagonist's minions, antagonist
- ❧ **Challenge:** Does the heroine travel fast enough to stop someone from getting hurt? Does she resist the urge to give up and wait for someone to rescue her?

INSIDE THE LAIR

The heroine is finally inside the antagonist's lair.

- ❧ **Opening Location:** The antagonist's lair, a magic castle, volcano, creepy mansion, huge cave
- ❧ **Characters Introduced:** None
- ❧ **Challenge:** Is the heroine tempted to join the antagonist? Will she figure out how to stop him? Is she brave enough to defeat the antagonist's defenses?



APPENDIX TWO

Definitions

- ❧ **BE DRAMATIC** – After the Narrator Sets the Scene, and before he declares the Challenge, he is being dramatic. This means that he is offering choices, introducing events, featuring the Antagonist, and inflicting Injuries and Divisions.
- ❧ **BE HEROIC** – The heroine behaves in an admirable way during the Challenge at the end of the chapter. She does something daring, clever, or kind. The Heroine Player rolls to determine whether or not she is successful in overcoming the Challenge.
- ❧ **BE SUCCESSFUL** – The heroine overcomes the Challenge at the end of the chapter. The Heroine Player rolls to determine whether she behaves heroically, or whether she succumbs to fear, temptation, or confusion.
- ❧ **BECOME THE NARRATOR** – After the Heroine Player rolls during the Challenge, but before the Narrator describes the outcome of the roll, a Companion Player can pay drama points to become the Narrator of the next chapter.
- ❧ **CHALLENGE THE HEROINE** – At the end of each chapter, the Narrator describes some climactic event, an opportunity for the heroine to succeed or fail and to demonstrate heroism or immaturity.
- ❧ **Division** – During the Challenge, the Narrator may pay 1 drama point to describe the heroine or one of the companions becoming separated from one of the other characters. The other Players may choose which group their characters go with. This separation lasts until the end of the next chapter. Also, beginning in chapter three, at any point during

the chapter, the Narrator may describe either an Injury or a Division happening to the heroine without paying any drama points.

- ❧ **FEATURE THE ANTAGONIST** – **While the Narrator is Being Dramatic, he** may pay drama points in order to introduce the antagonist into the scene in an active way. This allows him to inflict both an Injury and a Division on the heroine during this chapter.
- ❧ **GET IN TROUBLE** – **The Companion Player chooses for her companion** to do something that causes problems for the heroine sometime during the chapter before the Challenge. He then rolls to determine whether the Heroine Player has a penalty on her roll during the Challenge.
- ❧ **HELP THE HEROINE** – **The Companion Player chooses for her** companion to assist the heroine sometime during the chapter before the Challenge, so the Heroine Player has a bonus on her Challenge roll.
- ❧ **Injury** – **During the Challenge, the Narrator may pay 1 drama point to** describe something bad happening one of the companions. This causes the character to be unable to do one specific thing until the end of the next chapter. Also, beginning in chapter three, at any point during the chapter, the Narrator may describe either an Injury or a Division happening to the heroine without paying any drama points.
- ❧ **INTRODUCE AN EVENT** – **After setting the scene and before stating the** Challenge, the Narrator may describe something helpful happening to the heroine or the companions in order to make their lives easier.
- ❧ **INTRODUCE YOUR COMPANION** – **The Companion Player brings his** companion into the story for the first time. This usually happens during a chapter after the Narrator has **SET THE SCENE**, though it can happen during the introduction.
- ❧ **OFFER A CHOICE** – **After setting the scene and before stating the** Challenge, the Narrator gives the other players opportunities to act by giving them multiple-choice decisions. These choices should be balanced so that both options are good or both options are bad.

- ☞ **REMEMBER A WAY OUT** – After the Heroine Player fails her roll during the Challenge, but before the Narrator describes the outcome of the roll, a Companion Player can pay drama points to describe his companion somehow minimizing the consequence of the heroine’s failure.
- ☞ **SET THE SCENE** – At the beginning of each chapter, the Narrator describes the location and the characters present. He tries to set up a situation loaded with interesting opportunities and conflicts. The Heroine Player Sets the Scene during the introduction.
- ☞ **TAKE A CHANCE** – The Heroine Player chooses to roll to determine the heroine’s behavior during the Challenge at the end of the chapter. The heroine either overcomes admirably or fails immaturely.

OVERVIEW OF PLAY

DECIDE ROLES

Choose a Heroine player, a Narrator and Companion players.

INTRODUCTION

Introduce the Heroine and bring her to the Other World.

Heroine Sets the Scene

Heroine Chooses Player to Narrate Conflict

Narrator Describes Trip to Other World

CHAPTER

Narrator Sets the Scene

Heroine And Companion Players Respond

Companion Players may Introduce a Companion

Narrator uses Be Dramatic

OFFER CHOICE

INTRODUCE EVENT

INJURE

DIVIDE

Heroine and Companions Respond

Companion Players Choose a Move

GET IN TROUBLE

HELP THE HEROINE

Narrator Challenges

Heroine Player Chooses a Move

BE SUCCESSFUL

BE HEROIC

TAKE A CHANCE

Narrator can Injure or Divide Companion

Companion Player Chooses a Move

REMEMBER A WAY OUT

BECOME THE NARRATOR

Narrator Narrates results of the Challenge

Narrator Announces end of Chapter

INTRODUCTION

Player with Fewest Drama Points Narrates

Player Narrates the Heroine's Effect on the Other World

Player Narrates the Heroine's Return to the Regular World

Heroine Player Narrates One Conflict in Regular World