ScreenPlay

EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL

A CO-OPERATIVE STORYTELLING GAME

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BROKEN RULER GAMES

MYSTICAL THRONE ENTERTAINMENT

Nothing pans out the way you planned. Especially not in the bygone days of a decade now faded into the last century. When music once fresh and original is now a staple on classic rock stations. When high school became history and your eyes turned towards the next chapter and all the incredible things you finally had a chance to do with your life, escaping your past by creating a future.

Mine was to become a film director. A genuine one; start off with a couple of indie films to showcase my genius before a major studio discovered my talent and put me behind the cameras on big budget extravaganzas. Oh, and they would let me write the scripts, produce, cast, all of that. What can I say? It was right after Quentin Tarantino skyrocketed to moviemaking fame and every one of us in film school idolized him for doing exactly that. Like I said, there was a time, but reality has a funny way of changing things.

I'm sure there are a lot of us who've thought about that. Watched a movie and wondered how in the name of good cinema that monstrosity got the green light, or felt so inspired by a classic picture – either deemed a classic by the world entire or one that spoke to you alone –to take up the mantle of a director, screenwriter, producer, what have you. Maybe you wanted to start with small budget horror films, assemble an indie drama, or bust your chops in documentaries. Me, I wanted to get into action films. Something about the fluid motion of martial artists like Jackie Chan or Bruce Lee, the slow motion gunplay of a John Woo film, and the grit of a Clint Eastwood western spoke to me. But that was then and life has a way of changing things.

Despite the course of time, my desire to dip my toe into the movie making process has never left me and while my passion has turned to roleplaying games, I found a way to bring them together like peanut butter and chocolate. That's what ScreenPlay is all about: blending the creative experience of screenwriting with the co-operative experience of a roleplaying game. While I can state it is technically the result of more than two years of development to become the final result you see before you, that's actually a lie. As this game grew and blossomed before my very eyes, it became the game I think I've always wanted to play. A game where the characters were not bound by the dice or the rules, one where the players defined the story and not the other way around. A game where the characters could be as cool, decisive, terrifying, and admirable as those we admire on every screen around the world.

The playtesters labeled it best: ScreenPlay is a co-operative narrative game where the players are the central storytellers. If roleplaying games are nothing new to you, many of these concepts will be familiar yet turned on their heads. This game involves players, known here as the Writers, working as the primary storytellers and the host, called the Director, acting as the guide keeping their story fluid, coherent, and challenging. That's right, the roles are reversed and it's the gamemaster who will react to the events presented by the players while simultaneously helping the story along by revealing the visuals, villains, and surprises that keep everyone on their toes. All of this is done with a single goal: to tell a story no one else can tell. Your story, the one all of you will create together.

It's inside you, the ability to tell a story. We've been exposed to so many of them, they've become second nature. Yet many of us are nervous to share ideas and take a stab at it because there are so many conditions, requirements, and "rules" for storytelling. Not here. ScreenPlay does not have rules dictating how the story must unfold or limiting characters to static archetypes and setting restrictions. The beauty about this game is that it trusts its players. It's universal; the same guidelines you see in these pages will allow you to start telling your story – any story – right away, however you and your fellow players want to tell it. You have it in you, now it's time to create something magical. Maybe even as magical as the first time you saw RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, CASABLANCA, THE KILLER, INCEPTION or any of the other countless classics you'll seek to emulate in your next ScreenPlay.

Let your story begin!

Todd Crapper
Designer

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Act 1: What Is ScreenPlay?

Humanity has been telling stories as long as we have been humans. It started with crude depictions of wild animals on cave walls, continued into tales told around community fires, progressed into the creation of the written word, spread through the use of the printing press, and evolved into new mediums such as radio, movies, television, and the Internet. Today, the dominant form of storytelling is a visual one where physical actions are a heavy influence on how characters explore and progress to reach exciting conclusions.

ScreenPlay is all about creating your own unique and exciting stories in the spirit of modern films, be it the gun-happy bloodfests of Asian gangster films, the harsh conflicts and inner struggles of the beleaguered legal team trying to walk the straight and narrow path and convict a powerful politician, or the exploits of a band of intergalactic superheroes who find themselves transporting a lost artefact capable of destroying the galaxy. This game – the one you hold in your hands or view on your screen – is not about one particular story. It's about all the possible ones you and your friends can finally tell. It's about creating something new and exciting, a first draft of something new.

There was no stopping Deacon, not at times like this. The long nights, the endless cups of coffee and shots of whiskey to keep him moving. The answers he needed can only come from those who function at night: prostitutes, bartenders, even some of the local boys working the third watch…

The Writing Process

During the course of reading this game, you may notice references to movies, scripts, and other matching terms. Even the name, ScreenPlay, indicates a game about the moviemaking process and while that is the game's original intention, it's about more than that. The name is more of a play on words, taking advantage of the word "play" in "screenplay."

At its core, this game is about writing an original story and regardless of the writing style your group wishes to embrace, there are no changes to any of the rules or material provided. You could use this game to create a new graphic novel, devise a soap opera, maybe emulate a web series. Whatever route you and your players choose to take, go for it and have fun trying.

Think of this game as a creative writing exercise blended together with the tension and excitement of a tabletop game. ScreenPlay is not about reaching a predetermined final scene or following a map to discover every room in the castle. This is a game where everyone playing writes an original story together. Maybe not everyone works in the same direction as everyone else but that opposition will help draft an exciting tale you might never have expected. It's about coming up with an idea and watching it take on a life of its own until you reach a natural and unexpected conclusion. Together.

To understand how to play ScreenPlay and what makes it stand out from other games of its kind, you need to know what makes it tick. What is it about this game that defines it? Sure, if you know anything about roleplaying games or story games, you already have a basic understanding, but that's just the beginning.

> **The players are the main storytellers.** If there's one defining attribute to this game, it's this one. Known here as the Writers, everyone who is not the host (called the Director) will take turns to actively move the story along by utilizing the events and descriptions provided by everyone at the table. It involves a healthy dose of co-operation, creativity, and timely reactions, all intended to help move the story forward. While it presents a special kind of challenge for the Director, this style of play introduces an invigorating change of pace from your standard RPG fare where players react to moments initiated by a gamemaster.

Dice are rolled to determine complications, not success or failure. Many characters, especially the main characters, should never have to worry if the dice will blow up in their face and cause them to look foolish. This should never be the case as you would never see a moment like this on film. That's why dice are only rolled when creating a complication is a possibility. Success and failure have a part to play too, but they are not the deciding factor for rolling dice. For example, when you roll for one of your characters to attack another, what you are truly rolling for is to determine what, if any, complications will occur to that character... or your own. Dice rolls simply determine if a complication will affect your enemy or your own character.

The rules do not control the story or the characters. There are no rules or mechanical influences dictating how the story progresses. ScreenPlay's rules and recommendations allow everyone to tell the story they want to tell as a group and allow a stronger result by moving the story forward in whatever way you imagine. The goal is to progress the plot, not your characters, yet in doing so you will allow your characters to have a larger part to play for a longer period of time.

Knowing Your Parts

Everyone has a part to play in ScreenPlay, and where you sit at the table determines what you can do and how you can influence the story. These are divided into who plays the game and who they control.

Writers: All but one of the people in your group will be Writers, actively telling the story by controlling the narrative using the setting and history established either by the Director or one created by the entire group. Writers will do so through the use of at least one lead character and as many supporting characters as they prefer. Through these characters, writers will provide descriptions detailing exactly how one of the characters progresses the story forward, whether it's to enter the gilded tavern in search of a wanted felon, bust down the door of a known drug dealer, or engage in a dog fight over the Arabian Sea.

Directors: The final member of the group will be the Director, who will help the Writers define the goals for a scene, establish opening shots, provide reactions, unleash triggers, and redeem challenges with the goal of keeping the story engaging for the Writers. All of these devices will allow the Director to help the Writers keep the story on track as well as keep the Writers immersed in the gameplay experience.

Who Are The Characters?

There are three types of characters used to move the story forward in ScreenPlay: lead characters, supporting characters, and extras. Each type has its own guidelines for play and can be developed by the Writers, the Director, or both.

Lead Characters: Played by the Writers and only the Writers, these are the central figures around which story revolves and is propelled. It is through these characters that the Writers will perform the majority of their descriptions, and if all the lead characters are eliminated from the story, it all comes to a tragic end. Or maybe the best ending ever. Who knows?

Supporting Characters: Available to both Writers and Directors, these secondary figures aid or hinder the lead characters as needed in a manner fitting their personalities and histories. While not as dominant or influential as the leads, certain Director-controlled supporting characters can become the main villains upon which the story's conclusion rests.

Extras: Only the Director provides these characters to the story and that's a good thing because these are the nameless goons and background characters filling the story gaps. Be they the anonymous henchman thrown through a plate glass window, the driver of the getaway car, or the local shopkeepers running from the colossal monsters laying waste to the city, extras can work as individuals or small groups, and are created in mere seconds.

Fundamentals to Playing ScreenPlay

There are a couple of key foundations for playing ScreenPlay, aspects you must understand before you can move on to learning the rules themselves. These keys override everything else and can be used by the Director to help render a verdict on any mechanical conflicts in the game.

The Rule of Initiatives: During play, everyone will have a chance to add to the story by describing their characters taking actions, interacting with the scene, and creating new elements and dangers to move the story forward. From there, everyone else will have an opportunity to take those elements and use them accordingly, but whoever introduced that element – be it a location, character, event, or anything else – has the final say on what that element can and cannot do. For example, if the Director reacts to a lead character turning on a light switch by providing a description of a sweatshop, a Writer cannot suddenly turn it into an alien spaceport on her turn unless the Director (who introduced the sweatshop into the story) approves. This is known as the Rule of Initiatives and basically states that whoever initiates something into the story arbitrates its every facet. This also applies to Writers as well, such as when a Writer describes one of his characters spotting a band of half-feline ninjas skulking along the moonlit rooftops.

To help facilitate this fundamental point of the game, it's recommend players use index cards to record new elements, characters, locations, and other introductions in the game with particular attention given to the player who initiated them. Record all key facts of these elements and lay them on the table for reference during play.

Yes, And...: ScreenPlay is a co-operative storytelling experience and that means accepting what's been presented by all players in the game (Writers and Directors alike) and applying it in your future descriptions. This involves a basic principle of improvisation known simply as "Yes, And..." meaning when something is introduced into the scene, everyone else will embrace it and it will be gospel. Everyone must then work within the limits of these descriptions, reactions, and other facets of the game, no matter how strict or broad. For example, if the story is established to take place in 1890s France, describing a horde of Mongol barbarians would not be appropriate (unless your story has already established a wormhole in time allowing this Mongolian horde to attack the Eiffel Tower). If this key is broken, the Director has final judgment on whether or not to deny its introduction, and then insist on a revised one.

Who's Who?: There are times in these pages where the terms "characters" and "players" bounce back and forth, but there's a reason for that. Whenever the term "player" is used, it refers to anyone playing in the game at the table. Sometimes the rules will clearly state whether it involves a Writer or a Director. If the term "character" is applied, it refers to an individual character in the game, regardless of the type and who plays it. They are considered to be active elements of the story, even if the rules refer to something that a real person (the player) is attempting, such as rolling dice.

Rossario hears the footsteps echoing behind her and doesn't hesitate. As soon as she rounds a corner and is out of sight, she rushes towards an alleyway and begins the incantation. Hovering in her hands is a rune of entrapment constantly shifting with a soft white glow. With a deep breath, she waits...

Let's get straight to the meat and potatoes, shall we? This section applies to everyone playing, both Writers and Directors, and describes how this game is played. Everything you read here is important for everyone to know and understand so that all can work together in creating a truly awesome story that will be remembered for years to come (though only one of you, typically the Director, need understand everything contained in this Act and paraphrase it to the Writers).

Sample Play: High Plains Samurai

The following sample play is taken from an actual playtest session with members of ScreenPlay's Development Team, Fraser Ronald and Kieron O'Gorman. More importantly, it's from our **High Plains Samurai** campaign, an extensive and ultimate version of ScreenPlay still under construction for a Fall 2016/Winter 2017 release. In a place known only as the One Land, it is a story of a world shattered by the wrath of Chaos after believing his children – Honor, Innocence, Balance, and Patience – came to love the world of the mortals more than himself.

In the aftermath, the One Land has been broken into five major city-states ruled by powerful warlords. It is a land of gunslingers, katanas, Tommy guns, and barbarians, where the most powerful have tapped into their inner qi (pronounced "chi") to display impressive individual power. Think of it as westerns meet wushu meets Mad Max meets the Uncanny X-Men. You can learn more about HPS on our website, brokenrulergames.net

In this scene, the Director and the Writers (Fraser and Kieron) have agreed to find a way for their two characters to officially meet after a brief encounter in the previous scene. Fraser's lead character is Mauser, an untapped (meaning no special qi power) gunslinging bounty hunter from the town of Hunan, where this scene takes place. Kieron's lead character is Jade Palm, a fierce martial artist who may be blind but has tapped into her qi to unlock senses beyond those of her mortal kin. Everyone has agreed the scene shall begin as Mauser returns to the Tea House, where he is staying with its owner and an old friend, the Old Man (a supporting character played by the Director). Let's begin with the opening shot.

THE DIRECTOR

Dusk casts a red-tinged pall over the dusty streets of Hunan, a darkness made deeper by the never-ending sandstorm blocking out any natural light on a daily basis. As Mauser enters the shot, walking away from the camera and holding his hat firmly with his left hand, he approaches and eventually enters the front door of the Tea House. As he does, the camera slowly pulls back to reveal Jade Palm at a corner across the street. She does not look around the corner to see her target as she can hear his footsteps crunch on the ground and the

Using Your Potentials

These are the potentials for the two lead characters provided in this sample play. For teaching's sake, each potential is provided with dice, Difficulty, and maximum details.

Mauser
Rifle-slinger
(d8/Difficulty 5/3 details)
Bounty Hunter
(d6/Difficulty 3/2 details)
Knight Errant
(d6/Difficulty 3/2 details)

Jade Palm
Jade Palm Style
(d8/Difficulty 5/3 details)
Acrobatics
(d6/Difficulty 3/2 details)
Spirit Sense
(d6/Difficulty 3/2 details)

creak of the rusted door to the Tea House opening. The only part of her that moves is the long tail of her blindfold flapping in the powerful wind.

Let's start with Fraser for this one.

FRASER
(provides a description)

Sure, I'll start with my Knight Errant potential. He's back from an unsuccessful venture so that leaves his Bounty Hunter out, but he's bothered by these rumours of an army massing and locals gone missing.

No sooner has Mauser entered does the Old Man return behind the counter and light the flame of the wood stove, setting a tea kettle over the element and preparing Mauser's cup. Mauser dusts himself off and settles down in his usual chair, even though he has his pick of the place.

(In an earlier session, Fraser came up with the idea of the Tea House and as such has initiative over it. He decided that there's barely ever any business and that Mauser is perhaps the owner's best, if not only, customer, making it a good place for him to lay low whenever he's back in Hunan.)

"Think I'm gonna need something a little stronger this time, Old Man," he calls out. And so the Old Man reaches under the old bar and pulls out a small shot glass and a bottle of whiskey.

(Due to Mauser's Knight Errant potential, Fraser only has 2 details he can incorporate into his description: one for sitting down at a table (which would require a detail when he needs to stand up again) and another for ordering a drink.)

THE DIRECTOR
(provides an outcome to Fraser's description)

As he pours the shot of whiskey, his grizzled voice speaks up for the first time since the sun rose that morning. "It's been a while since you needed something stronger. In fact, the last time I remember pouring you one of these was before pulling three slugs from your back." He moves around the bar and brings Mauser the glass of whiskey before taking a big gulp straight from the bottle himself. "That bad, eh?"

Who do you want to go next, Fraser?

FRASER

How about you go, Kieron?

KIERON

(provides a description)

Yeah, I think once the coast is clear and her target is inside, Jade will walk calmly across the street using the sandstorm and darkness for cover. That'll use her Acrobatics with 2 details. As she approaches the building, she uses the sound of the grains of sand striking against the building to detect every wall, the height of the roof, and sense if there are any stairs running up the side of the building.

FRASER

I could see there being an outdoor staircase leading to the second floor. It's not blocked off, seeing as no one ever comes here.

KIERON

Then she'll use that... but instead of walking up the stairs like anybody else, she'll grab hold of the first railing and flip herself onto the side of the stairs, then complete her climb all the way up to the roof, using the last railing to jump up and land softly above. Would there be a skylight up there?

FRASER

There could be, but then that would only show you what's on the second floor. Did you want to use it to get inside?

KIERON

Exactly. I don't need a window to see what's inside anyways but I want to be able to get in from the roof and escape that way if I need to. It's just fancier, more her style.

FRASER

OK, why not? You've got a skylight.

(Jade Palm's Acrobatics potential provides Kieron with 2 details to build in his description: one for crossing the street and scaling the side of the building, and a second for locating the skylight.)

THE DIRECTOR

Good enough, but I think that's a full description right there, Kieron, so let me give you the outcome. Something like that sounds like a continuous shot following Jade across the street and up the side of the Tea House until she's up on the rooftop. She can hear the rhythmic chime of spurs on

the heels of Hunan's watchdogs (ARMED SENTRIES WORKING FOR THE TOWN'S WARLORD, GRANDFATHER) in the distance, but there is nothing to indicate they have spotted Jade's ascent. Their heart rates remain constant and the patter of their circular path along the distant rooftops remains the same.

Who's next?

KIERON
Ah, right. Um, I guess it's just you for this round, Mr. Director.

THE DIRECTOR
The only character I've got right now is the Old Man and he's just talking with Mauser. He's not much of a talker, as we've established, so I think I'll pass on him and call that the first round. That means we'll start the next one with... Fraser.

FRASER
Doesn't make much of a difference, but let's go with Bounty Hunter. I'm looking for some information.

"I took a big chance coming back here, Old Man. Not even sure if it'll be worth it, but... something's going on that has me a little worried. What's this I keep hearing about an army marching out of Hunan six months back? And I found a supply order in Grandfather's study for enough gear to support an entire invasion force." Mauser swallows back the entire shot and slams down the glass on the table, shrugging off the whiskey like it was nothing. "What do you know about all this?" he asks the Old Man.

(FRASER HOLDS OUT HIS HAND INDICATING HE'S READY TO HEAR THE OUTCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR. WHILE FRASER COULD EASILY HAVE ADDED A SECOND DETAIL, HE'S ACHIEVED HIS GOAL WITH ONE BY ASKING THE OLD MAN SOME QUESTIONS.)

THE DIRECTOR
The Old Man takes another, longer shot of whiskey and there's something in his eyes telling you he's unsure about sharing anything with you for fear of pissing off the warlord. He dodges the question and says the following instead. "I thought you were here for that bounty on Ash and Viper. What's all this about an army, hmm?"

FRASER
Sneaky bugger.... Alright, I want you to go next, Director.

THE DIRECTOR
Ok, so with his d6 of Strictly Business...

The Old Man places the whiskey bottle down on your table and begins to ramble on about the nonsense spouted by old women and tavern drunks, that he's told you once and he'll tell you again to never take refuge in the rumours of chatty prostitutes, blah, blah, blah. All the while, he moves towards the door and locks it. Next, he heads towards the windows at the front of his shop and shutters them closed, as if locking up for the night.

Why don't you give me the outcome, Fraser?

FRASER
Alright. (CHUCKLES TO HIMSELF) As the Old Man begins to close up early, he does catch sight of something just as he shutters the last window. A small red light, like a burning cigar as someone inhales.

It comes from an alleyway across the street, barely visible through the storm outside. But it's still clearly there.

THE DIRECTOR
Nice! Ok, that leaves us with you, Kieron.

KIERON
I'm gonna use her Spirit Sense this time. Crouching down on the roof, Jade can hear this conversation and she's intrigued by this talk about an army before she hears the tobacco burning inside the stranger's cigar. Maybe it's because of the wind, but now that she knows someone is there, she can make out his heartbeat throbbing calmly in the shadows. She's intrigued and she'll try to pick up whatever she can about this individual.

THE DIRECTOR

Cool, that will trigger a complication roll because this individual seems like he... or she... wants to remain hidden and you're trying to complicate that. Kieron, roll your Spirit Sense potential against a Difficulty of 5.

(In his head, the Director must now create an extra on the fly to account for the introduction of this stranger Fraser has introduced. As most extras can only have a single potential of d6, the Difficulty would normally be set to 3, but the strong winds and dim lighting provide +1 steps to the Mysterious Stranger. He writes down a single potential - "Works In Shadows d6/3/2" - with the first number representing his dice value, the second his Difficulty, and the third his maximum details. While this character is technically Fraser's creation, he has made no mention of taking him on as a secondary character and so the Director will use him as an extra.)

KIERON

(rolls a d6 for Jade Palm's Spirit Sense potential)
Ha, a 6!

THE DIRECTOR

That'll do it. What complication do you want to place on him?

KIERON

Well, now that I know he's there, let's go with "You Can't Hide From Me." Jade knows this person is there and I'll spend 1 of her Stamina to make that a penalty; he'll take -1 steps to hide from her. The spirits will warn me if he tries anything funny.

THE DIRECTOR

(marks down the complication)
The combination of this stranger's heartbeat and the musk of his cigar lock in a kind of innate signature in Jade's mind and she could probably pinpoint this person in a crowd now. But she's also able to discern a few other details, each of them revealed by rapid fire cuts from one extreme close shot to another. Fraser, you brought this guy in, why don't you tell us some minor details about this Mysterious Stranger?

FRASER
Sure. She can feel the five day old stubble growing on his chin, a poncho flapping in the wind, the oils from the leather of a horse standing not more than ten feet away from him, and the steel of the twin Smith & Wessons holstered at his hip.

KIERON
Definitely sounds like a pro. That's good, he's not going anywhere without me knowing.

THE DIRECTOR
OK, so that brings us to the start of the next round. Kieron, you closed out the last one. Who do you want to start?

KIERON
Why not Fraser?

FRASER
Yep, Bounty Hunter's gonna work here. Mauser leans forward on the table, keeping his voice lower as he's getting a sense that the Old Man is worried about someone talking about a terrible secret. "What rumours have you heard, Old Man? There's something different about Hunan and it's not like you to dodge the question."

And what does he say?

THE DIRECTOR
The Old Man does not answer, his gaze locked out that last window with the shutters in his hand and only an inch before it is completely closed. His face goes pale and he looks as if he's seen a ghost.

FRASER
Uh-oh. Kieron, you go ahead. Maybe give us a better sense of what this guy's up to.

KIERON
Yeah, I was thinking the same thing. Okay then, with Spirit Sense, Jade can smell the cold sweat running down the Old Man's forehead and hear his heart skipping a beat – something's trouble about this stranger. But she also doesn't know anything about Mauser and what he may have done to bring this guy's attention down on him... hmm, maybe if she can pinpoint where he's from that could give us an

idea of what he wants. Jade focuses her concentration on this stranger in an effort to pick up the slightest iota of information on him. Do I roll dice for that?

THE DIRECTOR
Well, it's not a matter of success or failure and I'm not sure if you're trying to complicate anything for him with what you just described, so no dice roll but here's your outcome. As Jade Palm's senses, both physical and beyond, hone in on this mysterious stranger, she detects the smell of a small tin flute pulled from the stranger's pocket, which he places against his lips and releases a high pitched whistle.

I'm going to spend one of my challenges and place a restricted complication on Jade Palm called Temporarily Disoriented. The pitch is so high that it causes Jade so much pain that she must cover her ears as if in an attempt to protect her skull from being ripped to pieces. She cannot use her qi power until the complication is removed.

FRASER
Can we hear the whistle from inside?

THE DIRECTOR
Ah, you'd think, but no. It does not emit a frequency audible to human ears, but Jade can hear it because of her extreme senses.

Now, since I'm the only one left in the round with characters to play, I'm going with the Old Man with his Knows More Than Others d8 potential first. While his eyes continue to gaze in fear at the stranger standing in the alleyway, the hand resting on the window shutter is not visible to the Mysterious Stranger.

Just as Mauser begins to wonder what it is that has terrified his friend so, the Old Man makes a series of subtle gestures indicating there is a threat across the street.

"Looks like you've brought trouble down on me again, my friend," the Old Man mutters, his lips barely moving.

Suddenly composing himself, the Old Man finishes shutting the window and continues to move around extinguishing lanterns and continuing on with the illusion that he's closing shop for the night. All the while, he speaks to Mauser in a hushed voice.

"If he's who I think, then you'd better keep that Winchester of yours handy and get out before someone starts shooting up my business. Take the back door. I'll buy you some time."

By the time the Old Man reaches the counter, he's already grabbed hold of his own insurance plan: a freshly sharpened katana.

Kieron, why don't you give me the outcome for that?

KIERON
(cracks his knuckles)
You know what? Let's have a little fun with this.
At that moment, there is a flash of movement on the rooftops above the Mysterious Stranger as half a dozen shadowy figures leap across the street and land on the Tea House roof.

THE DIRECTOR
Oh-ho, really? Well, that just leaves the Mysterious Stranger, who has now vanished as strangely as he appeared into the darkness. For our next round, let's start it off with Kieron seeing as you've got Jade Palm on the roof with these attackers.

KIERON
(who happens to be petting a cat on his lap)
Seeing as we've got the foundations of a fight going on here, I'd think she'd use her Jade Palm Style. When the shrieking pain in her ears subsides, Jade discovers she is surrounded by six ninja, all of them clad in black with thin eye slits to reveal their true heritage. Beneath the masks are eyes like a cat and Jade can hear them purring in delight for the fight to come, for these are not humans at all but half-feline

creatures known as... the catar. While they were not aware of Jade's presence on the roof before, there is no mistake now and they surround her on all sides, ready to do battle. Jade claps her fists together and bows her head to honor her opponents as she waits for them to make the first move.

(Because Kieron initiated these new attackers, he has decided to embellish on them even further by making them half-feline ninjas as part of his description. Because a large chunk of his description involved the ninja and not his character, they do not count as details.)

THE DIRECTOR
You're not going to attack?

KIERON
She's going to wait until one of them tries to attack and quickly counter it.

THE DIRECTOR
Ok, but that will cost you 1 Stamina as you'll have to wait.

KIERON
Oh. Can they not attack me as part of my description?

THE DIRECTOR
Unfortunately, you cannot detail another character's actions in one of your descriptions and even though you initiated these ninja, it's not their turn. And I'd also say they're extras and will become my toys to play with. You'll have to wait. And don't forget you have that complication as well.

KIERON
Yeah, that's right and she needs her qi power or else she's totally blind. In that case, I'll use her description to remove the complication as she reconnects with her qi waiting for the catar to make their first move. What's the outcome?

THE DIRECTOR
As the blur of overwhelming noise and eerie silence dissipates, Jade Palm hears their claws slowly grow out from their fingertips and their padded feet softly move counter-clockwise around her. Who's next?

KIERON
Yeah, definitely Fraser.

FRASER

You got it. Using his Bounty Hunter potential, Mauser stands up and approaches the window to see what has the Old Man so concerned and discovers nothing. But when he sees his friend's gaze looking up to the roof, Mauser slips his mare's leg (A TYPE OF HEAVY CALIBER REVOLVER) from the holster and runs up the stairs to the second floor. Through the skylight, he spots darkened figures moving in a circle around a lone woman and opens fire to shoot out the glass. His goal is to catch these intruders by surprise.
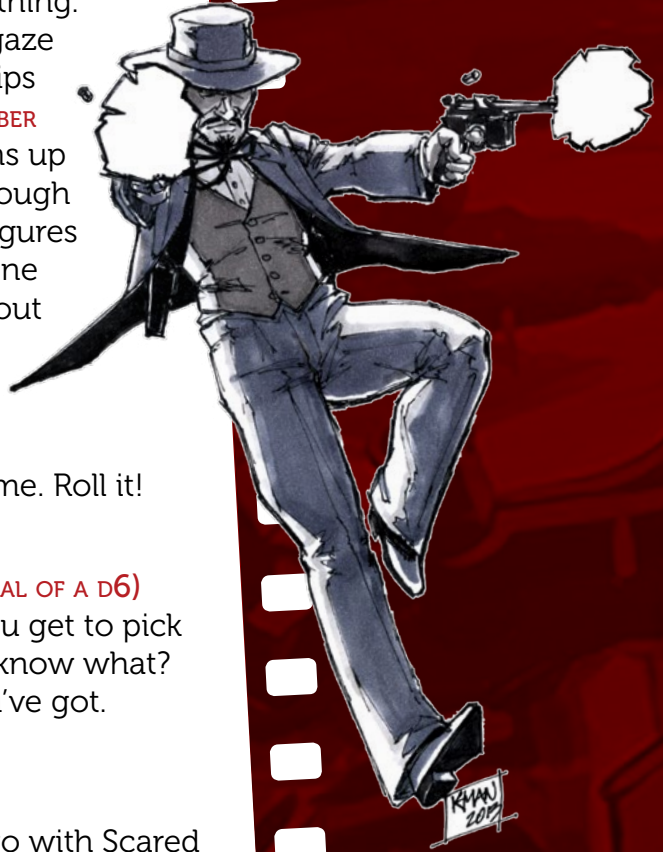
THE DIRECTOR

Sounds like a complication to me. Roll it!

FRASER

(ROLLS HIS BOUNTY HUNTER POTENTIAL OF A D6)
Nice! A 5… oh, but that means you get to pick the complication. Ah, crap. You know what? Go for it. Let's see what you've got.

THE DIRECTOR

(LAUGHS)
Nice! Since they're half cat, let's go with Scared Of Loud Noises, a restriction, and they cannot advance towards Jade until it's gone. The glass explodes outwards and sprays shards all over the roof, causing each of the ninja to drop low and look around in a panic as Jade Palm remains perfectly still, as if she knew that was going to happen.

And that's all the time we have for now, but this should give you a good idea of how ScreenPlay works. The rest of this Act will delve into the specifics of all the rules discussed above, but we're not done with our two Samurai yet; all of the examples that follow will continue the fight against the catar.

Before You Create Characters...

When starting a new story, there are still some key factors the Director will need to do her job. These are known as **formats** and include key decisions such as genre (action, drama, mystery), style (anime, comic book superheroes, novel adaptation), rating (super bloody with foul language or kid friendly), initiatives, and length. If you are the Director of this particular story, consult the section on formats in Act Three.

Make It Happen:
Creating Characters For ScreenPlay

Characters are the key to ScreenPlay because not only are they the protagonists and antagonists for your story, but they are the means by which Writers interact with the setting, learn about the backstory, and engage with other figures populating this unfolding tale. Whenever a player provides a description, it is done through the eyes of a single character under her control and so it only makes sense to learn this game by first detailing how characters are born.

In the appendix, you will find a character sheet (also referred to as the "character notes"). Feel free to print off a copy of this page for personal use. Directors may wish to use it as well for the assorted gallery of supporting characters they'll create, though many prefer to work with the shorthand of cue cards or sheets of lined paper or the scene notes also available in the appendix.

As various aspects of the game are introduced, extended rules will soon follow. When a mechanical term is referenced, it is presented in red bold text indicating a detailed definition elsewhere in this section. Understanding how these aspects function after bringing your character to life can help with your selections and ideas and can be helpful as you flesh out your character.

Step 1:
Mark Your Character Type

There are three types of characters in ScreenPlay: lead characters, supporting characters, and extras. These are the same types discussed on page 13 of Act One: What Is ScreenPlay?. Various decisions and a number of options are based on this character type, making it perhaps one of the most important factors in character creation. Write down your character's type on the top left of your character notes.

Step 2: Choose Your Role

Based on the story everyone has chosen to tell, whether it's a pre-published treatment or an original idea created by your group, write down the role your character will play on the top right side of the character notes. For more information on roles, consult page 77 in Act Three: Directing ScreenPlay.

A Step-By-Step Guide To Character Creation

What follows in the first half of this chapter is a detailed breakdown of character creation, but maybe you've already read this chapter and simply need a quick reference. Below is a quick checklist for creating any type of character.

1. Choose a character type.
   - Lead, Supporting, or Extras
2. Choose a role (if available).
3. Create your potentials.
   - Lead characters have 3 potentials (1x d8/5/3, 2x d6/3/2)
   - Supporting characters have 2 potentials (1x d8/5/3, 1x d6/3/2)
   - Extras have 1 potential (d6/3/2)
4. Create resources for your first scene.
   - Lead characters have 3 resource slots
   - Supporting characters have 2 resource slots
   - Extras have 1 resource slot
5. Create at least one motivation. For every additional motivation, your character must have a hindrance.
6. Mark your character's maximum Stamina.
   - Lead characters = 15 Stamina
   - Supporting characters = 7 Stamina (or more; see page 83)
   - Extras = 3 Stamina

Step 3: Create Potentials

Everything from simply observing their surroundings to reading the facial expressions of a cowering figure on the far side of a subway car to hurling a car through a brick wall uses potentials. These are interpretive representations of key phrases, beliefs, or attributes used to identify a character above all others. They are used to determine dice values for complication rolls, target numbers for someone attempting to complicate your side of the story, and how many actions you can provide on your turn.

The starting number of potentials available to a character is based on the character type. When you are ready, list your potentials and their steps on the left side of your notes.

> **Lead characters** have 3 potentials and start the story with one at d8 and two at d6.

> **Supporting characters** have only 2 potentials, but their starting values can vary greatly. For Writers, they begin with one assigned a d8 and the other a d6. Directors have their own unique rules for creating various supporting characters, discussed in Act Three.

> **Extras** have only a single potential listed at a d6.

Potentials

Each character has their strengths, certain characteristics ranging from physical to mental to social and everything in between, highlighting who they are and what makes them the best compared to others around them. In ScreenPlay, these are measured in potentials and they perform three mechanical feats:

> 1. They determine the dice value for a complication roll.
>
> 2. They set the Difficulty for a character attempting a complication roll against another character.
>
> 3. They provide the maximum number of details allowed in a single description.

All three accomplishments are determined by steps (see below), a rank of how impressive a potential is compared to someone who does not have that ability at all. Use the chart below to determine each of the three feats based on the potentials' step.

Dice Value	Difficulty	Details
d4 or less*	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12 or higher*	9	5

* Every step below a d4 results in a flat -1 penalty to the roll. Every step above a d12 provides a +1 bonus.

At the start of a character's turn, a single potential must be declared before providing the first detail in a description. If there are no potentials that can be applied to a description, it defaults to the base step (complication rolls use a d4, Difficulty is 1, and only 1 detail maximum; this is written in character stats as "d4/1/1").

Creating Potentials: Each potential is customized by the player to help provide a visual identity, personality, traits, and other possible considerations to the character. There are no predetermined potentials; each player is free to create his own potentials to suit his own style. When determining potentials for a character, regardless of type, think of them as descriptors highlighting what makes this character unique against the rest of the setting, how he expresses himself, interacts with the world, judges his moral compass, even through professional occupations. There is no limit to what a potential can be and players are encouraged to ensure their choice of potentials will be useful in a large number of situations, including physical, mental, and social situations.

Optional Rule: Building Potentials

The early playtests of ScreenPlay included a slight twist on the use of potentials and while this twist has been removed from the current version of the game, some groups may choose to apply it as an "advanced" version of the game.

When a complication roll is triggered, characters must build up to their potential's dice value with every detail. For example, if Jeffrey wants to actually roll his d8 potential, he has to provide 3 details leading up to his key detail. If he can only provide 2 details, he can only roll a d6 and if restricted to a single detail, only a d4 can be rolled. A potential can always produce at least one detail and therefore will always allow the character to roll at least a d4 (though additional step penalties can apply). This optional rule forces Writers to truly get creative with their descriptions in order to max out their full potentials.

Minimum Difficulties

Regardless of how many obstacles a character may face, a Difficulty cannot be reduced below 1 and simple becomes a matter of determining which character gets to create the complication.

Below is a list of possible potentials to use as a reference for your next story.

A Wily Mind	No One Can See Me
Charisma	Absolute Power
Cold Blooded Killer	Shocking Touch
Eagle Eyes	A Body To Die For

Difficulties

You will not be the only one rolling dice, as other characters will attempt to achieve their own ends and thwart your efforts during the course of the story. When this happens, Difficulties are used to determine the target number a potential must roll against to be considered effective.

Difficulties are always listed as odd numbers and range from the base step of 1 (practically automatic) to 11 (next to impossible). Every step increases the Difficulty's value by 2 (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11). For your characters, each potential also comes with a Difficulty. Whenever the Director rolls dice against your character, choose an appropriate potential's Difficulty. If you do not have one that applies, then the Difficulty defaults to the base step of 1.

Details

The depth of a description is based on the number of concentrated actions a player can provide for a character. This is measured in details, which is based on their potentials. A single detail is the equivalent of a sentence offering no more than a single action of significance.

All details in a single description must work towards a single end and can be viewed as an action (though they need not always be physical; a detail can involve mental concentration or a thought leading to

a conclusion). Details can only be provided for any character a player controls with his description; he may be allowed to incorporate minor actions of an allied character so long as they do not qualify as a detail as defined by this section, such as simple gestures or stepping to the side. The following list contains some of the essential elements of a detail and anything else can simply be considered descriptive additions. Not all of these need apply simultaneously, but each one on its own can be used to define a sentence as a detail.

- It requires concentrated and deliberate effort from the character.

- It may require another character to use a his own detail to overcome or avoid what has been provided. For example, pointing out a lie in another character's previous statement forces the liar to cover his tracks or confess with a future detail of his own.

- It requires a response from another character, either through dialogue or physical action.

- It may trigger a complication roll.

Key Details: One of these details is considered the key detail and is the primary action performed in the description. If a complication roll is triggered, it will be to determine this detail, leaving all others to work as additional flourishes and actions related to or assisting in building up to the key detail. The last detail in a description is normally the key detail, but this is not a requirement and remains at the describing character's discretion.

For example, if a character were being described as attacking another character using only her capoeira martial arts training and she could apply 3 details to the description, she may start off with a running leap over

Optional Rule: Dialogue Scenes

Certain scenes do not intend to trigger complication rolls, inflict complications, or involve any foreseen possibility of combat whatsoever. These are known as dialogue scenes because they involve characters talking amongst each other to gain information, present exposition for future scenes, or other possibilities.

If an upcoming scene does not expect to trigger complication rolls, feel free to skip details in character descriptions. This allows characters (and their Writers) free ability to talk without keeping track of how many active sentences are spoken. In a dialogue scene, all characters are allowed to provide a number of details up to their highest ranking potential (meaning they perform actions, such as investigation, movement, or other options). If they reach this maximum number of details, they cannot provide another detail until all other characters in the scene have done the same. This is the equivalent of a round in a dialogue scene.

three extras that turns into a side barrel roll, followed by landing in front of her true target and kicking away the pistol aimed squarely at her head before the final detail reveals the spinning kick taking out the target's legs from underneath him. While 3 details were provided, the key detail is the spinning kick at the end. The Director could then decide if this key detail triggers a complication roll to determine if a complication appears, such as the target being knocked onto his back. All other non-key details cannot cause complications and are simply for dramatic effect.

USING JADE PALM'S SELF-TAUGHT JADE PALM STYLE D8 POTENTIAL, KIERON CAN APPLY UP TO 3 DETAILS IN A SINGLE DESCRIPTION. SURROUNDED BY 4 CATAR, HE DESCRIBES HER LEAPING FEET FIRST INTO THE CHEST OF ONE CATAR AND SENDING IT FALLING BACKWARDS. (THAT'S ONE DETAIL.) REBOUNDING OFF THIS FIRST CATAR, JADE PALM FLIPS AND SLAMS HER FEET INTO THE CHEST OF THE CATAR STANDING DIRECTLY OPPOSITE OF THE FIRST ONE AND SENDS THAT ONE FLYING BACK A FEW FEET. (THIS IS THE SECOND DETAIL.) FINALLY, AS SHE LANDS ON ALL FOURS ON THE ROOFTOP, SHE HURLS HERSELF FORWARD AT THE FIRST CATAR, SPINNING CLOCKWISE LIKE A BULLET, AND DOUBLE PUNCHING IT IN THE STOMACH. (THIS LAST ONE IS THE KEY DETAIL AND WILL TRIGGER A COMPLICATION ROLL.)

Maintaining Details: Some things occur without a hitch the moment they are described but others require a concentrated effort in order to last for a couple of rounds. Whenever a detail is provided to offer an **advantage** or inflict a **complication** that requires an active effort maintain for more than one round, the character must continue to use the same number of details on every proceeding turn as it took to introduce the original detail. For example, if a character presses his weight against a door to hold back a vicious werewolf, he must continue to use 1 detail every following turn to maintain his efforts to keep the werewolf on the other side of the door.

Required Details: Certain events in ScreenPlay require the use of a detail; these are listed below for your convenience. Many of these are explained in greater depth later in this chapter.

Required Details	# of Details Required
Equipping a physical resource	1
Gain the cover/ concealment modifier	1
Maintaining an advantage, complication, or trigger	1 per detail used to activate
Move forward by one range category	1 detail per range category
Pass your turn to another Writer when chosen by the Director to start a round	1 detail

Descriptions

A description is an active account of how a character interacts with a scene and attempts to move the story forward, either by attempting to investigate the situation further, trigger a complication roll with another character, witness the introduction of a new element or character, or anything else a player can imagine. Think of it as a paragraph dedicated to revealing the actions of a single character in the wider story. The only limit to a description is that it must directly and actively involve the character and how that character interacts with the story. For example, players cannot describe the Director's bartender reaching behind the bar and pressing the silent alarm button, but they can describe one of their characters noticing a bartender at his station with one hand out of sight (in which case another player, likely the Director in this case, would inform the Writers about the silent alarm).

Descriptions are limited to the number of details that can be applied based on a chosen potential.

Advantages, page 63

Steps

Steps are used to measure, increase, and decrease characters' potentials during the course of the story. Depending on the current application of a potential, they can change the dice value used in a complication roll, the Difficulty another character must roll against, or the number of details allowed in a description.

There is a base step, considered the automatic value whenever no listed potential applies. The standard base step is d4/1/1, meaning a character can only roll a d4, set a Difficulty of 1, and apply 1 detail if she does not have an applicable potential for a description.

Potentials can increase or decrease based on step bonuses and penalties applied either before the character begins her description or after a description reveals the application of a step modifier given below. For example, if a character's key detail involves shooting at a target hiding behind a car door, the Director can determine the target gains the light cover step modifier and gains +1 steps to his Difficulty. These step bonuses or penalties can alter the dice value or Difficulty as appropriate to the bonus or penalty and it is possible to affect all three within the same round. Each step bonus or penalty is unique and comes with its own conditions and limitations.

All step modifiers can only be awarded by the Director, though they can be awarded in response to a Writer's description, or by applying a role's benefits. They cannot alter the maximum number of details provided by a potential's original value unless a character benefits from an ongoing step penalty, such as an advantage from a previous description. A list of the common step modifiers is provided below and Directors are encouraged to improvise on an as needed basis.

Modifier	Step Bonus/ Penalty	Additional Rules
Aid Another Character	+1 steps	Requires a full description from the aiding character
Attacking Multiple Targets	-1 steps for every additional target beyond the first	Does not apply to Extras if they act as a group, but does apply when targeting more than one group
Cover/ Concealment	+1 steps for light; +2 steps for heavy	A character must use a detail to access this step modifier
Concentrating/ Preparing	+1 steps per description	The character must announce what she is preparing to roll for; using a detail for anything else breaks concentration & the character loses this bonus
Long Range	-1 steps for every additional range beyond a resource's normal range	See the section on Range for details

Step 4: Set Resource Slots

Perhaps a story features hi-tech spies with a slew of gadgets at their disposal or the Writers are drafting a tale of warlocks hunting down forgotten monsters of lore using spellbooks, potions, and their knowledge of the dark arts. Whatever the story, characters make use of numerous weapons, vehicles, skill sets, and all sorts of external objects to aid them in their quest. In ScreenPlay, these are known as resources.

Resources

Not every item, skill, or bit of information is a resource, and characters can describe themselves using any tool at their fingertips without gaining any mechanical advantage. Resources are a select few specifically chosen as important by a character that they will assist in complication rolls when applied to a description.
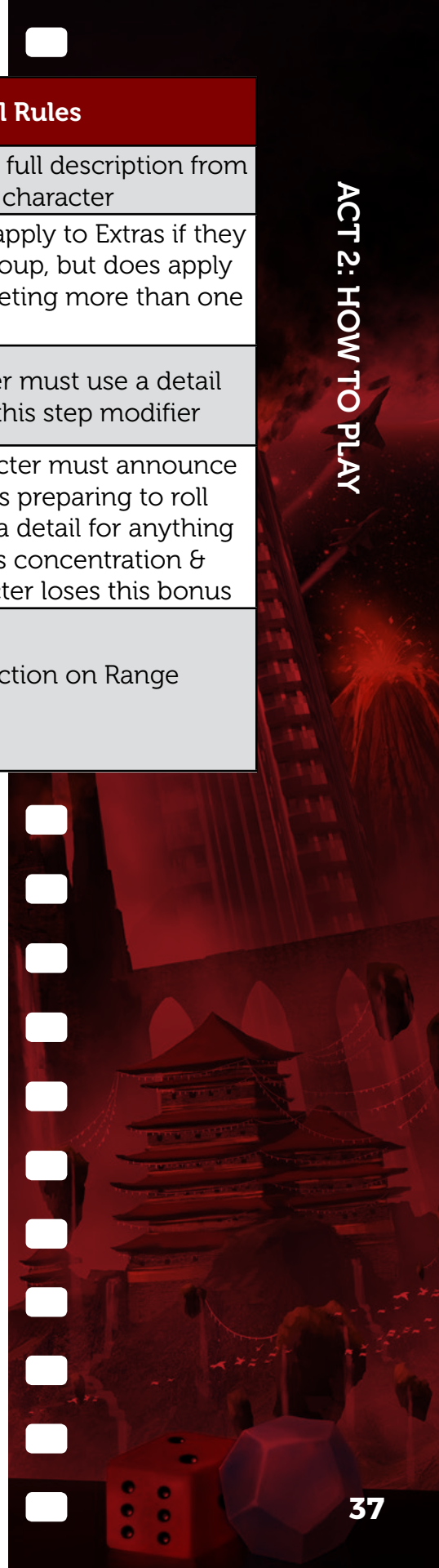
A character can only apply one resource to a complication roll or Difficulty at a time, whether it's towards a complication roll or to improve the Difficulty. Different resources can be used by a single character over the course of a round, but no more than one resource can be applied at a single time. Resources do not provide ongoing benefits and so cannot increase the number of details in a description.

Props (AKA Items, Weapons, Armor): Characters must use a detail to introduce a physical resource, known as a prop, into a scene if it must be actively manipulated (i.e. remove a camera from the backpack, draw a gun from its holster), but not to discard it or return it to its original space. For example, a character must use a detail to draw a sword, but not to re-sheathe it. He can have multiple counts of the same prop, such as a collection of throwing knives, but the player must stipulate exactly how many the character has and each requires its own detail to become available in a description.

Skills & Backgrounds As Resources: Characters can call upon their knowledge to act as resources, whether they are skills learned by a trade or through formal education or life lessons earned from a colourful history. Whatever this resource may be, it must be connected to one of the character's resources to gain one of the bonuses offered below and cannot contradict a fact introduced earlier in the story.

Resource Slots: Resources are only limited to a certain number available per scene. In other words, while a character may have a backpack or a moving truck filled with supplies, only a pre-determined number of them can function as resources. The rest are simply filler material incorporated into descriptions as seen fit. These are assigned to a set number of resource slots and each one can be filled with a resource of the character's choosing at the start of a new scene.

Characters start with a maximum number of resource slots based on their character type.

Lead characters start with a maximum of 3 resource slots at the beginning of a story.

Supporting characters have a maximum of 2 resource slots.

Extras have only 1 resource slot.

At the start of a new scene, characters can assign a resource to one of these resource slots and designate one of the following benefits (but not both). These benefits can be changed from scene to scene and the same item, skill, or other consideration cannot be assigned to more than one resource slot.

Step Bonus: The resource provides a +1 step bonus when applied in the description. This step bonus can only be used to increase the complication roll's dice value or the Difficulty.

Damage Bonus: The resource provides a damage bonus based on the criteria below;

- If the resource can be used one-handed, it grants a +1 damage bonus.

- If the resource must be used two-handed, it grants a +2 damage bonus.

- If the resource is an advanced weapon of any genre (firearms, lasers, etc.), it grants an additional +1 damage bonus.

- If the resource creates an explosion, it grants an additional +1d4 damage bonus per use.

- Any knowledge-, background- or skill-based resource can provide a +1 damage bonus.

OPENING FIRE AT A CATAR JUST BEFORE IT CAN JUMP DOWN THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT AND CLAW MAUSER'S FACE OFF, FRASER APPLIES HIS MARE'S LEG WITH +1 STEPS TO INCREASE HIS DICE ROLL FROM A D8 TO A D10. ON HIS NEXT TURN, MAUSER INSTEAD USES HIS WINCHESTER RIFLE WITH A +3 DAMAGE BONUS AS FRASER DECIDES IT BEST TO ENSURE THE CATAR IS FINISHED OFF FOR GOOD.

Step 5:
Create Motivations and Hindrances

If a character does not learn from the mistakes of her past, overcome personal issues, and rise to become a better person than she was at the beginning, the story suffers for it. Character evolution is a vital element to a living, breathing story that engages its audience (even if that audience is the players themselves). That's why all lead and supporting characters can have motivations and hindrances to help them leap off the table and invoke visceral responses from the players.

A motivation is a personal goal laid down for a character to achieve by the end of the story. Hindrances are physical, mental, or emotional obstacles they must overcome to achieve a scene's goal and bring closure to their own motivations. Each Writer-controlled lead and supporting character can start the story with one motivation. For every additional motivation assigned to a single character, they must take a hindrance. (Because Directors do not gain **milestones** like Writers do and instead earn **challenges**, their characters do not require motivations or hindrances.)

Motivations

A vengeful wife vows to find the bastard who kidnapped her husband; a son wants to reconnect with his estranged parents; a monk lives under a vow of silence as he seeks out the Lost Temple of his ancestors... all of these are examples of motivations. They are personal goals sought during the course of the story as they relate to the story itself. They may be directly related to the main plot or they could create subplots Directors can help weave into the central storyline. They can be major accomplishments of great strength or inner struggles as the character seeks to understand the events of the past.

Motivations provide roleplaying and character-building incentives for Writers but they also create rewards to help increase the character's chance of survival as the dangers build over time. Motivations are written as a single sentence on character notes during character creation and are best conceived in conversation with the Director. Whenever a character completes a scene's goal by directly applying a motivation, he gains additional milestones. (See Milestones on page 64 for more details). The more motivations a character has, the richer his spirit, but the harder it becomes to intermingle all of them in a single direction. Different motivations must be unique from each other and develop a different viewpoint or history of the character so as to keep him interesting; the Director has final approval on additional motivations added to a character.

> To seek revenge on those responsible for the death of my partner.
>
> Nero wants to learn how to control his new powers.
>
> Assume control of the family business, not my older brother.

Closing A Motivation: The entire purpose of a motivation is for the character to achieve closure and move forward with the lessons learned from struggling to reach her motivation. This is known as closing a motivation and it can happen at any point and time in the story when the character's Writer and the Director agree the motivation reached its end. At the end of the session, the Writer is awarded with milestones. (Once again, see page 64 for more information on milestones.)

Hindrances

Hindrances are aspects that slow a character's personal growth and increase the effort required at various moments in the story. A bad knee, a violent temper, post-traumatic stress disorder, and a fear of heights are all examples of hindrances. For every additional motivation beyond the first, a character must take on a hindrance. They work like motivations (a single sentence on your character notes) but can be manipulated by the Director spending challenges to create problems for characters. (See Challenges on page 67 for more information on how hindrances can mess with characters.) These problems are directly based on the hindrance a Writer creates, yet can be called into play at a moment of the Director's choosing to add complexity to a scene. For example, a lead character with a fear of heights suddenly find himself thrown through a plate glass window and onto a fire escape ten stories up with an opponent grappled in their arms.

> I TRULY BELIEVE NO ONE IS BETTER THAN ME BEHIND THE WHEEL.
>
> PEOPLE COULD GET HURT WITH THESE POWERS.
>
> ARTHUR HAS A BIT OF AN ANGER PROBLEM...

A hindrance cannot be closed in the same fashion as a motivation. Characters may continue to carry the burdens that haunt them forever, though they may creep up less often than before. An alcoholic character that finally goes into rehab is never truly rid of his addiction, but is less troubled after confronting his demons head on. A character can choose to forego receiving any milestone award for closing a motivation in exchange for closing its connected hindrance.

Step 6: Record Maximum Stamina

Stories in ScreenPlay thrive on danger and excitement, meaning all characters face risk on a regular basis. Even death. Keeping track of how long a character remains within the story falls under the realm of Stamina, a measurement of a character's endurance against damage and her ability to either apply skill in her favour or get lucky when things go bad.

All characters start with a maximum amount of Stamina based on their character type.

> **Lead characters** begin the story with 15 Stamina.
>
> **Supporting characters** start with 7 Stamina, while the Director can assign a varying number of Stamina based on the importance of the character to the story (see Act Three for details).
>
> **Extras** have 3 Stamina per individual. When formed into a group, this is multiplied by the number of extras in the group. For example, a group of 4 extras has 12 Stamina. (See page 84 in Act Three: Directing ScreenPlay for information on handling extras in a group.)

Stamina

In ScreenPlay, the story is told through the eyes of the main characters. Without them, there is no story worth telling. But without an element of danger and the risk of losing those characters (and therefore losing the story), all of these rules simply allow for a nice and tidy turn-based night around the campfire. Stamina is the measurement for how long a character will remain in the story or in an individual scene and is also used to "cheat" at the core rules of the game, if you will.

Optional Rule: Name That Stamina

The use of "Stamina" is actually a default term for stories across the board, but it may not always be the best fit for tales of intrigue, suspense, horror, and infinite other possibilities. If the term "Stamina" doesn't fit your particular story... change it! A story based on the Chthulu mythology could have characters fighting to maintain their Sanity, a group of thieves seeking the perfect heist might track their Freedom, and the legend of arctic warriors battling the frigid wasteland's touch seek to maintain Warmth. Whatever you choose to call your version of Stamina, it all works the same.

The catar are extras and act as a group. As there are six of them (as described by Kieron when he initiated them), the catar have 18 Stamina (3 per individual x 6). The Director can choose to remove individual catar for every 3 points of damage the group suffers or wait until their overall Stamina runs down to 0 before they are all removed from the scene.

Whenever a character suffers damage, her Stamina is reduced by that amount. Once a character reaches 0 Stamina, she is removed from the scene in accordance with the wishes of the character who caused the final damage – characters can be killed and permanently removed from the story, knocked unconscious and removed from the scene (or temporarily, depending on the particular story crafted), forced to reveal their secrets during a confession, tossed over a cliff and unavailable until the following scene... there's no end to how this finality can be applied. Their fate is in the victor's hands. These characters could potentially remain in the scene, but anyone with 0 Stamina cannot attempt complication rolls or provide more than a single detail in their description.

Stamina can also be used to apply additional tactics for lead and supporting characters – these options are **not available for extras** unless they are assigned during character creation. By spending Stamina, these characters can accomplish the options below. They cannot spend more than 1 Stamina at a time for any single option, but there is no limit to how many times a character can benefit from these options in a turn, round, or scene.

> **Shift:** Characters can spend 1 Stamina to increase or decrease the result of a die roll (either one they rolled or one rolled against their character) by 1. For example, if an opponent rolls an 8 on its complication roll, a character can spend 1 Stamina to reduce it to a 7 and choose her own complication. (See the section on Complications below.) In turn, the other character involved in the complication roll can also shift the result, but both characters can only shift the result once.

> **Interrupt:** A character who has yet to act in the current round can spend 1 Stamina to cut in line. The player can choose whether she wants to interrupt before another player is chosen, after a character's description is provided, or just before another character attempts a complication roll.

Retaliate: Immediately following a complication roll, regardless of its success or failure, a character can spend 1 Stamina to make a complication roll against the opposing character who just completed a complication roll against her, even if the character has already provided a description in the current round.

Remove a Complication: A character can spend 1 Stamina to remove a complication with one detail instead of a full description.

Receiving a slash to the side of his face, Mauser is not impressed and neither is Fraser. He spends 1 Stamina and decides to retaliate against the catar by blasting it in the face with the Winchester.

Stamina can also be regained at the end of a scene or actively restored when a character is treated by another character during the scene.

Regaining Stamina: At the end of a scene, all characters regain half of their current Stamina (rounded down) to no more than their maximum Stamina. The Director may also choose additional moments in the story where characters can regain Stamina due to lengthy periods of time between scenes or other reasons.

Healing Stamina: A character can use her description to actively treat any injuries or replenish her energy or that of another character. If a character does so on herself, she regains 3 Stamina. If a character does so for another character, that character gains 4 Stamina. Healing any character requires a full description.

> **Starting A New Scene From 0 Stamina:** Any character allowed to continue participating in a story after she's reduced to 0 Stamina begins the next scene with 3 Stamina.

As the last catar is thrown through the shuttered window, landing in a heap on the street outside the Tea House, Mauser is left with 11 Stamina while Jade Palm took a harsher beating with only 6 Stamina remaining. The Director declares the scene over and each character automatically regains some of their Stamina: Mauser is restored to 15 (half of 11 = 5.5 rounded down to 5 Stamina) and Jade begins the next scene at 9 Stamina (half of 6 = 3).

Growing Stronger
(AKA Stamina Increases)

Characters – especially lead characters – do not remain static as the story progresses. The deeper a character moves into the plot, the more is revealed about his dreams, his fears, his strengths and weaknesses. We learn more about him as the story progresses and develop a deeper connection, sometimes deep enough that we want them to carry on and have greater importance to the plot.

In ScreenPlay, Stamina controls how long a character will remain in the story, and the more Stamina is at their disposal the more important he becomes. A lead character's maximum Stamina can only be increased by redeeming milestones, which are earned by achieving essential plot points in the story. Supporting characters at the Director's disposal can begin the story with higher Stamina than normal. As such, these characters are also stronger, faster, smarter, and wittier than their counterparts, a facet represented by higher potentials, step bonuses, and more benefits awarded as a character increases their maximum Stamina.

Use the following chart to unlock character expansions during the course of a story. You can also use this chart to create stronger characters, such as major supporting characters, right from the get-go. Every + provided on this table refers to the number of Stamina above a character type's starting total. For example, a supporting character with 12 Stamina would have +5 Stamina (12 – the standard amount of 7 Stamina = 5) and could increase one potential by +1 steps.

Maximum Stamina	Benefits/Improvements
3	This character is an extra. If acting as part of a group, the total Stamina equals the number of extras x3. Extras only have a single d6 potential. (Extras do not gain additional benefits by increasing their Stamina as a group.)
7	This is the base Stamina for supporting characters, whether they are played by a Writer or Director. Each supporting character has two potentials, one listed at d8 and the other at d6.
15	This is the base Stamina for a lead character. Each one begins with three potentials, one listed at d8 and the remaining two at d6.
+5	Increase one potential by +1 steps.
+10	Gain a permanent +1 bonus to a single potential of your choice.
+15	Increase one potential by +1 steps OR gain a new d6 potential.
+20	Gain a permanent +1 bonus to a single potential of your choice.
+25	Increase one potential by +1 steps OR gain a new d8 potential.
+30	Gain a permanent +1 bonus to a single potential of your choice.
+35	Increase one potential by +1 steps.

Going Full Circle

With characters in hand, it's time to start telling your story. What follows is a breakdown of how all players do exactly that using their characters and other aspects such as outcomes, complication rolls, milestones, and more.

Rather than have everyone shouting out descriptions at random and potentially creating a messy experience, ScreenPlay establishes some ground rules for how to expand on the story and watch it come to life bit-by-bit until the screen fades to black. We're going to briefly highlight the features of gameplay here before detailing them further in this section.

All stories are broken down into scenes and each scene is discussed by both the Directors and the Writers to determine its goal (what the lead characters seek to achieve as a whole and/or individually), which lead and Writer-controlled supporting characters are involved, and when the scene will come to an end. Once this has been established, the Director will provide an opening shot detailing the setting, points of interest, supporting characters, and any other essential elements needed to help the Writers begin the scene. The Director will then choose a Writer to begin the scene or one can simply volunteer to begin.

Within each scene are rounds where all players have an opportunity to provide a description for each of their currently active characters. Each of these opportunities is known as a turn and involves a single character in a player's repertoire; once a character has completed a turn, she cannot take another turn in the same round unless she spends Stamina (see above).

Scenes

A scene is a particular moment in the story defined by any previous scenes and the goal(s) agreed upon by the players prior to the opening shot.

Before a scene can begin, all players discuss where they wish to take the story and how their characters can accomplish it. Once an agreement has been reached, the Director will clarify some or all of the following components of the scene as needed;

> **What is the goal of the scene?** What are the characters trying to accomplish and when will the scene end? Different characters may have different goals or individual objectives to meet a single goal.
>
> **Which characters will begin the scene?** Knowing who's involved in the scene helps shape the scene's goals, setting, and more.
>
> **Where will the scene take place?** A scene's duration is not limited to a particular location and it's also recommended to start a scene at an interesting point in the plot (for example, not every scene needs to demonstrate the characters travelling to a location).

Once these factors have been clearly established and all are in agreement, the Director will begin the scene with the opening shot and the first Writer will be selected to begin.

Opening Shot

Each scene officially begins with the Director providing an opening shot (typically known in roleplaying games as "read-aloud text," but seeing as most scenes are not predetermined in scripted adventures, this term no longer applies). It is used to establish the setting, characters involved, and provide context, visual details, and other key ingredients the Writers can use for their characters' turns.

Feel free to embellish as you see fit in whatever manner suits your personal style. As ScreenPlay seeks to emulate the movie making experience, you may wish to use camera shots (i.e. "We fade in from black to a wide shot of a green field...") or simply lay down what the characters see in a couple of short and sweet sentences. How Directors use the opening shot can help set the tone for Writers. The more specific you are, the better.

At the end of the opening shot, the Director will choose a Writer or one of his characters to begin the scene with the first turn or a Writer can volunteer to start first. The Director can spend 1 **challenge** to choose himself to start the scene.

Rounds

When every character currently involved in a scene has completed a turn, a round is complete and a new one begins. Characters can only take one turn per round and certain **roles**' special abilities are limited to once per round. Spending Stamina to retaliate does not count towards a character's turn in a round.

Turns

Once per round, every active character in a scene has an opportunity to provide a description and discover its outcome. The same rules apply to all characters and work in the following order:

1. The character is chosen to take his turn by the previous character (even if it was the last acting character in the previous round) or by the Director to start the scene. The chosen character cannot have already provided a description in the current round.

2. The character announces the chosen potential and determines how many details are allowed in the description.

3. The character provides a description.

4. The Director determines if there are any step modifiers and triggers, including a complication roll. If so, it is played out accordingly and used to help determine the outcome.

5. If the current player is a Writer, the Director will provide an outcome. If the current player is the Director, a Writer will provide the outcome. This Writer may be the one controlling the character affected by the Director's character or not.

6. The character chooses who will go next in the round or who will start the next round.

It's Your Turn

On a player's turn, he will provide a description of how his character will take the information already presented and use it to move the story forward, no matter how minor or major that may be. These descriptions are built using details, a set number of breakdowns or components based on a chosen potential from the currently active character. Each potential is assigned a number of steps to determine a dice value ranging from a d4 to a d12, and these steps will determine how many details can be provided in a description. When a Writer completes a description, the Director provides an **outcome** revealing how the other elements affected by the description respond. When a Director completes a description, a Writer provides the outcome using the same applications and guidelines.

Certain descriptions and outcomes will **trigger** a particular reaction or demand from the characters involved. This trigger can be created spontaneously during play by the Director while the most common trigger is a **complication roll**. This roll is triggered when the description or outcome can result in a possible complication for either character involved, including but not limited to damage. Whoever activated the trigger will roll her potential's dice against a **Difficulty**, determined either by another character or the situation itself. Various factors, including **range**, can determine any additional modifiers to the roll. How the complication roll fares against the Difficulty will determine if, and to whom, a **complication** occurs; the severity is also determined by whether or not the dice rolled an even or an odd number. If anyone rolls the highest possible value on a die, it is considered an **absolute** and cannot be altered in any way.
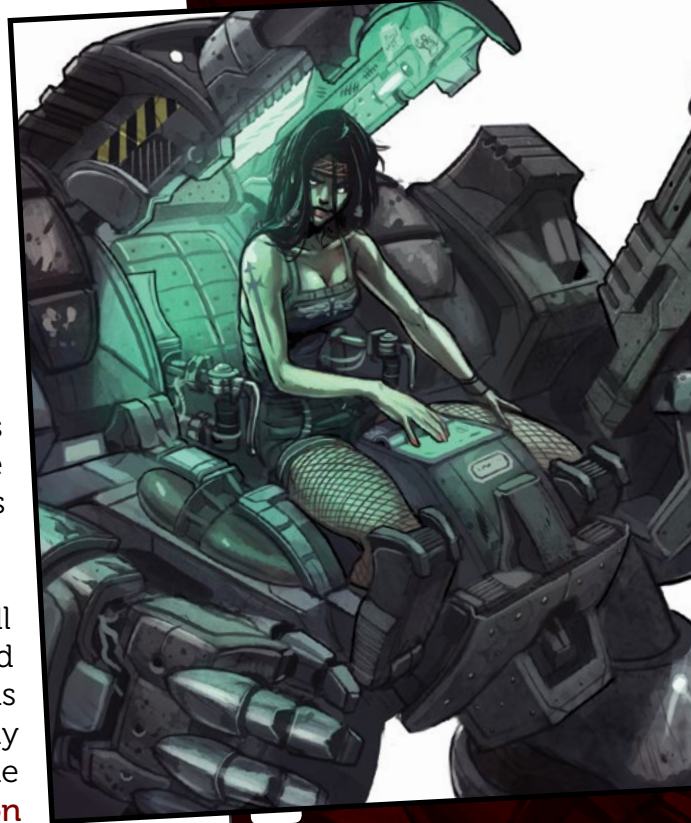
Presenting Outcomes

Unlike descriptions, outcomes are not limited and provide a lot of flexibility in how they are presented. It may actually be easier to list what they cannot do rather than what they can.

> **Outcomes cannot provide actions or responses that would technically count as descriptions.** They can only react to the events established in the description and any possible complications introduced. This means characters involved in an outcome cannot perform anything that counts as an action, only as a reaction.
>
> **The Rule of Initiatives applies in all outcomes.** If an initiating player disagrees with a character's involvement in an outcome, she can ask for a revision.
>
> **While there is no technical limit to an outcome's length, it should never run longer than a minute long.** This is simply for common courtesy to the other players and to help keep the game moving at an acceptable pace. This is more of a recommendation than a guideline and some outcomes work best when a player runs a little long.

Otherwise, an outcome is a means of providing an incredibly freeform monologue by a player that can help move the story along as well as provide reactions and results of the triggering descriptions. If a description is used to open a door, the outcome is the initial

Outcomes

For every description, there is an outcome reacting to the description provided and offering an account of what happens as a result. Outcomes are always provided by another player other than the one who provided the description; Directors always provide one for a Writer's description and a Writer must provide one for a Director's description.

An outcome must be directly based on its triggering description and can insert additional information or provide anything that would equate to a description attempted outside of another character's turn so long as they are provided as a reaction to the triggering description. For example, an outcome may provide a supporting character's verbal response to a question and include details vital to the story. If the outcome is based on a complication roll, it must comply with the complications determined by the roll.

Outcomes based on standard, non-conflict descriptions must provide an appropriate response and offer relevant information, even if that information is an indirect no, yet still help move the story forward and make room for the next character's description to try something related. For example, the outcome to searching a university professor's desk for a map to the Lost Treasure of Ankhurk could result in no map whatsoever, but the Director informs the characters that they've found a small and worn journal bound by a thick elastic band. On another character's turn, this journal could reveal clues as to the location of the Lost Treasure, though the significance of this journal does not have to be explicitly indicated. The Director may offer a denial if a character's description has no relevance to the story whatsoever, though it is recommended that a Director, to the best of her ability, always find a way to make descriptions work.

Once an outcome has been provided for a character, his turn is complete and the character must choose another player to go next.

Triggers

Whenever an event occurs in the story that warrants an immediate reaction, such as when a burglar waits for the guards to round the corner before making a dash for the basement window, a trigger is set and activated. During the course of the story, descriptions may invoke triggers for a variety of reasons. The most common trigger is the complication roll (see below) and is set to go off whenever a description attempts to place a complication on another character, as per the Directors' judgment.

Triggers are created at the spur of the moment so long as the trigger is directly related to something in the description. For example, our burglar creeps down a shadowy hallway and this triggers the motion detectors set to go off whenever someone passes through without deactivating them. Triggers can be avoided, sometimes without the Writers even knowing they existed or actively learning of the danger they've avoided. Using the above example, if the burglar had sprayed a fine mist down the hall, he could have seen the infrared laser beams lining the floor and avoided automatically setting off the trigger. Without disarming them, however, the Director can alter the trigger to go off whenever the burglar fails a complication roll to climb along the walls to the other end of the hallway.

Characters Setting Triggers: Any character can set a trigger on her turn by declaring it with a single detail. A character can use 1 detail to set a trigger, creating a moment in which that character will hold the remainder of her description until a particular event of her

discovery inside. If a description is throwing someone through a plate glass window thanks to a complication roll, the outcome is the moment in which the glass shatters and that character somehow finds herself grabbing hold of a ledge and hanging on for dear life.

For Directors, outcomes can be the tool in which the style, cinematography, choreography, framing and other moviemaking aspects can come to life. Think of descriptions, complication rolls, and all other in-game elements leading up to the outcome as the writing on the page; it exists well before any film crew gets involved. The outcome is how a movie looks on the big screen or in the comfort of the viewer's home. It's how Michael Bay's movies look compared to Steven Spielberg's. That is what an outcome provides to the game.

Use whatever tools or methods you like based on the format chosen at the beginning of the story. (See more on formats in Act Three: Directing ScreenPlay.) Set up an outcome with camera shots and lighting styles, get in depth with physical descriptions and minute details, or simply provide a general impression for other players to embellish with future descriptions. Outcomes are what help make your story unique and build up the next description from another player. They are equal to descriptions in plot development and excitement. Have fun with them!

determination has occurred. When this event takes place (known as "setting off the trigger"), the character can use however many remaining details from her previous description at the moment the trigger is set off. It works similar to an interrupt, except no Stamina need be spent. Holding/maintaining a trigger uses the same rules as preparing/concentrating, but if that character does anything to jeopardize her readiness to react to the trigger, it's automatically cancelled.

For example, racing up the top of the stairs, Jane discovers a half-opened doorway and rushes inside, slamming the door closed. Raising her broken metal pipe over her head, she gets ready to smash it over the next person to walk through that door. Now if we assume she used a potential with a maximum of 3 details available, discovering and running through the door is one, setting the trigger is her 2nd detail, meaning that when her triggers goes off, regardless of which round, she can only provide 1 detail. If she makes a complication roll, which is likely, she'll do it with a d8 as she did on her original description. For every additional round she has to hold that trigger, she must spend 1 detail, leaving her two additional details per round to do other things… unless she describes herself walking away from the door. And a very malicious Director could even pounce on a certain someone turning her head away for a brief moment.

Using Challenges For Spontaneous Triggers: By spending 1 challenge, a Director can create a trigger within a scene. This can be spent as soon as a Writer finishes his description, after a particular detail, at the beginning of a scene, or whenever the characters enter a particular location.

Damage Triggers: Certain supporting characters, mainly the major villains of the story, are designed to give the lead characters a run for their money. These supporting characters have special triggers known as damage triggers set to go off whenever they take damage or suffer particular complications. These work exactly as if the character retaliated but without spending any Stamina. As a default, these triggers will only affect those who set off the trigger (meaning the attacking character).

Complications

Not everything will go a character's way and when it doesn't, that's a complication doing its job. A complication is a forced limitation, viewpoint, penalty, or damage placed on a character as the result of a complication roll. Depending on the nature of the complication applied and whether or not the Director redeems a challenge to extend it further into the story (or even make it permanent), they can only be removed by using descriptions or spending Stamina to expand on how a character handles and confronts these complications.

Whoever created the complication assigns it a name based on how it functions within the scene. Complications are designed for creativity on the fly and to suit the situation at hand. Think of a complication as an effect placed upon a character as the result of bad luck or the concentrated effort of another character in the scene. If a character effectively grapples an opponent as the result of a complication roll, that character is complicating the other's desire to walk away or accomplish something else requiring the full use of his body. Once applied in a scene, the complication must be removed or incorporated into the scene, which typically makes things harder for the affected character.

Once a complication has been introduced to the scene and affects a character, it lasts until the end of the current scene or until it has been actively removed by the affected character. (Damage automatically lasts longer than the end of the current scene, but can be recovered by regaining Stamina, healing, or other means.) Removing any complication (other than damage) requires the character to use a full description detailing how he counters it, copes with it, or whatever method seems best at the moment. Each of the four types of complications below provides description guidelines for removing them. Stamina can also be spent to reduce the description down to a single detail, leaving the character free to perform other feats on his next turn. See the section on Stamina above for more information.

> OUT OF AMMO (RESTRICTION COMPLICATION): YOUR GUN CANNOT FIRE ANY MORE BULLETS UNTIL ITS RELOADED.
>
> YOU CAN RING MY BELL (PENALTY COMPLICATION): ALL YOU HEAR ARE BELLS RINGING IN YOUR EARS, MAKING IT HARD TO HEAR WHAT'S ACTUALLY GOING ON AROUND YOU.
>
> IT CAME FROM UPSTAIRS (INCEPTION COMPLICATION): YOU BELIEVE THE NOISE CAME FROM UPSTAIRS.

There are four types of complications available in ScreenPlay. Any is available through complication rolls and can be adapted to suit the scene.

Penalty: The affected character suffers a -1 step penalty to a single potential, but only after the character creating the penalty spends 1 Stamina. Multiple penalties can compound this penalty until the character is reduced to the base step of d4/1/1. Removing this complication requires the character to describe how she has countered or removed the penalty altogether.

Restriction: This complication removes a character's access to a single prop, set piece, other aspects already introduced to the scene, even parts of her own body until the complication is removed. It prevents a character from being able to use a weapon, consider a previous statement, notice an object in the corner, use her left hand, or many other possibilities from the descriptions. Removing this complication requires the character to describe how she is able to remove the restriction.

Inception: The affected character is lead to believe something that is not true or re-interpret information from a different viewpoint. Until this complication is removed, the character may believe he heard a noise upstairs, become convinced a guilty person is harmless, or run the wrong way in a chase. Removing this complication requires the character to describe how he has come to believe the truth without using the falsehood as evidence.

Damage: Physical, mental, or emotional harm is inflicted on the affected character and he loses a number of Stamina equal to the difference between the complication roll's result above the Difficulty plus any applied resource's damage bonus. Regardless of how damage is inflicted multiple times in a scene, it all compounds as the character's resilience is worn down, meaning it is plausible for a single character to suffer physical damage as well as endure emotional abuse and feel their sanity slipping away. When the character is reduced to 0 Stamina, he is removed from the scene in a manner chosen by the character inflicting the damage. Damage can be healed using the rules provided for Stamina on page 45.

Jade Palm completes a spinning backwards kick and connects with a catar, sending it stumbling backwards and over the side of the building. Kieron assigns the Hanging On For Dear Life complication (a restriction) and the outcome portrays the catar dangling precariously from a window ledge thanks to its sharp claws, unable to use its feet as it hangs above the street. The Director must use a full description for this particular catar to regain proper footing as it's an extra and cannot spend Stamina to shortcut it to a single detail.

On her next turn, Jade Palm dodges the slashing claws of a catar by bending over backwards and grabbing its wrists to prevent herself from falling onto her back. Using the catar as leverage, she pulls herself back up, twists its arms underneath her armpits, and dislocates one of the catar's shoulders with a quick snap. This is done as a penalty complication and the catar now suffers a -1 step penalty whenever it tries to do anything with its arms until it uses a description to reset the injury. Doing so requires Jade Palm to spend 1 Stamina.

Mauser opens fire with his mare's leg (a resource providing a +2 damage bonus) and rolls a 4 against a Difficulty of 3. Choosing damage as the complication, he causes 3 damage (1 for the difference and +2 for the mare's leg).

Complications vs. Descriptions: A complication can only come into play as the result of a complication roll or from the Director spending a challenge. Descriptions and outcomes can offer details that sound like a complication; they simply have no mechanical effect for the purpose of the game. For example, one character can punch another character and fully connect with that punch, but there is no effect unless it comes from a complication.
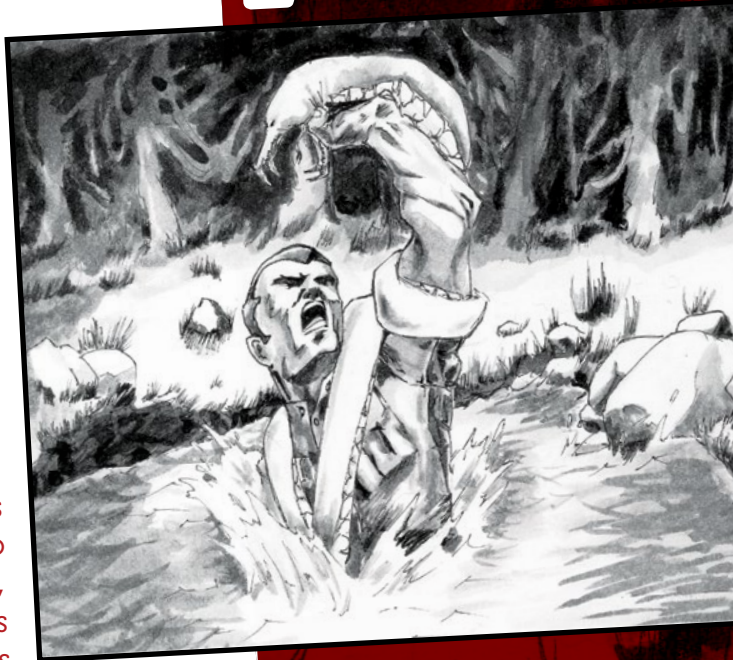
There's nothing to say a player cannot describe her character grappling with an opponent before declaring a key detail, such as a punch to the face. It simply means that unless she actively creates or becomes affected by a complication, these details are minor to the point that they do not properly weigh down a character in any way.

Removing Another Character's Complication: Aside from damage, one character can help remove another's complication by using a full description as if she were removing it from herself. The character cannot spend Stamina to reduce this to a single detail.

Complication Rolls

Whenever a description could result in a character facing a complication, a complication roll is triggered. The describing character rolls his chosen potential's dice against an appropriate Difficulty to first determine if it will be effective or ineffective. If the dice roll equals or exceeds the Difficulty, it is effective and the targeted character must now deal with a complication. Otherwise, the roll is ineffective and the rolling character risks something bad happening to them in return.

Complication rolls are only intended to determine if a complication will occur; if it's simply a matter of a description's overall success or failure, **the character should always succeed.** When it comes down to someone trying to increase the difficulty of accomplishing a current or future description, that's when complication rolls comes into play. If one character is described as locking her arms around an opponent to hold them at bay, the success of grappling an opponent is not what the complication roll is deciphering; it's how effective that grapple is. If the complication roll is ineffective, discretion is left to the players on how to provide the outcome and it may include "missing the target" entirely for the sheer sake of believability. That grapple could still occur, but it can be easily shrugged off by the grappled target that it's barely worth any effort on their next turn. Whatever the result of a complication roll may be, it becomes part of the outcome and it used to move the story forward, even if that movement is slowed or halted by the complication.

The Director is the final arbiter on whether a complication roll is triggered by a description. There may be times when the Director decides to spend challenges and force a character to make a complication roll. These are known as challenge-based complication rolls and function as the Director attempting to complicate the scene by applying location-based obstacles, such as a slick floor caused by recent rainfall. See Challenges on page 67 for more information.

Determining whether or not a complication occurs and which player creates it is based on whether the die roll was even- or odd-numbered. Consult the list below to determine the results and use them to craft an outcome to the description. "Roller" refers to the character rolling dice and "target" refers to the character setting the Difficulty.

Complication Roll Result	Vs. Opponent	Challenge
Effective with an Even Number	The target gains a complication chosen by the roller.	Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Stamina.
Effective with an Odd Number	The target gains a complication chosen by the target.	Avoid the challenge.
Ineffective with an Even Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the roller. The roller can choose to receive no complication, but will receive 1 milestone if a complication is chosen.	
Ineffective with an Odd Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the target.	The roller gains a complication chosen by the Director.

JADE PALM LEAPS INTO THE AIR AND PERFORMS A SIDEWAYS BARREL ROLL IN THE AIR BEFORE EXTENDING HER ARMS AND LEGS OUTWARDS TO STRIKE THE FOUR CATAR HUDDLED AT THE FAR END OF THE HALL. ROLLING HER JADE PALM STYLE POTENTIAL OF D8 AGAINST A DIFFICULTY OF 3 (THEY ARE EXTRAS, AFTER ALL) — SHE ROLLS A 1. THIS LEAVES HER FACING A COMPLICATION CREATED BY THE DIRECTOR, WHO WRITES FOR THE CATAR, BUT JADE DECIDES NOT TO TAKE THAT RISK AND SPENDS 1 STAMINA TO SHIFT THE ROLL TO A 2. KIERON THINKS FOR A MOMENT AND DECIDES TO GIVE HIS CHARACTER THE SURROUNDED COMPLICATION, RESTRICTING HER FROM LEAVING HER CURRENT SPOT UNTIL SHE REMOVES THIS COMPLICATION. THE DIRECTOR PROVIDES AN OUTCOME: "THERE IS A FLURRY OF PUNCHES AND FEET TO THE FACE AS JADE PALM'S IMPRESSIVE MANEUVER DOES INDEED CONNECT WITH ALL FOUR OF

these creatures, just not enough to have an effect. Jade now finds herself smack in the middle of the crowd, all of them leaning forward with claws at the ready to finish off their prey."

Mauser's next turn provides a rather simple description: he takes aim at the next catar he sees and unloads a furious barrage of non-stop shots from his mare's leg. Rolling a d10 (by applying his Rifle-slinger potential of a d8 and +1 step from the mare's leg) against a Difficulty of 3 for the catar, he ends up with an 8. Chuckling with delight, Fraser states his sole purpose is "blow a hole in its chest" and that means damage becomes the complication. Since the die rolled an 8 and the Difficulty was 3, that means the catar takes 5 damage. Or a giant hole in its chest.

Absolutes

Whenever a character rolls the highest value on complication rolls, such as an 8 on a d8, it's considered an absolute and cannot be shifted by another character. The character that rolled an absolute can spend Stamina to shift his own result.

The catar have removed their Scared Of Loud Noises complication and the Director describes them moving forward to attack Jade Palm. Rolling a 6 on their Catlike Agility d6 potential, it's an absolute! Kieron cannot spend any of Jade Palm's Stamina to shift the result down to 5, which would have allowed him to choose the complication instead.

Difficulties

Target numbers set down in complication rolls are known as Difficulties and they come from two sources: other characters or situations based on the Director playing a challenge.

Whenever a complication roll is attempted against another character in a scene, the targeted character (meaning the one who is being rolled against) chooses a potential to defend against the attempt and the Difficulty is based on that choice. All other rules and applications for potentials apply here as normal, including step modifiers (see Steps for details on step modifiers).

Whenever a challenge-based complication roll is made to attempt a feat that is challenged by the Director (meaning she spends at least 1 challenge during a Writer's description), a Difficulty Level is assigned based on the number of challenges spent.

Challenges	Difficulty Level	Difficulty
1	Tricky	5
2	Damn Hard	7
3	Foolhardy	9

Lowering Difficulties: Every challenge-based complication roll's Difficulty is never lower than a 5 unless reduced by step modifiers and therefore possible for these Difficulties to be reduced to 1. This does make it automatic for the complication roll to be effective and so this roll simply comes down to which character (the roller or the target) chooses the complication.

Range

Distance plays a crucial role when it comes to matters such as combat, stealth, perception, and any number of additional situations players concoct. Rather than work with actual measurements, ScreenPlay keeps everything in broad range categories in relation to the character attempting to complicate.

To move from one range to another, a character must provide at least one detail to make the change in the list below. The only exception is the Impossible range (see below). Additional details in the same description make no difference, but a character can use her full description to move across two ranges (such as being Far from an opponent and using a full description to run up to Melee for the next round). The Director has final say on the maximum

range for a complication roll based on the description provided or may choose to apply any resource-based maximum ranges (see below). For example, attempting to convince someone to not jump off a bridge can be done from Far away.

Melee: Anything and anyone standing within immediate reach of the character is considered in melee range. Characters must be in this range to use melee weapons, grapple, punch, kick, or any similar complication against a target.

Close: Further away than melee yet still within stepping distance, a character must use at least one detail to provide movement towards the target object or character to treat it as melee range. Thrown weapons, such as knives, can be used without penalty.

Far: Too far away for movement, a character must be able to attempt the complication roll from a distance, such as a ranged weapons or to spot an enemy's approach from far away.

Impossible: Reaching anything in this range cannot be done reliably. The Director will determine how many descriptions are required to move from Impossible to Far range (if applicable).

Maximum Range: All resources have a maximum range limiting them to the best range. Applying these resources to a target further than its maximum range requires an additional step penalty per additional range category applied to a complication roll. Use the following factors to determine a resource's maximum range.

Unless otherwise specified when assigned to a resource slot, all resources default to the Melee range.

If a resource is intended or designed to be thrown or is a one-handed ranged weapon (such as a firearm), its maximum range is Close.

If a resource is designed exclusively as a two-handed ranged weapon, its maximum range is Far.

Jade Palm leaps down through the shattered skylight to escape from the three remaining catar on the roof. Normally, the distance alone would take her from Melee to Close range, but the hole in the floor immediately under the skylight means Jade will fall right through the floor and end up Far from the catar still on the roof. If she was to run up the stairs and return to the roof, she would either need two descriptions with one detail each dedicated solely towards movement or provide one full description of Jade running up the stairs and jumping up onto the roof.

Advantages

Dramatic moments come and go in the blink of an eye and there are many things characters will accomplish in the blink of an eye. Others can endure for a brief period of time and sometimes there's something that carries a strong impact on other characters in the story. That's where advantages come into play.

An advantage is a benefit one character provides to another or a group of characters and always works in the form of either a step or damage bonus (similar to a resource). Providing an advantage simply requires spending 1 Stamina to activate and the use of at least 1 detail until the start of the character's next turn in the following round. Maintaining an advantage over additional rounds requires the same character use the same number of details applied in activating the advantage so that it continues to provide its benefits until the start of the character's next turn and so forth until the advantage is no longer maintained.

Mauser provides covering fire to give Jade Palm a helping hand finishing off the remaining catar. With a single detail, Mauser now provides a damage bonus advantage to Jade Palm's complication rolls as they work together, despite being total strangers. This bonus lasts until the start of Mauser's next turn and he decides to keep it going for one more round, applying another detail in his next description to maintain the advantage.

Under Control

Throughout the story, all Writers will be rewarded for accomplishing certain broad and specific plot goals for the story, known as **milestones**. As the Writers accumulate milestones, they can use them to increase a character's maximum Stamina, re-roll dice, and more. Directors, on the other hand, collect tokens called **challenges** based on the successful ventures of the Writers; the easier things get for the Writers, the more challenges a Director collects. Challenges are later redeemed by the Director to slightly alter the current events of a scene, to increase the scene's intensity, and/or force the Writers to think outside of the box.

Milestones

Moving the story forward is, perhaps, the ultimate goal in ScreenPlay (though it actually takes a back seat to the real goal – having fun!). Milestones are a point system rewarding Writers for creating an engaging story and following the tenets of great storytelling as well as working with the treatment provided by the Director. (What's a treatment, you ask? That's to come in Act Three, so hold tight.)

Milestones are assigned to the Writers as a reward for excellent gameplay, use of motivations, and general accomplishments that help move the story forward. From there, a Writer can choose to redeem milestones for any of her characters, lead or supporting, even if a chosen character was not involved in how a Writer received a milestone in the first place. It is possible to receive more than 1 milestone per scene and they are only handed at the end of a scene. Writers can track their total milestones in a pool using poker chips or tallied on a separate piece of paper or immediately assign them to characters as soon as they are awarded.

If a Writer meets any of the following criteria, he will receive milestones for every character portrayed in a scene. For example, if a Writer plays two characters and only one of them accomplished a goal in a scene, only 1 milestone is awarded.

Introducing Potentials: At the beginning of a story, Writers receive 1 milestone for each lead character's potential introduced without the aid of a complication roll. For example, a character with the Defender of the Innocent potential earns his Writer 1 milestone when he is introduced to the story feeding the poor at a soup kitchen. This is a one-time award. If a character triggers a complication roll at any point and time in the story, a milestone cannot be earned this way. Use the checkboxes next to each potential on the character notes when a milestone is awarded in the story or when it is no longer eligible.

Achieving Goals: Every character who accomplished a goal in a scene, whether it is a shared goal or an individual one, earns the Writer 1 milestone. If a character connected one of her motivations to successfully achieving a scene's goal, the Writer gains an additional milestone. You cannot apply more than one motivation for this purpose.

Closing Motivations: If a character closes a motivation during the course of the story, her gains 1 milestone for every motivation closed to that point. For example, if a character closes her first motivation, she gains 1 milestone. After closing the second motivation, she gains 2 more milestones. Once a closed motivation earns a Writer milestones, no further milestones can be earned from that motivation.

There are numerous ways milestones can be used during a Writer's turn or in between scenes and all of them are detailed below.

Additional Resources: A Writer can redeem 5 milestones to permanently gain an additional resource slot for one of her characters. This can only be achieved between scenes.

Combine Step and Damage Bonuses: A Writer can redeem 1 milestone to apply both the step and damage bonus of a single resource applied to a complication roll. It costs a cumulative +1 milestones for every additional use of this application in a single session.

Complication Re-Roll: A Writer can redeem 1 milestone to re-roll one of his complication rolls immediately after it is rolled and before complications (if any) are applied. Whatever the new result, it must be honoured and multiple milestones can be redeemed for the same complication roll.

Increased Maximum Stamina: A Writer can redeem 3 milestones to increase a character's maximum Stamina by 1. This can only be achieved between scenes and if the character starts the next scene at full Stamina.

Make a Comeback!: By redeeming milestones, a Writer can bring back one of her characters who was removed from the story after being reduced to 0 Stamina. The character re-enters the story with 3 Stamina and cannot make a second comeback. A supporting character's comeback requires at least 7 milestones while a lead character requires at least 15 milestones.

FRASER ROLLS MAUSER'S RIFLE-SLINGER D8 POTENTIAL AND ENDS UP WITH A 3 VERSUS A DIFFICULTY OF 5. EVEN BY SHIFTING THE RESULT BY SPENDING 1 STAMINA, THE ROLL WILL STILL FAIL AND SO FRASER CHOOSES TO SPEND 1 MILESTONE AND RE-ROLL IT COMPLETELY. LUCKILY, IT PAYS OFF AND HE NOW HAS A 7 TO GAIN A SUCCESS.

Challenges

Along with assisting the Writers in developing their story, the Director's secondary role is to excite and surprise them. Not to say the Writers cannot create their own exhilarating tales, but it can become far too easy for Writers to always write in their favour. That's where challenges come into play.

In the same way that Writers collect milestones for moving the story forward, Directors gain challenges as the lead characters delve deeper into their exploits and engage in incredible adventures. The short and sure-fire way to explain challenges is that Directors gain challenges to ensure the Writers are... well, challenged.

Whenever any of the following events take place during a scene, the Director gains challenges. Challenges carry over for the duration of the story until spent.

> **At the start of every new story, Directors begin with 1 challenge per Writer.** Whether stockpiled for later or used right away, it's always good to have some ammo under the belt.

> **A Writer rolls an absolute.** Whenever a Writer naturally rolls the best possible result on her complication roll (without shifting), the Director gains 1 challenge.

> **All lead characters achieve a scene's goal.** When all Writers receive milestones for achieving the scene's goal, the Director also gains 1 challenge. The Director can gain no more than 1 challenge, regardless of how many milestones are awarded to individual Writers.

A single challenge can be redeemed in the same way a milestone can, except these allow the Director to make a slight alteration to the scene for the purpose of pitting the characters against a stronger threat. At any point during a player's turn, the Director can spend 1 challenge (or more) to accomplish one of the following.

> **Place a complication on a character.** This complication does not occur until after a complication roll (regardless of the result) or after the Writer has completed a description for that character. Directors cannot inflict damage on a character using a challenge and must use 2 challenges to inflict a penalty. If a challenge is used to place a complication on a character after a failed complication roll, the complication

must be different from the rolled attempt. For example, if a Director attempted to trip a character and failed, she cannot spend a challenge to trip the character anyways.

Increase the duration of a complication. Directors can extend the duration of a complication the moment it is placed on a character by spending a certain number of challenges. This means character afflicted with these complications cannot use descriptions or Stamina to remove them and must instead endure its effects for as long as the Director chooses. Damage cannot be extended using challenges.

- For 1 challenge, the complication remains until the end of the current scene.
- For 2 challenges, the complication remains until the end of the current session.
- And the deadliest of them all, 3 challenges allows the complication to become a hindrance for the remainder of the story.

Force a situation-based complication roll. The Director can spend a certain number of challenges and force a Writer to make a complication roll against a Difficulty Level (see Difficulties).

- With 1 challenge, the roll is attempted against a Tricky Difficulty of 5.
- With 2 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Damn Hard Difficulty of 7.
- With 3 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Foolhardy Difficulty of 9.

Alter a set piece to create an additional danger requiring a full description to counter or bypass. This danger can come in the form of changing the setting or introducing opposing characters to start a fight scene. For example, characters racing to escape from a burning building suddenly discover the staircase leading to the main floor has collapsed. These alterations can interrupt the middle of a character's description and it must be plausible for characters to use descriptions to eliminate, overcome, or avoid these dangers.

Choose a supporting character to start a scene after the opening shot. This allows the Director to get a leg up on events in a scene, including triggering a complication roll.

Create a spontaneous trigger. By spending 1 challenge, the Director creates a trigger based on the information provided by the Writers at the start of a scene, in response to a character's description or a single detail, or when the characters enter a location.

Use a character's hindrance to create a complication. Drafting an applicable reason why the hindrance would complicate matters for the character, the Director can spend 1 challenge to create a restriction or inception complication with the hindrance and 2 challenges to create a penalty complication.

Leaping down from the rooftop through the shattered skylight, a catar lands on top of Mauser. Rather than simply pinning him down, the Director spends 1 challenge to cause the two to fall through the floor and create a gaping hole underneath the skylight. Now if anyone wants to leap down from the skylight, they must deal with a potentially painful two-storey drop or find a way to land on the edge of the gap.

And that is how you play the game we call ScreenPlay.

Act 3: Directing ScreenPlay

While the onus for moving the story lies on the Writers' shoulders, Directors have their own sacred responsibility in developing epic tales of heroic deeds. It is they who keep the story from derailing, challenge the Writers and their characters, referee the mechanics of the game, and package every description, outcome, and trigger into something bigger than even the Writers could imagine. No pressure.

Doing so requires a better understanding of how the rules function and the best practises for making them work for the Writers. Each section below tackles a different aspect of the game from the Director's chair, but there's always one thing to remember: do what's best for the story. If you see something here that doesn't quite fit the bill or doesn't jive with your Writers, scrap it.

This Act also contains a few optional ideas to try out in your first (or next) story. These are far from crucial, yet can add some much needed depth and complexity to the characters should their story benefit from it.

Starting A New Story

The early stages of a new story may be the most exciting part of the process. All the anticipation and endless possibilities available between all the players at the table must be sanded down into a single idea with a direction, purpose, and characters to guide the story. Even when working with an existing treatment, there are still many different directions to tell your own version and that's what this section is about.

When it comes time to begin a new story in ScreenPlay, there are some key details to sort out amongst all players. These are known as formats and account for features such as genre, source material, levels of violence/language/sex, initiatives, and story length. Before creating characters for your story, take five to ten minutes and hash out these formats.

Genre: From supercop action films to historical dramas, there are a wide range of genres to choose from and the possibilities become larger when you look at any plausible combinations. Locking down the genre of your story will go a long way toward determiningthe other formats to follow and the story everyone will tell over the coming sessions.

Style: While the default "setting" for ScreenPlay is scriptwriting, there's nothing locked and loaded in the rules requiring this format. If anything, the use of the word "ScreenPlay" is more of a play on words with the word "play" as a pun on a game about writing. What kind of first draft you and your players will create is entirely up to you and deciding so now can help shape how everyone views their characters' actions and provide their descriptions. For example, writing for a novel allows characters to explain their inner monologues and intentions out loud whereas a movie does no such thing (unless it features voice-over monologues).

Rating: How violent will your story be? Will it be gratuitous or tame? How will adults relate? Will there be cursing? Movie ratings have become common vernacular in every country and it's easy enough to establish how hardcore or family-friendly the story will be. Even if you choose a different style other than movies, using a rating system still allows everyone to work off a similar idea on how far to push the boundaries of decency.

Key Initiatives: While each story will grow into its own unique account during play, it works best if everyone is aware of certain key initiatives from the beginning so prevent matters from running off the rails early on. These cover fundamental aspects of the story such as period of history, technology, backstory elements, and more. Think of these as the details highlighted during the opening scroll of a movie. With published treatments (such as Ironbound, a quick-start guidebook/treatment, on sale now), these initiatives will be listed in advance and default automatically to the Director. Original stories allow all players opportunity to create their own accessible to all players. When starting an original story, use the following format to set down your initiatives.

- Establish a maximum number of initiatives equal to 1 per player.
- Starting with the Director, each player creates a single initiative. Additional initiatives can build off a former one or stand on their own.
- If a player cannot think of an initiative at the beginning of the story, they can declare one at a later time during the story.

Length: Will this be a short film, a regular feature, or an epic mini-series? Better yet, is everyone looking to create the first season of a TV series? Establishing the length of your story can go a long way to keeping all Writers from drifting too far from the main plot and focused on their motivations. For ScreenPlay, story length is best measured in the number of sessions you intend to play. Here are some key points to keep in mind based on the average game of ScreenPlay.

- Expect to complete an average of 3 to 4 scenes in a single 4 hour session.
- Three sessions can be the equivalent of a single 1-hour episode for a television series (or 42 minutes, factoring in commercial breaks). Three sessions should equal 10 to 12 scenes.
- Ten sessions (or 30 scenes) can be the equivalent of a two-hour movie.

Using these guidelines, work out how many scenes and sessions everyone wants to set for the story. From there, you can even divide the total number of scenes into three acts and establish the key function of each act.

Tips For Directing ScreenPlay

Let's cover a few general guidelines and tips for playing the part of the Director, and by that we mean laying down exactly what a Director does in this game. The short and sweet of it is you assist the Writers in creating an engaging story with rewarding outcomes and challenging descriptions designed to help keep the lead characters as the central focus of the story and continue to move the story forward. That's really a very broad definition, which is why these tips will hopefully help provide a better understanding.

> **A Director's goal is to keep the Writers' characters, particularly their lead characters, as the central protagonists in the story.** Everything revolves around them, though this is not to be mistaken with everything working out in their favour. Without some stress and uncertainty, there is no adversity for the Writers to address during play and that would make for a boring game. Using challenges in small doses can help keep the story engaging, dangerous, and tense at appropriate moments without overshadowing the lead characters, while spending large amounts of challenges (possibly up to half of the current challenges available) during crucial scenes can up the ante and force the Writers to make the scene truly memorable.
>
> **Establish only the basics at the beginning and leave plenty of room for everyone – including yourself – to fill in the gaps.** Never worry about drafting a lot of material into your story notes because that is not the goal of the game. If the Writers feel you have constructed an extensive level of background, setting, and yet-discovered plot into their story, it will make them feel restricted in how they participate.
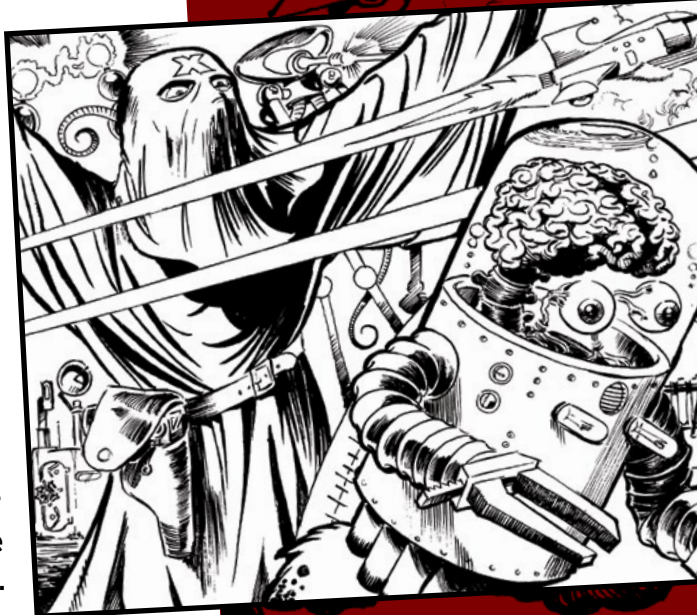
At the same time, laying down the first few tracks will help get the train started and that is the only goal you need concern yourself with before the first opening shot. Once those wheels start turning, the experience will push it along further and faster until it reaches the end of the line. (This is where the Rule of Initiatives will work in your favour, as the Director will always be the one to establish basic scene elements through the core supporting characters, opening shots, and more; not enough to control everything, but enough to maintain a grip on the main plot your Writers must tackle.)

Don't ask – tell! Unless an element has already been introduced in a scene or the story as a whole states otherwise, there's never need for anyone (including a Writer) to ask if something specific is available. If it won't contradict an existing initiative, go right ahead and bring it into the story.

There are only two true limitations to any character description in the game and it's simply that the description must come from the character's point of view and it cannot control what another assigned character does in the scene. For example, if the Director has initiated control of the bartender in a scene, a Writer cannot describe that bartender handing them the key to the secret tunnels under the bar. They can, however, describe their own character approaching the bartender and discreetly using the secret password in casual conversation before waiting to see the bartender's reaction (provided as an outcome by the Director, in this case).

Never assume fate will lead to success. If the hero in a movie gets into a car chase, is he expected to wipe out on a simple right turn and end up serving five years in prison? Nope, so why should that happen in ScreenPlay? It shouldn't and that's why complication rolls are not used to determine success or failure, but complications. Unless a description is attempting to make things difficult for the target – even if it's the rope used to scale Mount Everest – never rely on the dice. Do or do not; there is no try.

Bringing Stories To Life

There's a reason why this game is called ScreenPlay and it's more than a simple play on words. While the Writers are creating, inspiring, and propelling the story forward, what is there for the Director to do? The same thing as happens on a movie set – make those descriptions pop, give them substance, and allow everyone (yourself included) opportunity to "see" what was nothing more than words moments ago.

If you're an experienced gamemaster from other roleplaying games, everything the Director does isn't that far from what we're talking about here. The trick is how you present the outcomes to your Writers as a film director would translate a script: add camera shots to your outcomes. This non-mechanical addition provides a whole new reservoir to your arsenal and embraces the creative elements of the game by allowing you to offer your own creative outlet in translating what the Writers have described. It's also entirely optional, so feel free to treat the name as a witty play on words. Remember, once everyone sits down to play, it's your game. All of you.

To aid in this directing style, you can find a list of camera shots at http://www.mediacollege.com/video/shots. Start with the basics and build from there or simply use hand motions to represent the camera as it pans across from right to left or swoops down from a drone shot to focus in on a tight shot of the next character.

Ironbound

Available now from Broken Ruler Games, Ironbound is a quick-start treatment providing not only a dark action-fantasy story of witch hunters but it also offers a condensed version of the rules presented here to introduce players to ScreenPlay.

To learn more, go to the Ironbound page at brokenrulergames.net

Treatments

Creating original stories at the table is the goal of playing ScreenPlay, but all stories need a spark and some of those sparks ignite long before the first opening shot. That's what treatments are for.

A treatment is a basic and easy to expand layout for a story's main plot, setting, supporting characters, tone, style, roles, and any other fundamentals created to help give the players a starting point. They are also provisions to help the Director through the Rule of Initiatives as they are the story elements introduced by the Director, yet they are never enough to allow a Director to completely dominate every aspect of their incorporation. For example, a treatment for a post-apocalyptic world in which wars are fought over water introduces the reason for society's collapse and prevents a Writer from suddenly bringing in a back-story in which giant toys suddenly rise up to slay their creators.

Think of a treatment as an elevator pitch for a story; there's no way the story is complete, and it still requires a lot of character, heart, and action to create an ending that will make it a great story. But it is enough to give everyone an idea of how you want to begin and gives all players a direction to look towards as the endless horizon of possibilities looms in the distance. Your treatment can be viewed as the back-story and first act of the story with enough fundamentals established that allow your Writers enough information to carry on from there – **a treatment should never include a pre-determined ending or possible options for a conclusion.** Treatments can be created by all players as part of a special introductory creative session, by the Director alone, or purchased online.

Roles

Who will be the intrepid heroes of your next ScreenPlay? The exact answer will remain a mystery until the Writers unleash them from the depths of their imaginations, but what are the individual characters' purposes in the story as a whole? While not required for every story, many ScreenPlays make use of roles to help provide a greater sense of purpose and definition by setting down connections between other lead characters, the setting, the back-story, and more. They are tools allowing the Writers to create something that will integrate with the core values that make for an engaging story and even provide a shortcut to ensure no one's character is left behind or has trouble finding their voice.

Roles can be as loose or as tight as needed for the story at hand and some can even be created by the Writers if all players are creating the plot, setting, and more as a collective. Some roles even provide mechanical benefits as roleplaying rewards and some treatments may even include secondary roles for combination with primary ones, creating a wider range of possibilities for convention play or newcomers to the game who may still find the water a bit cold at first.

Each treatment provided in the ScreenPlay line provides a list of roles for every lead character expected in the story. Roles are an optional aspect to the game; if a Writer does not see a role that fits their ideas, they do not have to take one.

Building A Scene

There is no greater measurement of a story's success than a great scene. Whether it's the first scene setting the stage for what's to come, a gritty shootout with the lead characters trapped inside a bank vault minutes before a bomb will bring the entire building down around their ears, or the exciting conclusion with the world's fate in their hands, all your stories will be told as a collection of scenes, and building a great scene is the key to enjoying this game.

As mentioned in Act Two, there are three key considerations you and your Writers must establish before you can start a scene: its goal, the characters involved, and locations. Aside from following the standard tropes of storytelling, these three aspects are fundamental to keeping you and the Writers moving in the same direction.

As Director, it is not only your duty to keep the Writers on track and creative, it's also about keeping them on their toes and throwing problems at their feet to solve. That's why this section will pony up some suggestions for using scenes to accomplish just that.

> **A single objective can take multiple scenes to accomplish.** Assume the lead characters must storm a hijacked school to rescue a gymnasium filled to the gills with teenage hostages – does that mean reaching the gym and taking out the terrorists can all be done in one scene? No, and it's actually discouraged to keep a scene this simple (unless terrorists taking over a school is actually a prologue meant to introduce the lead characters). Break it up into multiple scenes, each with their own goals, challenges, and obstacles. Start with the planning phase as the lead characters review a blueprint of the school and hear a detailed report from the Chief on how many bad guys are stationed where and how much longer they have until the principal gets a bullet to his skull; follow it up with entering the school undetected; then the lead characters must crack open the ventilation shafts and move about undetected into the library to rescue the teachers trapped inside; and so forth until the hardcore moment in the gym is the only goal remaining. Along with extending the tension and action available to the story, it also allows plenty of time for the lead characters to regain much needed Stamina and continue taking the fight to the bad guys.

Use triggers and challenges to surprise Writers with a new scene. Going with the high school terrorist plot above, an explosion cuts off the only access out of the building and now the lead characters have to find a new escape route or risk leading the students right into an ambush. The purpose of triggers and challenges is to toss out surprises at the Writers so they don't become complacent in their characters' accomplishments and there's nothing in the rules stating they cannot create a new scene.

Use cutaways to reveal simultaneous events. A useful tool for covering a lot of material in shorter periods of time, a cutaway is an optional device in which characters in the same scene are described in different locations accomplishing individual objectives rather than handling each one as its own scene, one-by-one. In this manner, the Director allows each Writer to give each character three to four (or more) descriptions before moving onto the next Writer. There are two key factors to remember when using cutaways: each Writer should provide the same number of descriptions per turn and any of the Director's characters directly connected to a cutaway get a description of their own in between the Writer's. For example, if a cutaway features one of the terrorist-fighting lead characters getting into a bathroom brawl against one of the bad guys, the terrorist is given a description after each of the lead characters. Any characters not directly connected with that cutaway must wait until the current scene cuts to another Writer's character.
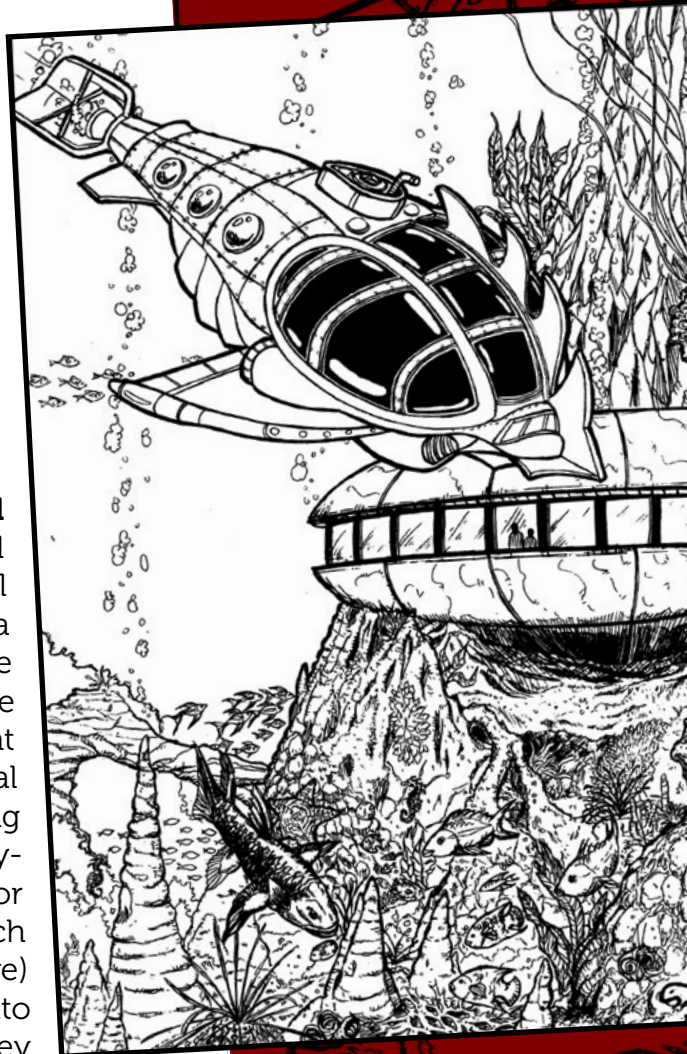
Stretching the Boundaries: Running Unique Scenes in ScreenPlay

Everything you've read up to this point is designed to handle as many stories, scenes, and outcomes as possible. It's simply a matter of translating the rules to suit the moment. Directors are not only the gentle guiding hand of the game, they are also the interpreter of the mechanics translating the content in these pages to create a smooth and seamless play experience. Yet no one ever understands a new language the first time they speak it and the same applies with applying game mechanics; it takes practise and experience before Directors can feel comfortable enough to experiment with new ideas and take the game in bold new directions.

This section provides ideas for running particular types of scenes, typically those frequently possible in many stories while also unique enough to require some guidance.

Chase Scenes

With movement relegated to four basic range categories, running a chase scene in ScreenPlay can seem tricky at first. The keys to making a successful getaway or catching up to your target are applying complications and getting a good head start.

The latter is a simple case of either spending 1 challenge to have the target start off the round running away from the lead characters or a supporting character spending 1 Stamina to interrupt the round and take off. (If the lead characters are the targets, they automatically have first crack at describing their head start in the round.) Once the target is hightailing it to freedom, he has to maintain that distance.

Using the normal rules for movement in a chase scene requires at least 1 detail to move one range category (such as Melee to Close or Close to Far) and a full description to move two range categories (such as Melee to Far). Giving chase means providing an equal number of details or descriptions to match your target. The best approach for a target (the one running away) is to try and complicate his pursuers' attempts and force them to use additional details to remove them. Pursuers can attempt the same and use complications to slow down the target until both parties are in Melee range or in a range category with an appropriate resource that can bring the target to a stop (such as shooting out the tires with a rifle).

During the chase, keep track of the number of details applied to actively avoiding the pursuers and those actively spent trying to catch up to the target. Consider a full description as 3 details for simplicity; increase this number as the target gets further away and decrease it as the pursuers encroach on this distance. For every difference of 3 details between the target and the pursuers, the target is considered to be one range category ahead. Once the target enters the Impossible range and is at least two range categories (or 6 details) ahead of his pursuers for a full round, he has escaped.

Using Vehicles In A Chase Scene: Car chases are perhaps one of the most common chase scenes around and they can potentially complicate the scene if one of the parties involved is in a vehicle and the other is not or there is a reason for one vehicle to be remarkably faster than the other. For simplicity's sake, if one of the parties involved in a chase is able to move faster than the other due to a vehicle's speed, double the number of details counted towards the chase scene. For example, if the target carjacks someone's Honda and races off while the cops are still on foot, the carjacker is considered to be 2 details away when applying a single detail and 6 details away (meaning two range categories) when applying a full description.

Interrogation Scenes

Information propels the story forward and sometimes characters have to obtain that information by force or through cunning linguistics. Any time a character attempts to divulge information another character does not wish to reveal, it is considered an interrogation scene.

Just like any combat scene, interrogation scenes can use complications and damage to achieve the goal. The only difference is that characters now have the option to apply social skills, mind games, and physical violence together. (It's normally hard to verbally convince someone to take a bullet to the chest unless they have a mutant ability to do so.) Each complication restricts the interrogated character's ability to use certain descriptions, inserts viewpoints, or penalizes efforts in their descriptions while losing Stamina drains their willpower and clarity until they are no longer able to resist and counter the interrogation. Think of false confessions gained from intense police interrogations as a basis for this concept.

When an interrogated character is reduced to 0 Stamina, the interrogator who brought them to this value chooses how they will co-operate. This point is key because it's up to the character to determine what they reveal. As the Director, you can request specifics or simply have them tell everything they know about a previous incident. The specifics of the requested information can greatly affect the outcome. For example, if the interrogator demands to know the combination to the safe, that doesn't mean the interrogated character has to reveal the hidden camera inside the vault.

MAUSER HAS A SUSPECT BOUND TO A CHAIR AND NEEDS TO KNOW WHERE THE REST OF THE GANG IS HIDING OUT BEFORE THEY'RE ABLE TO CATCH A TRAIN AND LEAVE TOWN. AT FIRST, MAUSER TRIES TO BEFRIEND THE SCUMBAG AND APPLIES AN INCEPTION COMPLICATION CALLED YOU CAN TRUST ME, TO GIVE THE TARGET A REASON TO TRUST HIS INTERROGATOR. FOR THE NEXT COUPLE OF TURNS, THE CRIMINAL IS FRIENDLY AND DIVULGES SOME OF HIS PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH THE GANG WHILE NOT YET GETTING INTO SPECIFICS ON THE GANG'S WHEREABOUTS. SEEING WHERE THIS LINE OF QUESTIONING IS GOING AND REALIZING THE GANG WILL KILL HIS FAMILY IF HE TALKS, THE CRIMINAL DISMISSES HIS EFFORTS AND USES HIS FULL DESCRIPTION ON HIS NEXT TURN TO REMOVE THE COMPLICATION — HE DOESN'T TRUST MAUSER AGAIN. TIRED OF BEING THE NICE GUY, MAUSER TRIES INTIMIDATION AND REMINDS THE CRIMINAL ABOUT THE BOUNTY ON HIS HEAD AND HOW MUCH MORE VALUABLE HE IS DEAD THAN ALIVE. MAUSER'S COMPLICATION ROLL PLACES DAMAGE ON THE CRIMINAL — HE'S SWEATING AND BEGINS TO QUESTION HIS LOYALTY AS THE STRESS OF THIS REVELATION EATS AT HIM. FINALLY, MAUSER SLAMS THE BUTT OF HIS RIFLE AGAINST THE CRIMINAL'S SKULL AND DOES MORE DAMAGE, BRING HIM DOWN TO 0 STAMINA. NOW HE'S WILLING TO SPIT IT ALL OUT.

Supporting Characters and Extras

While the Writers are only expected to handle one lead character each with an option to create their own supporting characters, Directors will definitely have to wear many hats over the course of the story. Anyone from blacksmiths to taxi drivers to the nameless faces in a crowd of onlookers; in some shape or form, characters of all colours, behaviours, moods, and motivations will enter the story through the Director's imagination. Some many even develop from the Writers' imagination in the middle of a scene.

All Director-controlled characters, save for any major characters provided in a published treatment, are intended to exist only moments before their first description enters the story. Each one will perform a particular role or purpose to either assist in moving the story forward or offer some resistance to keep the story exciting. This section offers a brief guide on creating supporting characters and extras in your story to help Directors creating these characters on the fly during play.

Supporting Characters: There's a default way to consider when characters should be supporting characters; if they have a proper name, they should be a supporting character. While not always an automatic decision (it is plausible for some extras to have a name), supporting characters carry a relevant amount of weight to the story, even if that weight has not been revealed. A supporting character is one who knows vital information, actively engages in working with or against the lead characters, and/or should be a significant obstacle (be it physical, mental, or social) to the lead characters. In other words, if a character should be able to put up a decent fight, make them a supporting character.

Determining Maximum Stamina for Supporting Characters: As a default, supporting characters enter the story with a maximum Stamina of 7 but it can go higher should a character demonstrate a stronger influence on the developing story or the Director intended for the character to offer stronger opposition to the lead characters. For simplicity's sake, this section deals only with lead character opposition (AKA putting up a good fight).

A single supporting character with 7 Stamina can provide decent opposition to a single lead character without the lead character suffering too many complications. A single supporting character with 15 Stamina can offer enough opposition to last two or three rounds against a group of 3 to 4 lead characters with very little chance of complications. For every 5 additional Stamina, a supporting character can be expected to last either one additional round or cause one additional complication in a scene. For example, a Director can expect (but not be guaranteed) a supporting character with 25 Stamina to stand up against 3 to 4 lead characters for four to five rounds and/or inflict at least three or four complications in a fight. Applying the optional Damage Trigger rule (see page 54) potentially doubles the number of inflicted complications.

Extras: Anyone who is relatively nameless (aside from Goon #2 or Lady in Shopping Mall) is considered an extra. Extras are window dressing. During complication rolls, they are there to help make the lead characters looks good and maybe offer a decent obstacle for a round or two. In other words, if they're not important enough to be a lead or supporting character, they're an extra. Plain and simple.

Extras In A Group: Extras work as individual characters or in a group. (See page 43 in Act Two for specifics on creating extras in a group.) Grouping extras is recommended for fight scenes involving a bunch of nameless goons, bodyguards, anyone the lead characters can toss around with relative ease. Grouping extras does make them a bit more challenging without making them too much to overcome.

There are a couple of factors to consider when grouping extras.

> **Extras only count as a group while in the same range category.** If you have 4 extras standing within Melee range of the lead characters and another extra on the roof with a rifle locked and loaded at Far range, the sniper extra cannot be included in the same group as the other four.

> **Handling Stamina for group extras is the Director's call.** There's no fixed way to handle extras when the group's Stamina is lowered bit-by-bit during a scene. They could be eliminated from the scene one by one for every 3 Stamina reduced or every effective damage complication could eliminate individual extras in the group until there is one left standing working with however many Stamina remain. It could even bounce around from scene to scene, whatever works for what the Writers have created. In other words, feel free to play with whatever works in your story.

Turning Extras Into Supporting Characters: Some characters may start off the story as extras and soon reveal a stronger influence in the story. They may even receive a name! When that happens, simply expand them to the minimum requirement needed to become a supporting character (raise the Stamina to 7 and provide a new d8/5/3 potential or increase the existing potential to d8/5/3 and given them a new d6/3/2 potential.

Stretching Reality:
Magic, Superpowers, Technology, and More

There are a wide variety of possibilities when creating a story that is not actually bound by limits actual filmmakers face on a daily basis. There is no budget here, no employee payroll to balance, no computer crashes in the VFX labs, no studio heads screaming about deadlines, none of that. If your story involves supernatural, magic, or hi-tech elements that bend normal reality, it's totally possible in ScreenPlay.

Mechanically speaking, these elements take advantage of the standard rules already provided here. More importantly, they are additional means by which characters can be described in the story. A lead character with the ability to fly is no longer limited to taking the stairs; they can simply fly up to the top floor and get inside through the balcony. They are also an optional resource available to any characters' resource slots should they choose to do so in a given scene.

There is a reason why there are no equipment lists provided in this game and that's because the items characters use, any powers at their disposal, spells they cast, or ships they pilot are not the focus. They are simply the means by which they describe their actions and stand out against all others in the game. Some may offer mechanical benefits as resources, but the majority of these reality-bending options are simply window dressing to the story. If one character jumps into a hovercar and races off between the towering skyscrapers of New New York, that is simply how the character escapes and is technically no different than if the character rode off on horseback or teleported. Previous descriptions will determine whether other characters are able to give chase or not.

That is not to say stories cannot benefit from these special features and such extras are left to the individual stories created. Some ScreenPlay treatments will have special rules for applying aspects such as magic, advanced technology, superpowers, and more. Your story may wish to do the same. As with everything else your story creates, go for it! Whatever makes the game fun to play.

Quiet On The Set...

There comes a time when all the preparation in the world finally leads to that first opening shot launching your first story. That moment is now. Everything you've read here will give you the knowledge, skills and confidence to direct your first (or next) game of ScreenPlay. Embrace your role and the imagination of your Writers and you'll do just fine. Create the story you've always wanted to tell and remember the first rule of any game...

Have fun!

ScreenPlay

CHARACTER NOTES

Name

Player

Role

Milestones

Stamina

Maximum

Story

Scene

Potentials

Dice	Difficulty	Details
/		
/		
/		

Resources (Props, Skills, Backgrounds)

Step or Damage Bonus

Complications

Motivations

Hindrance

Hindrance

Steps

Dice	Difficulty	Details
d4	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12	9	5

-1 for each step below d4; +1 for each step above d12

Complication Rolls

Effective with Even Number: You create a complication for the target character.

Effective with Odd Number: The target character chooses a complication for herself.

Ineffective with Even Number: You choose a complication for yourself OR nothing happens.

Ineffective with Odd Number: The target character chooses a complication for you.

Spending Stamina (all cost 1 Stamina)

Shift: Increase or decrease a conflict roll (yours or another character's) by 1.

Interrupt: Cut in line before your turn in a round.

Retaliate: Immediately respond against a conflict roll (regardless of result) with your own conflict roll.

Remove a Complication: Use 1 detail instead of a full description.

Supporting Characters

Additional Notes/Initiatives

Role Benefits

Spending Milestones

Additional Resources: Redeem 5 milestones to permanently gain +1 resource slots for a character.

Combine Step and Damage Bonuses: Redeem 1 milestone to apply both the step and damage bonus of a single resource. (+1 milestone for each additional use)

Complication Re-Roll: Redeem 1 milestone to re-roll a complication roll immediately after initial attempt.

Increased Maximum Stamina: Redeem 3 milestones to permanently increase a character's maximum Stamina by 1.

Step Modifiers

Aid Another Character	+1 steps
Attacking Multiple Targets	-1 steps per additional opponent
Cover/Concealment	+1 steps
Concentrating/Preparing	+1 steps per description
Long Range	-1 steps per additional range

Challenge-Based Complication Rolls

Effective with Even Number: Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Stamina.

Effective with Odd Number: Avoid the challenge.

Ineffective with Even Number: You choose a complication for yourself OR nothing happens.

Ineffective with Odd Number: The Director chooses a complication for you.

Required Details

Equipping a physical resource	1 detail
Cover/concealment modifier	1 detail
Maintain advantage/complication	1 detail per detail used to activate
Move one range category	1 detail per range
Pass 1st turn in a round	1 detail

Supporting Characters/ Extras

Name:

Supporting Character

Potentials

Stamina

Resources

Special Features/Notes

Complications

Name:

Supporting / Extra

Potentials

Stamina

Resources

Complications

Name:

Supporting / Extra

Potentials

Stamina

Resources

Complications

Name:

Supporting / Extra

Potentials

Stamina

Resources

Complications

ScreenPlay

SCENE NOTES

Scene Goal

Steps

Dice	Difficulty	Details
d4	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12	9	5

-1 for each step below d4; +1 for each step above d12

Step Modifiers

Aid Another Character	+1 steps
Attacking Multiple Targets	-1 steps per additional opponent
Cover/Concealment	+1 steps
Concentrating/Preparing	+1 steps per description
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Ineffective with Even Number: You choose a complication for yourself OR nothing happens.

Ineffective with Odd Number: The target character chooses a complication for you.
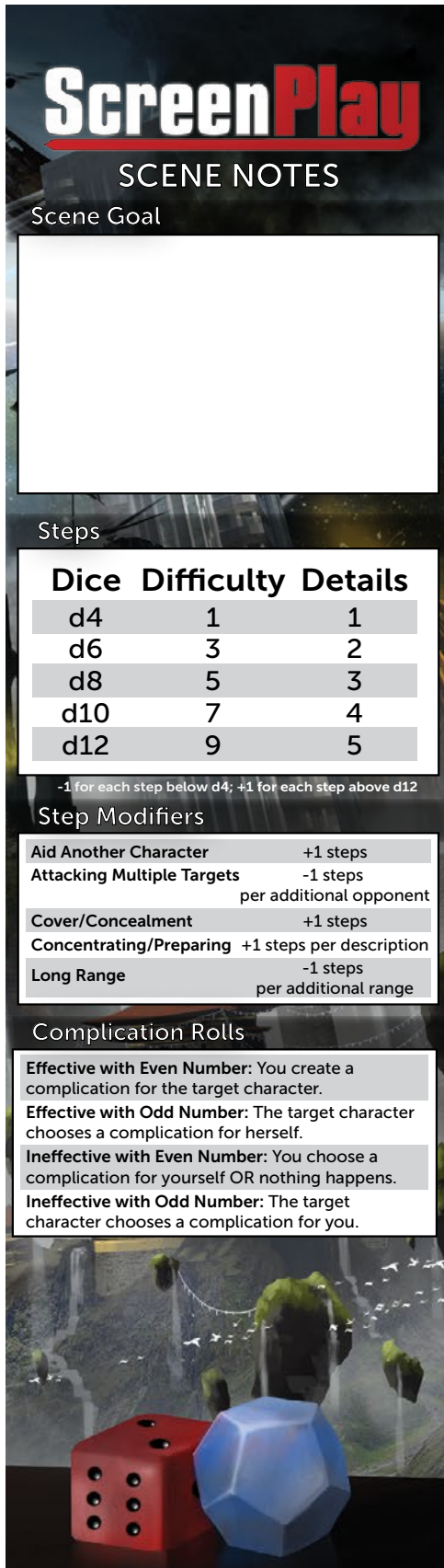
ScreenPlay
SCENE NOTES

Dangers

Hindrances

Challenge-Based Complication Rolls

Effective with Even Number: Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Stamina.

Effective with Odd Number: Avoid the challenge.

Ineffective with Even Number: You choose a complication for yourself OR nothing happens.

Ineffective with Odd Number: The Director chooses a complication for you.

Milestones Earned

Writer (Character)	Scene Goal?	Applied Motivation?	Defeat Enemy/ Apply Char. Hook?
_____	☐	_____	_____
_____	☐	_____	_____
_____	☐	_____	_____
_____	☐	_____	_____
_____	☐	_____	_____
_____	☐	_____	_____

Gaining Challenges

At the start of every new story, Directors begin with 1 challenge per Writer. Whether stockpiled for later or used right away, it's always good to have some ammo under the belt.

A Writer rolls an absolute. Whenever a Writer naturally rolls the best possible result on their conflict roll (without shifting), the Director gains 1 challenge.

All Writers simultaneously receive 1 milestone during or at the end of a scene. When all Writers receive milestones for achieving the scene's goal, the Director also gains 1 challenge. The Director can gain no more than 1 challenge, regardless of how many milestones are awarded to individual Writers.

Applying Challenges

Place a complication on a character. This complication does not occur until after conflict dice are rolled (regardless of the result) or after the Writer has completed a description for that character. Directors cannot inflict damage on a character using a challenge and must use 2 challenges to inflict a penalty. If a challenge is used to place a complication on a character after a failed complication roll, the complication must be different from the rolled attempt.

Increase the duration of a complication. Directors can extend the duration of a complication the moment it is placed on a character by spending a certain number of challenges. This means characters afflicted with these complications cannot use descriptions or Stamina to remove them and must instead ensure its effects for as long as the Director chooses. Damage cannot be extended through challenges.

For 1 challenge, the complication remains until the end of the current scene.

For 2 challenges, the complication remains until the end of the current session.

For 3 challenges, the complication becomes a hindrance for the remaining story.

Alter a set piece to create an additional danger requiring a full description to counter or bypass. This danger can come in the form of changing the setting or introducing opposing characters to start a fight scene. For example, characters racing to escape from a burning building suddenly discover the staircase leading to the main floor has collapsed. These alterations cannot provide a direct threat (i.e. a potential complication or damage), can interrupt the middle of a character's description, and it must be plausible for characters to use descriptions to eliminate these alterations.

Create a spontaneous trigger. By spending 1 challenge, the Director creates a trigger based on the information provided by the Writers at the start of the scene, in response to a character's description or a single detail, or when the characters enter a location.

Choose a supporting character to start a scene after the opening shot. This allows the Director to get a leg up on events in a scene, including triggering a conflict roll.

Force a situation-based conflict roll. The Director can spend a certain number of challenges and force a Writer to make a conflict roll against a Difficulty Level (see Difficulties).

With 1 challenge, the roll is attempted against a Tricky Difficulty of 5.

With 2 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Damn Hard Difficulty of 7.

With 3 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Foolhardy Difficulty of 9.

Use a character's hindrance to create a complication. Drafting an applicable reason why the hindrance would complicate matters for the character, the Director can spend 1 challenge to create a restriction or inception complication with the hindrance and 2 challenges to create a penalty complication.