WORLD

vs

HERO

**The Strategic Storytelling Game
for Two Players**

by
John Fiore

WORLD vs HERO

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GAME DESIGN AND WRITING
John Fiore

ART
Adam Otero

TYPESETTING & DESIGN
Tom Pigeon and Word Mill Publishing

PROOFING & TESTING
Deborah Campisi, Eric Curtis, Kelly Farrell, Edwin Fuentes, Scott Gallo,
Todd Gelbord, Carrie Mulligan, and Ariel & Romeo.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to World vs. Hero, the strategic storytelling game! In WvH, two players pit their wits and imaginations against one another to create the adventures of amazing heroes battling terrifying adversaries in fantastic worlds!

WvH is a unique game because the "moves" that the players make have more in common with what writers do than with what board game players do. Rather than manipulating objects on a table, WvH players are manipulating story elements in an ever-changing plot composed of daring heroes, evil villains, and incredible conflicts! From magical fantasy to superhero action to mind-bending horror, the WvH system is fully customizable and ready for anything players can dream up!

Even though WvH consists of storytelling action, the players don't need to be great writers to play well. Anyone – even children – can play a storytelling game like WvH with ease. The most essential requirement is an active imagination! Of course, along with that imagination, you'll also need:

- the rules included in this book;
- a standard deck of cards;
- a few poker chips or similar markers;
- paper and pens.

It's the randomness of the cards drawn from the deck that creates the "strategic" aspect of WvH. The cards give "permission" for the story elements that may be used by the players. The players then choose the order and content of their storytelling scenes as cleverly and as carefully as possible, with each trying to get an advantage over the other. During gameplay, the players must be ready to make crucial decisions at a moment's notice because, no matter how much either prepares, neither can know exactly what will happen next!

That unpredictability sometimes makes WvH as collaborative as it is competitive! Moments will occur when the players like the direction of the adventure so much that they actually work together to test the worth of the heroes! When this happens, the players will find that both of them "win" at the end of a game when their story comes to an awesome conclusion!

In this way, WvH is like a traditional role-playing game, or RPG, but it differs from most RPGs in the following three important areas:

In RPGs, a "Game Master" creates a secret adventure for a group of players and guides them through the plot. In WvH, the Game Master is replaced with the "World Player" who has much less control over the direction of the story.

In RPGs, the players in the group use numerical statistics to make "Player Characters" that will experience the Game Master's plot. In WvH, the "heroes" are created descriptively, not mathematically, and all are controlled by one "Hero Player."

In RPGs, game action is resolved through the serious application of charts, maps, tables, rules, FAQs, dice rolls, and sometimes even the placement of

miniatures on grids. In WvH, the game action happens casually and quickly as the players tell the story in turns.

During the course of the game, the World Player and the Hero Player will test each other's creativity as they expand their worlds, twist their plots, and lead their characters on to greatness or infamy!

Those unfamiliar with RPGs or other storytelling games might not know exactly what to expect from such a unique gaming experience. Don't worry! The rules of the game are illustrated with actual gameplay – an adventure in an exciting world of high fantasy action! In "Madness of the Moon Wraiths," you'll follow the adventures of Sir Charles de Ruelle, a werewolf warrior, as he tries to conquer the growing evils within the Nightfields of Tannaron!

Along the way, every rule of World vs. Hero will be explained and demonstrated, so players will be prepared for action almost immediately!

CHAPTER 1
WORLD CREATION

The first step to playing World vs. Hero is to build your world, the setting of the adventure. Building a world is a lot like building a playground.

On the playground, many challenges await daring youngsters. There are physical challenges like climbing monkey bars, mental challenges like building sandcastles, and social challenges like dealing with greedy swing-hogs. Failing at any of these challenges might not be fun, but at least failing on a playground will only result in a bit of bruising.

The "world" of an adventure story should be just like a playground filled with all sorts of potential challenges for the heroes – physical, mental, and social ones, along with others like political, environmental, emotional, or spiritual challenges. However, unlike a real playground, failing at one of these challenges should have more dire consequences than just a bump on the head!

The world of a storytelling game is the setting that exists to challenge heroes and stimulate the imaginations of the players. It must hold the promise of renown for intrepid adventurers and terrible penalties for those who fail. It is both time and place, or, in the case of really wild locations, it must suggest a time and place that anyone can still clearly imagine. The world of an adventure must be the ultimate playground of mystery, danger, and action for the heroes!

Although the idea of building a world might seem intimidating at first, the way WvH has been designed makes it a lot easier than you might think because both players work together to create the setting of their adventure. If one person is given the honor to be sole creator of the world, the players should both at least agree upon the setting's "genre" and "size" in advance.

Genre

Genre refers to a category of fiction determined by the style and subject matter of the story. Some genres have time and place practically built right into them, like the Old West. Most everyone can visualize the saloons, dusty trails, and wagon trains of that setting easily!

Other genres are far too subjective to be as efficient. Mention the fantasy genre to a diverse group of people, and the world visualized would probably be quite different from person to person.

Likewise, genres can overlap upon one another, mixing and melding storyline expectations. When science fiction meets horror, alien encounters are probably not going to end with diplomatic treaties or group hugs!

Genre is a good place for players to begin the creation of their playground, but it can never be a world unto itself. Our storytelling imaginations need more detail to really be able to get down to business!

Size

Worlds don't have to actually be global.

The action of a story could easily take place in a specific and limited area which is perfectly appropriate to the scope of an adventure. The world of the adventure may be as cozy as a village or as restrictive as the interior of a space station. It is up to the players to decide if a small stage is all they need for a big show.

If a larger world is preferred, nothing is off limits. Kingdoms and continents are as valid as galaxies or alternate realities. "Bigger" does not always mean "better," though, and the players must always remember that a larger setting might require more thought and preparation.

Realistically, players do not need to create an entire universe before getting into the action of their first adventure story. So long as the broad strokes of the world are colorful and bright enough to inspire the World Player to invent interesting adventures, and to encourage the Hero Player to create bold heroes ready for action, the story told should be an exciting one!

The World Description

In WvH, a descriptive paragraph of about five sentences is all you need to set up your entire world for adventuring! Honestly! This paragraph is called the "World Description."

There are three things to keep in mind when drafting the World Description.

First, always remember that a World Description is not a plot – it is a landscape for planting and cultivating plots. With bits of history, geography, and social conflict, World Descriptions offer opportunities for great tales to be told about the characters within them; they are themselves not stories, but grand premises waiting to be developed.

Second, a World Description must be evocative. It must contain vivid language that conjures up clear images of what the place is like, regardless of how fantastic it may be. Using sensory details, visceral picture words, and familiar or exotic references will make even the most bizarre landscape exciting to imagine.

Finally, a World Description must be provocative. Tease secrets, establish conflicts, foreshadow danger, drop story seeds, and, of course, promise adventure, but leave it all open to development. The World Description must allow the freedom for the World Player and the Hero Player to devise their own stories during gameplay.

The world of the story can be described with as much detail and data as the players prefer. However, it is better to develop what players are definitely going to need in order for the story to be thrilling than to spend countless hours devising the breadth and scope of an entire civilization. To start adventuring, one paragraph really is enough! If the players continue to have adventures in the same world, they can expand on the World Description as much as they'd like!

What follows is a World Description that is an excellent example of how to start a game of WvH.

World Description Example

The Nightfields of Tannaron
Genre: Fantasy
Size: Kingdom and countryside

When the evil minions of the Vampire-Princess Qala attacked the kingdom of Brightmoor, the Lords of neighboring Tannaron did not come to Brightmoor's aid. One month later, when Qala's Hex Masters had tripled their mistress's forces by turning fallen enemies into zombie soldiers, the Lords realized they had made a terrible mistake! And so began the War of the Crooked Saint, a ten-year conflict that obliterated Brightmoor and left Tannaron a shattered wreck, its people unsure of their allegiances. The Good Saints intervened to help mankind, and the Vampire-Princess was eventually defeated, but the remnants of Qala's minions still linger on the blasted heaths of old Brightmoor. Now, in the Tannaron night, a new secret battle is waged. Greedy Tannaron Lords scheme to retake their power; Hex Masters practice terrible rituals learned during the War; and Qala's faithful seek the magic that will extend the darkness of night, devouring the day and returning the Vampire-Princess to life again…

"The Nightfields of Tannaron" hints at epic battles, diabolical plots, dangerous villains, mysterious magic, and dark secrets. The best part is that none of it is so definite that it cannot be utilized in unique and personal ways by imaginative players. In WvH, world creation should be about providing creative opportunities for the players, not explicitly delineating every blade of grass before the heroes have even stepped foot into it. The World Player and the Hero Player should be able to envision a multitude of scenarios about such an exciting place and devise their own plots as they play.

The potential of WvH is such that it might produce from a World Description like this an intimate tale of disillusioned heroes seeking redemption amid corruption, or a sweeping epic of noble warriors fighting against the night to secure the lands against evil!

Consider the following questions derived by the description:

How did the War of the Crooked Saint "shatter" Tannaron? Who are the Lords of Tannaron, how are their realms changed since the War, and what are they doing

to regain their power during these difficult times? How strong are Qala's minions in old Brightmoor? Who are the Good Saints? Who was the Crooked Saint? What kind of magic do Hex Masters wield? What other horror genre elements like zombies and vampires are among the threats to Tannaron? How will the faithful of Qala lengthen the darkness of night? Who will rise up and save Tannaron?

When a single paragraph can generate that many intriguing story questions, the World Description is a success!

Hero Types, Races, and Affiliations

The World Description will suggest the kinds of heroes who would adventure in such a setting, and the players should take advantage of those suggestions. In advance of hero creation, the World Player and the Hero Player should cooperatively create a list of interesting hero types, races, and affiliations – three to five of each – for the Hero Player to use in various combinations. This is a great opportunity to extend the world creation process and have fun defining the qualities of the heroes in the players' unique world!

"Hero types" are mandatory and include the roles, classes, or occupations of heroes followed by brief descriptors. Defining hero types upfront helps both the World Player and the Hero Player to better identify their storytelling expectations by distinguishing the sorts of "people" who will function as the main characters of the adventure. This is an important step and an exciting one, offering both players the chance to impact all of the gaming action to come!

"Hero races" are the ethnic, cultural, or species backgrounds of the heroes and are only mandatory when the world is richly varied. Often, a race will feature one or more specific traits that can give a hero an extra skill that could be used during the game.

"Hero affiliations" are optional and indicate a hero's membership in a group, organization, or family. This association could offer a benefit to a hero or help to define his or her relationship to the world.

The following are examples of hero types, races, and affiliations for "The Night-fields of Tannaron":

Hero Types
CAVALIER
Warrior; Steadfast; Seeking Justice
SAINT SEER
Mystic; Prophetic; Seeking Balance
HEX MASTER
Spellcaster; Ritualistic; Seeking Power
MERCENARY
Adventurer; Opportunistic; Seeking Profit

Hero Races
HUMAN
Target of evil; may manipulate magic or bargain with evil beings
CHANGELING
Being of magic; may moderately alter facial and body features
HEMOPHITE
Offspring of vampire-human coupling; has enhanced strength and senses

Hero Affiliations
TANNARON FULLBLOOD
Descendent of original three families of settlers; may stake land claims
**ORDER OF THE WOLF**
Devout of the Good Saint Luna; may have combat advantages at night
LORD'S INNER CIRCLE
Loyalist to a Tannaron Lord; may access financial, political support

By mixing and matching hero types, races, and affiliations, a Hero Player could be inspired to come up with all sorts of unique and unusual heroes. It's a great way to stimulate the imagination and kick off the hero creation process! Imagine what a Hero Player could do in Tannaron with a Cavalier of the Order of the Wolf who has had a powerful gift bestowed upon him by the Good Saint Luna, one that causes an extreme – and hairy – transformation in battle!

Of course, the final design of the heroes is up to the Hero Player who has a great deal of creative freedom as you'll soon see...
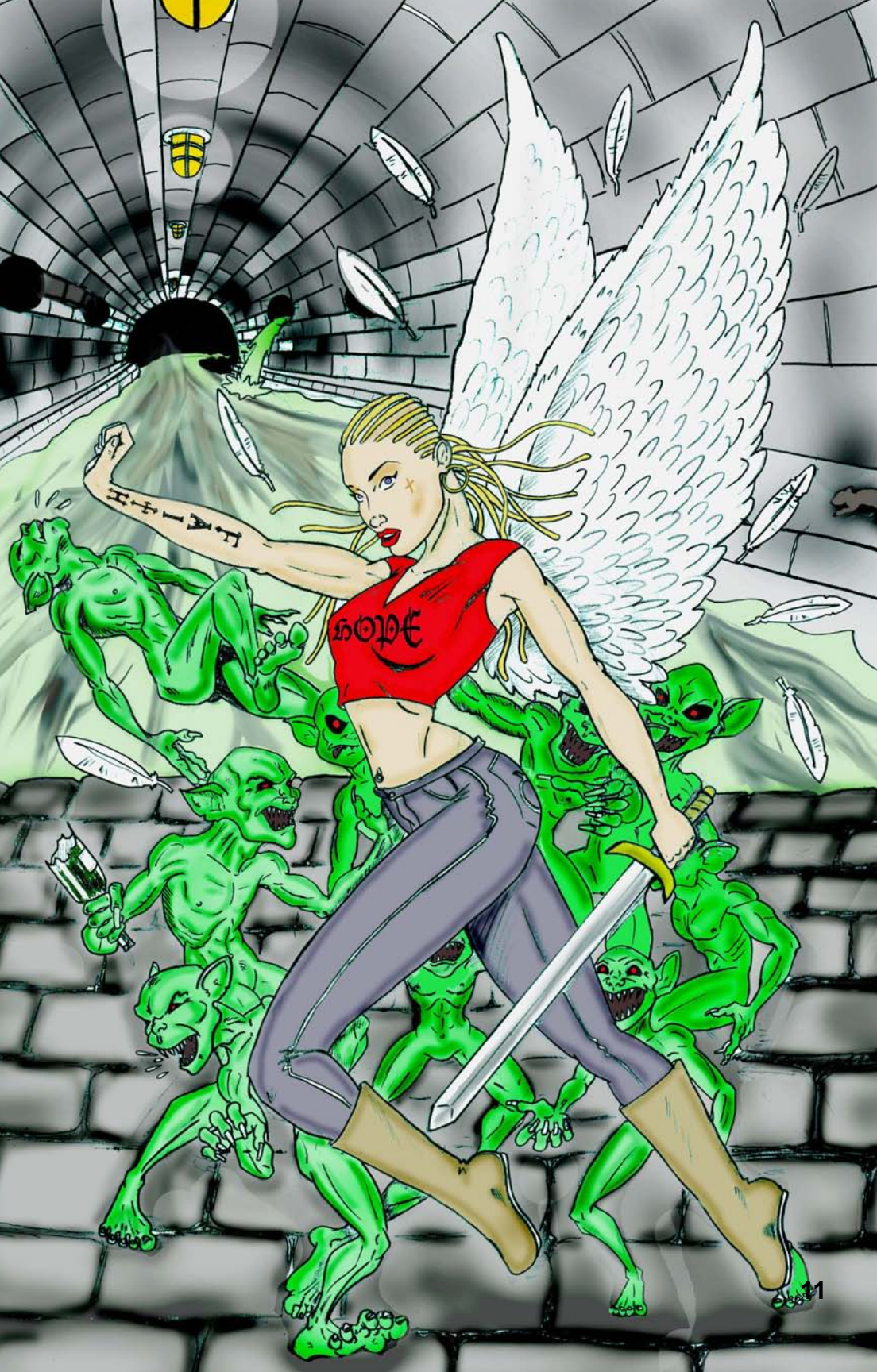
CHAPTER 2
HERO CREATION

If the world has been created to be a place of adventure, danger, and intrigue, then it should be a world that is crying out for heroes to emerge from the darkness to battle against the forces of chaos and strife! Mysteries will need to be solved, evils will have to be thwarted, and it should be clear that no ordinary citizen will do for the job! We need heroes!

Whereas many RPGs prefer to make players start with fledgling characters who will one day become great heroes after many adventures, WvH starts with heroes ready for action! The Hero Player is encouraged to create heroes who are prepared from the first moment of gameplay to perform great deeds of daring!

What's more, each hero is meant to stand out from the masses; each will be gifted with extraordinary abilities, masterful skills, or incredible powers, all limited only by the world they inhabit and the imagination of the Hero Player. Typically, the Hero Player will create and control up to four heroes in a single game, so making each special and memorable should be the aim of the Hero Player during the creation process.

The system used to build heroes in WvH is simple, descriptive, and offers several opportunities to introduce as much depth as the player desires. Listing every possible mundane skill a hero might possess is not necessary, and the tedium of complicated math and restrictive leveling formulas does not exist. As in the case of a World Description – where an entire adventure setting rests in the space of a single paragraph – the hero character is also tightly summarized in a "Hero Profile," a streamlined format that is easy to reference during gameplay.

To illustrate the concept of the Hero Profile, here is one about Sir Charles de Ruelle, a magical knight from "The Nightfields of Tannaron." You'll notice right away that his Hero Profile thrives on evocative and provocative descriptions just like a World Description. This is typical of every good Hero Profile in WvH.

Sir Charles de Ruelle
Human Cavalier, Order of the Wolf

After witnessing much bloodshed and sorrow during the War of the Crooked Saint, Sir Charles questioned his own views on fealty to men and kingdoms. Having been called by the goddess Luna to serve as her champion, the handsome knight has become a member of the Order of the Wolf, leaving behind his former master, Lord Crowley, a man he no longer trusts. Sir Charles now roams the countryside on his warhorse, aiding the defenseless of Tannaron as corruption, dark magic, and Qala's legacy slowly creep across the land. Sir Charles de Ruelle may be a noble without a lord, but he is a warrior with a higher purpose.

SUIT ABILITIES
Clubs [3] - Sword Master, owns a superior arming sword
Spades [1] - Night Stalker, expert tracker in moonlight
Hearts [1] - Chosen of Luna, invokes deity for guidance

SPECIAL FX
King of Clubs - Luna's Gift: Becomes a fierce werewolf warrior

Though brief, the profile of Sir Charles is actually full of rich details that the Hero Player can use during gameplay to make this champion a dynamic and memorable character in an adventure story. Furthermore, the particulars of his life actually bring more details to the world, aiding in the evolution of Tannaron itself. From his somber past to his gift of werewolf transformation, Sir Charles de Ruelle is an intriguing individual ready for dramatic growth and epic action!

The Hero Profile

Creating Hero Profiles like the one made for Sir Charles de Ruelle is an easy process with a lot of freedom, but the heroes created have to be suitable for their world and prepared to face any challenges that might come their way. They will need remarkable skills, intriguing motivations, and captivating personalities to become the champions of their own adventures!

To begin the hero creation process, the Hero Player should read the World Description carefully and really visualize what that environment would look and feel like.

Brainstorm how extraordinary a person would have to be to become a hero in that particular setting.

Once a hero concept is in mind, begin to apply the ideas to the four essential elements of a Hero Profile. Each element fulfills its own function during gameplay.

The first element of the Hero Profile is the hero's title, which includes his or her name, type, race, and affiliation, if any. In fiction, the name of a character often foreshadows what role he or she is going to play in the unfolding drama. It becomes a hook upon which a viewer may place expectations, and writers are very deliberate when it comes to naming their characters for that very reason. Names are just as important in WvH, and they can actually be used during gameplay, so choose them thoughtfully!

When choosing a hero type, race, or affiliation, review the hero list that was created with the World Description and consider which items seem the most appealing. Give the hero a title that can imply much about him or her for use later during gameplay.

In the case of Sir Charles de Ruelle, his first name means "manly," the middle article denotes nobility, and his last name references a famous wolf which, for this character, works on several levels. In de Ruelle's accompanying information, the designations "sir" and "cavalier" signify knighthood as a warrior capable of fighting on horseback, and the affiliation "Order of the Wolf" indicates that he is part of an organization whose name rings with an air of controlled ferocity.

The second element of the Hero Profile is the hero's description. Like a World Description, this brief paragraph is a narrative necessity in a storytelling game; it is part biography and part psychological report. The primary purpose of the hero description is to establish the hero's motivation – to give a clear explanation for why this person would willingly place himself or herself in danger.

Beyond that, the hero description should include any interesting details about the hero that make him or her stand out as a unique individual. The description does not need to be an exhaustive one. As long as there is enough information to give the Hero Player a solid handle on the character, the hero should be open to evolution and exploration during gameplay. Be evocative and provocative, but leave room for further discovery in the same manner in which the World Description was crafted. Consider the opening scenes of a movie or the first few chapters of a novel; most of the time, the audience gets information gradually, not all upfront.

In WvH, even though the Hero Player is controlling the actions of the heroes, the storytelling nature of the game is such that the game experience is improved with character development and revelation. This is similar to the advice about not inventing every little detail of a world in advance. Allow the story to take your character to places of reflection, just like real life does to real people!

For Sir Charles de Ruelle, consider these questions:

Into what noble family had de Ruelle been born? What was so traumatic to him during the War of the Crooked Saint? Why has Luna picked him to be her champion? Is he on bad terms with Lord Crowley? Does he ever collaborate with

others from the Order of the Wolf? How do other nobles react to de Ruelle's rejection of "normal" society? What evils in the night does he hunt?

It's perfectly fine to have so many lingering questions about a hero before the first game is played. Discovering their answers during an adventure makes playing WvH even more exciting!

The third element of the Hero profile is the list of the hero's Suit Abilities, denoted by the name of a suit from a standard deck of cards and a number. Suit Abilities represent the incredible skills, powers, and feats that a hero possesses and utilizes more effectively than ordinary folks do. A player has a starting maximum of five points to distribute among all Suit Abilities. No Suit Ability may be greater than [4]. A hero may be given different Suit Abilities that use the same type of suit.

In general, the suits used in a Suit Ability will follow the same overall characteristics in any world. Black suits represent physical abilities, and red suits represent metaphysical abilities. Each individual suit carries its own special traits of the physical or metaphysical aspects.

Clubs represent strength and physical presence. Depending on the world, a hero with a Suit Ability symbolized by clubs could possess powerful muscles, stunning features, melee weapon expertise, a resilient constitution, regenerative properties, physique-alteration control, inherent bodily defenses, or any other special physical characteristics.

Spades represent agility and adroitness. Depending on the world, a hero with a Suit Ability symbolized by spades could possess incredible reflexes, acrobatic aptitude, ranged weapon expertise, martial arts powers, thief skills, unique movement capabilities, superior speed, artistic talents, or any other special dexterous characteristics.

Diamonds represent intelligence and mental faculties. Depending on the world, a hero with a Suit Ability symbolized by diamonds could possess scientific genius, strategic cunning, arcane mastery, psychic powers, an extraordinary educational background, linguistic capabilities, or any other special mental characteristics.

Hearts represent wisdom and qualities of spirit. Depending on the world, a hero with a Suit Ability symbolized by hearts could possess an incredibly strong will, keen insight, inspiring leadership, superior instincts or empathy, divine ties, supernatural sensitivity, holy channeling, or any other special spiritual characteristics.

The higher the number assigned to a single Suit Ability, the more "impact" that ability can have on the action of a scene.

Impact Levels

The impact levels are as follows:
[1] – Low Impact   **[3]** – High Impact
[2] – Moderate Impact   **[4]** – Extreme Impact

Impact terminology is relative to the particular characteristics of the game world's genre, physics, and inhabitants. Also, the impact designations themselves are relative to one another. "Low" impact is not a bad thing; most times any impact on a scene is better than no impact at all!

So, de Ruelle's "Clubs [3] - Sword Master" ability has the potential to physically impact a scene using melee weapon proficiency to a high degree. Such an effect would be a far more dramatic one than he would be able to create with his other two abilities, each of which only has a [1]. That will figure into the Hero Player's strategy each round when trying to contend with all that the World Player might throw at that hero!

The fourth element of the Hero Profile is the hero's Special FX, denoted by the rank and suit of a face card. The Special FX is like a Suit Ability, only it is a more clearly defined, unique effect, and it is incredibly powerful! Choose any face card to represent it, provided the face card's suit is appropriate to the power's physical or metaphysical characteristics.

The Hero Player is encouraged to devise an amazing Special FX, something that, if used during a story, would place the hero in an exceptionally bright spotlight. Special FX moments are rare occasions in WvH, so Hero Players do not need to be timid when creating them!

Sir Charles possesses "Luna's Gift," the chance to turn into a ferocious werewolf warrior! Imagine the impact that such a transformation would have during a dramatic gameplay moment!

Health Status

Unlike most RPGs, there aren't any hit points or other numerical measures of hero health in WvH.

In meaningful stories, the injuries and deaths of heroes should also be meaningful, not random. Because it is a storytelling game, WvH takes that notion very seriously. The "measure" of hero mortality should be tied to the ultimate theme or message of a story rather than to a pool of points or dice.

This does not mean that heroes cannot be injured or killed during a game, as you'll see later. It just means that there are more appropriate times in a narrative for harm to strike a hero down.

Magic System

There isn't one!

As is the case with all aspects of WvH, the characterization and complexity of magic and magic-like powers are up to the players. It all starts with how magical abilities are expressed in the World Description, and how much detail a Hero Player would

like to put into defining magical powers. Since the Hero Profile serves as guidance for what a character may do during game play, rather than as an exhaustive list of everything that character is allowed to explicitly do, heroes who use magic should have the same freedom and spontaneous creativity as everyone else.

If Sir Charles had been given the power to cast spells instead of being a master swordsman, he might have the Suit Ability "Diamonds [3] – Hex Caster." During gameplay, the Hero Player would potentially be able to describe how Sir Charles could highly impact what is currently happening with a hex spell of the Hero Player's choice. What exactly a "high impact" hex is would depend on the power of magic in the game world, the context of the current situation, and the Hero Player's imagination.

The Hero Player should be free to create spell effects in the moment or, if preferred, to create a spell list or spell book in advance, provided that all effects are consistent with the game world and the impact level of the ability. Whether spontaneous or planned, the Hero Player's creativity should never be hindered, especially when playing with magic!

Hero Advancement

After overcoming the odds and outwitting the villains, heroes learn, grow, and get better at what they do. As they move on to new adventures, their expertise improves, and the Hero Player is given more impact power to use against the World Player's challenges. "Hero advancement" is a way to express those improvements and turn heroes into legends!

In traditional RPGs, the reward for taking the same character through several adventures is to be able to improve that character's attributes, skills, feats, and powers by applying a mathematical formula that converts character "experience" into a bonus. Since there are no true "stats" in WvH, hero advancement is handled in other ways.

The first and easiest way to "advance" a hero is to simply add new details to the hero description after a completed adventure. This is a chance to broaden the hero's personality and to show how recent events have affected him or her. This would not be just a cosmetic change; those narrative details could be strategically referenced during a later game, giving the Hero Player the opportunity to demonstrate the hero's personal growth while engaged in new challenges.

Another way to advance a hero is to increase the impact value of one Suit Ability after an adventure, allowing the Hero Player to have more impact on the action in new adventures with that hero. Improving one and only one existing Suit Ability may be done after an adventure has been completed if that Suit Ability was used at its maximum possible impact value in at least three different rounds during that

adventure. Advance the ability by increasing its impact value by [1]. Remember, no Suit Ability may have an impact value greater than [4].

So, if Sir Charles had used his "Clubs [3] - Sword Master" ability at High Impact in three different rounds of a single game – a difficult feat – his Hero Player would be able to increase the ability to "Clubs [4] - Sword Master" after the adventure. It would be much more likely that one of the hero's abilities with an impact value of [1] would be used in three rounds during a game and could be increased.

The power of a hero's Suit Ability may also be decreased under certain conditions if the players think it appropriate. For example, Sir Charles de Ruelle's original Suit Ability "Clubs [3] - Sword Master, owns a superior arming sword" relies on his possession of a quality sword. If Sir Charles had lost his sword but was able to get a suitably similar melee weapon, he could be temporarily penalized by [1] impact value, as in "Clubs [2] – Mace Wielder." If he had no weapon at all, the original ability would be useless.

A way to add a new Suit Ability to a hero is when that character comes into possession of a powerful weapon or artifact. As long as the players deem that the hero could operate this new implement with proficiency, or if the item simply just needs to be on one's person to work, that hero gains the full benefit of ownership.

For example, if Sir Charles found a cloak of bat skin that granted amazing powers of flight to its wearer, the players would first have to decide whether a hero needed to practice flying with the cloak for a while, or if the item was so powerful that it bestowed perfect skills of flight immediately. If they decided the latter, Sir Charles could be given "Spades [3] – Nocturne's Cloak, can fly when worn at night" for as long as he possessed the artifact. Imagine the impact a flying werewolf warrior would have on the adventure!

Whether your heroes are created for a single quest or an epic campaign of great exploits, WvH gives you the freedom to take them in whatever direction you wish, to make them the main characters in their own mythology!

All your heroes need now is an adventure…

CHAPTER 3
ADVENTURE DESIGN

Adventure is what the players came for, and, in WvH there's plenty of it!

In a traditional RPG, a Game Master prepares every detail of the adventure in advance. The GM structures a plot for the players to follow, devises the encounters that will occur, creates non-player characters with whom the players will interact, and combines all sorts of dangerous traps and monsters for the player characters to face on their way to a climactic finish.

In WvH, the World Player has similar responsibilities, but must contend with one striking difference: a World Player cannot control the plot.

Because of the random nature of gameplay and story development in WvH, the World Player can never know what adventure elements he or she will be able to access next. So, adventure design must be a very open-ended process. Much like the World Description, the adventure should be designed with broad strokes that can be more precisely detailed during gameplay. Adventure design is a process that must promote opportunities for a plot to emerge during gameplay rather than fabricating the plot in advance. This means that the World Player will have to be a cunning, spontaneous, and inventive plotter in the moment.

The Adventure Premise

To begin creating an adventure, the World Player reviews the World Description and the Hero Profiles, and then states in a short paragraph the premise of one or more possible conflicts those heroes would face in that world. Whatever the World Player can do to more personally connect heroes to this "Adventure Premise" will make the game all the more appealing to the Hero Player. Hero creation precedes adventure design for a reason – to enable the World Player to devise conflicts that will draw heroes into the action more meaningfully through personal struggles.

At the start of a game, the Adventure Premise will be shared with the Hero Player, so any surprise conflicts that might be waiting at a location for the heroes should be artfully concealed. Above all, the Adventure Premise should be one filled with enormous promise, not one confined to a predetermined conclusion.

Let's examine an Adventure Premise for "The Nightfields of Tannaron" that is made especially to draw the hero Sir Charles de Ruelle into the drama:

Madness of the Moon Wraiths

Recently, during nights when the moon is bright, terrifying Wraiths appear in the little village of Hopshire and pull the souls out of the bodies of helpless victims. Lord Crowley, regent of the lands in which Hopshire was founded, has declared the attacks the work of the local Church of Luna whom he claims has conjured evil from the moon itself. Crowley has ordered all followers of Luna to be arrested on sight. He has sworn to the people of Hopshire that he will save them by eradicating Luna's influence from his lands! But is Crowley right about the Moon Wraiths, or is there an even more sinister explanation to the appearance of these horrible monsters?

In the above Adventure Premise, there is the suggestion of a plot and possible conflicts facing the hero. The details, however, do not go beyond the set-up of the action. The hero isn't even mentioned directly, though there are plenty of indirect connections made to him, such as the threat to innocents, the nighttime evil, the accusations against Luna, and, of course, his former master, Lord Crowley. Like the blurb on the back of a novel, we get just enough to know what the conflicts are going to be, but we have no idea how they might play out.

The World Player could have more ideas in mind beyond those expressed in the Adventure Premise. As in any strategy game, some preplanning is a good idea. In WvH, though, the World Player cannot plot out in advance exactly what will happen next because of the random way the details of the adventure are eventually pulled together.

Adventure Locations

After the Adventure Premise is created, the World Player makes a list of three to five "Adventure Locations," brief summaries of where the action will take place. An Adventure Location could be a dungeon for exploration, a space sector for starship battles, a saloon for showdowns, a prison for escaping, a crime scene for investigation, or a tavern for networking – and no maps are necessary! So, any place is possible!

Adventure Locations come in these three types:

Known Locations are sites that are familiar to heroes, even if only by reputation. The Hero Player may be given some or all of the associated game information concerning this location before gameplay.

Secret Locations are sites that are not familiar to heroes. The Hero Player is told nothing about this location except that it exists and that clues to its existence will be mentioned at other locations.

Tied Locations are Known or Secret Locations that are connected by the World Player such that heroes may only travel to one of those locations after first traveling to the other for at least one round. All, some, or none of the locations may be tied.

Adventure Locations Example

In the case of "Madness of the Moon Wraiths," the World Player might create the following three locations for that adventure:

Hopshire Village [known] – a typical medieval village; features basic village shops and several family homes; the primary source of economy for Hopshire is craftwork and smithies; the Moon Wraiths appear here only at night.

Little Church of Luna [known, tied to the Siv] – humble house of worship nestled in a clearing in Eldon Forest just outside of Hopshire; the members keep to themselves.

The Siv [secret, tied from the Church of Luna] – long-forgotten cave system beneath the church.

The Hero Player would be told the titles of the first two Adventure Locations and would be informed that the Church of Luna was tied to a secret location. The full descriptions of Hopshire Village and the Church of Luna would also be given.

Though three Adventure Locations have been created, a World Player cannot force the Hero Player into any or all of them. It should not be necessary for heroes to travel to all of the Adventure Locations in order to tell a great story, though most likely they will. Nevertheless, like the Adventure Premise, the locations present possibilities for plot developments; they are not the developments in and of themselves. So much drama might occur in a single location that the Hero Player chooses to remain there for a longer portion of the game than the World Player might have expected. This all illustrates yet another reason why over-preparation on the part of the World Player should be avoided.

Conflict Lists

Once the locations have been stated, the World Player creates a "Conflict List" for each of them. Conflict Lists represent the adversarial entities that oppose the heroes during each round of storytelling gameplay. Conflict Lists are based on elements derived explicitly or implicitly from the Adventure Premise and may also be inspired by elements from the World Description or Hero Profiles. Typically, Conflict Lists are kept secret from the Hero Player, but the World Player may hint at some of the threats if it would create more storytelling suspense.

For each location, the World Player fills in a list of ten conflicts. What counts as a "conflict" on the Conflict Lists could be anything from an archenemy's minions to the public discrediting of a hero to a natural disaster. The World Player is free to dream up any sort of conflict without having to worry about how his or her creation might translate into game statistics because there are no statistics. The only values that must are placed on conflicts are in terms of impact – low, moderate, high, and extreme.

The entry numbers of the list correspond to the numerical rankings in a standard deck of 52 cards, with an Ace being equal to "one," and a face card being equal to "ten." The higher the entry number is, the greater the threat will be to the heroes. The entry at the tenth position will be the greatest conflict that the heroes could face at that Adventure Location.

What follows are the Conflict Lists for "Madness of the Moon Wraiths." Because the World Player fully expects that the Hero Player will have Sir Charles investigate the Moon Wraiths at night, especially since Sir Charles benefits from nighttime encounters, the only lists necessary are ones that identify conflicts that the hero will face when the sun has already gone down…

Hopshire Village
1. Nervous HOPSHIRE VILLAGER(S), close to panic and suspicious of outsiders.
2. GOODY SALTON, deceased; the corpse of a Hopshire victim of the Moon Wraiths; beloved mother of five. Her soul has been removed from her body, leaving her face frozen in abject horror.
3. Evidence of ritualistic activity left behind possibly by members of the local Church of Luna, including white candles, sacred circles, or moon crystals.
4. Warding symbols – on objects or on the person of a villager – against the influence and magic of Good Saint Luna or her followers.
5. Disorienting, silvery mists that seem to be moving through Hopshire with purpose.
6. KAZDAR, Changeling Mercenary; dressed as a member of the Church of Luna; Physical Ability – Hand-to-hand Combatant; determined to cause chaos in the village, though he will never reveal why.

7. AUGUSTUS, Human Hex Master of Hopshire, Veteran of the War of the Crooked Saint; Metaphysical Abilities – Spirit Summoner, Hex Dispeller; has been perfecting infernal hexes learned from war prisoners years ago.
8. Qala's Darkness, an unnatural blighting of light sources, encroaching on Hopshire; many have heard that this has been spreading through Tannaron, a tangible form of Qala's evil legacy.
9. CROWLEY'S LOYALIST(S), Human Cavalier; Physical Abilities – Sword Wielder, Militant; on the hunt for followers of Luna.
10. MOON WRAITH(S), Abomination; Physical Abilities – Floater, Slasher (Bone Claws); Metaphysical Abilities – Terrorizer, Soul Stealer; deformed silver skeleton with long tendrils of silver light flowing from its arms, harmed by any light except moonlight.

Little Church of Luna
1. ACOLYTE(S) OF LUNA, alternately feeling devotion to their faith and anger toward their persecutors.
2. Ceremonial materials that match the evidence of ritualistic activity left behind in Hopshire Village.
3. Ancient decorative symbols of Luna on the walls that are beginning to change their shape, reminding those who see the change of old prejudices against the moon-based Good Saint and her moods/phases.
4. Angry HOPSHIRE VILLAGER(S) demanding that the members of the church leave the area forever.
5. MAGNUS VEREEL, Saint Seer, Little Church Leader; Metaphysical Ability – Secret Seer – notices hidden things with ease; has lost most of his powers, including healing abilities, with old age.
6. Magical defensive measures, producing harmful effects to repel transgressors who come near the entrance of the Siv.
7. AUGUSTUS, Human Hex Master of Hopshire, Veteran of the War of the Crooked Saint; Metaphysical Abilities – Spirit Summoner, Hex Dispeller; has been perfecting infernal hexes learned from war prisoners years ago.
8. The Siv entrance, reeking of evil's foul taint, weakening or corrupting those who are not evil as they near the magically-reinforced floor beams above the cave system opening.
9. MOON WRAITH(S), Abomination; Physical Abilities – Floater, Slasher (Bone Claws); Metaphysical Abilities – Terrorizer, Soul Stealer; deformed silver skeleton with long tendrils of silver light flowing from its arms, harmed by any light except moonlight.
10. CROWLEY'S LOYALIST(S), Human Cavalier; Physical Abilities – Sword Wielder, Militant; on the hunt for followers of Luna.

The Siv

1. Winding passage headed deeper into the earth, making navigating difficult.
2. GIANT WORMS, Mindless Beasts; Physical Abilities – Constrictor, Burrower; bile-filled bodies easily burst open, spewing rancid ooze.
3. Dead end.
4. GIANT SLUGS, Mindless Beasts; Physical Abilities – Incessant Biter, Ooze Trailer; will aggressively attack anything moving to see if it is food, leaves a slippery trail in its wake.
5. Loose earth caving in under foot which may moderately injure victims and leave them stuck until they can work themselves free.
6. Wide cavern of dormant BAT MONSTERS hanging from ceiling with a giant bug-filled guano heap, 40-feet high and nauseating, filling the base of the opening; dead end. With noise, the monsters will awaken and attack.
7. Chamber of artifacts resonating with arcane energy, compelling anyone who enters to take one of the cursed items of Qala's family from among the un-cursed magical items and mundane weapons; dead end.
8. ANY CHARACTER(S) from a previous location not appearing on this list.
9. MOON WRAITH(S), Abomination; Physical Abilities – Floater, Slasher (Bone Claws); Metaphysical Abilities – Terrorizer, Soul Stealer; deformed silver skeleton with long tendrils of silver light flowing from its arms, harmed by any light except moonlight.
10. BAT MONSTERS, Abominations; Physical Abilities – Flyer, Slasher, Plague-carrier; trapped in their caves for a century by the Little Church's foundation which formed a magical barrier; if released, they will spread contagion to humans, making Qala's return easier.

Since conflicts arise randomly during a game of WvH, all of the items on a Conflict List should be appropriate to the location as well as to each other, enabling the World Player to use them together in a variety of interesting ways. The randomness of conflict appearances means that the World Player cannot devise a single explanation for the unfolding plot and cannot rely on any entry's appearance in the game; many possible explanations have to be available for development during a game. Unlike the GM of RPGs, the World Player is not a "master" of anything; he or she is a "player" on equal footing with an opponent, both of whom must be improvisational storytellers to make the best out of what fate offers to them!

That opportunity is present in the "Hopshire Village" Conflict List. What exactly is causing the Moon Wraiths to attack this little village? In this Conflict List, the World Player has seeded a number of possibilities. Perhaps the village Hex Master Augustus has gone too far practicing the magic he learned during the War. Maybe the Church of Luna is really behind it, or could it be Lord Crowley has summoned these moon monsters to frame Luna's followers as revenge against Sir Charles? Could the Wraiths be a product of Qala's spreading darkness? And there's that Changeling Kazda, who is definitely up to no good! Perhaps the answers are waiting at another location, or perhaps this is just

the beginning of even greater evils to come! Two things are certain – every entry on that list will make heroic Sir Charles de Ruelle's life very, very difficult, but not every entry on that list is going to make it into the story!

As much detail can be added to the Conflict List entries as the World Player would like. Likewise, the same adversaries or incidents may appear on different Conflict Lists for different locations if the World Player sees their recurrence as important to the adventure. One "Any Character(s) from a previous location not appearing on this list" entry may be used on a Conflict List to make it easier for the World Player to create a more cohesive narrative, especially when the "evil mastermind" might not be known from the start. Whatever the World Player thinks would be fun to mix and match in order to stimulate creativity at a moment's notice will make the Conflict Lists some of the most important parts of the game!

Once all of the Conflict Lists are complete, the game is ready to play!

CHAPTER 4
PLAYING THE GAME

A standard game of World vs. Hero is a two-player match of strategic storytelling action that pits the World Player's deadly conflicts against the Hero Player's courageous heroes. The object of the game is to skillfully manipulate randomized elements from the Hero Profiles and Conflict Lists to create a thrilling and complete adventure story that doesn't seem random at all!

Even though both players will want the adventure story to come to an exciting and satisfying conclusion, the World Player won't make it easy for the heroes. During the game, the World Player will attempt to use conflicts to their most diabolical effect, making the tasks of the heroes that much more challenging to accomplish. Meanwhile, the Hero Player must attempt to outwit the World Player by cleverly using the heroes' special abilities to overcome every obstacle…or else!

The game's objectives are achieved when players make "Action Scenes," verbal or written statements that describe the developing plot of the story. Action Scenes are created in alternating turns by each player, and the players are encouraged to be as imaginative as they can be when making their scenes. However, the primary subject of all Action Scenes is determined by cards randomly drawn from a specially-prepared deck, so strategic choices will have to be made spontaneously, leading to unexpected plot twists!

As the game proceeds, players will follow guidelines that will permit progressively more intense action, leading to the last two rounds of play during which climactic finalities may occur for both the world and its heroes.

When the game has ended, surviving heroes may go on to further their legend, while undefeated villains may rise up once more to hatch their nefarious plans!

The first steps to playing WvH have been discussed at length in the previous sections. First, the players cooperatively create a World Description for the setting of great adventures. Then, the Hero Player creates a Hero Profile for one to four heroes waiting to brave the dangers of their world. Next, the World Player creates an Adventure Premise, Adventure Locations, and Conflict Lists for each location. Once all of those materials have been assembled, it's time to prepare the Game Deck!

The Game Deck

Remove the face cards from a standard deck of 52 playing cards. This gives the players two decks – one with 40 cards, and one with 12 cards. Shuffle each of these decks.

Remove four cards from the 40-card deck. Do not look at them. Place those cards in a face-down discard pile; they will not be used in the game.

Remove four face cards from the 12-card deck without looking at them and shuffle those four cards into the first deck, bringing it back up to 40 cards. This is the Game Deck. The remaining eight face cards are placed face-down in the discard pile and will not be used in the game.

Each player gets five poker chips or similar markers, and the first round is ready to begin!

The Game Round

There are eight rounds of play in a standard game of WvH. Five cards are drawn each round, and, based on the ranks and suits of those cards, the players alternately create Action Scenes that drive the drama of the story in progress. Thus, in each round, ten Action Scenes will be made – five by each player – with an eleventh occurring at the beginning of the round to indicate the heroes' arrival or continued presence at a location.

The following is an overview of what occurs in each round:

Steps In The Game Round

1. The Hero Player makes an Action Scene establishing the location for this round.
2. The World Player draws the top five cards from the Game Deck and places them face up in a row on the table. This is the "Tableau."
3. Starting with the World Player, the players create Action Scenes in alternating turns.
4. To make an Action Scene, the active player places a marker on his or her side of the card that he or she is accessing.
5. The active player declares what other cards in the Tableau he or she is using with the accessed card. Those cards may or may not have markers on them already.
6. The active player makes an Action Scene.
7. The non-active player may dispute the Action Scene. If there is no dispute, the Action Scene stands and play continues.
8. Both players must access all cards, but no player may access a card more than once. Once both players have each accessed all five cards, the round is over. Players take back their markers. The World Player discards the Tableau.
9. If there are still cards left in the Game Deck, return to step 1.

Action Scenes

Action Scenes are the heart of WvH. Within them, players become the gods of their creation, shaping the events that alter reality as good wages its eternal struggle against evil!

Simply put, an Action Scene is a written or spoken description that develops the action occurring in a round of gameplay. An Action Scene must be one or more sentences long and may be made of several paragraphs.

Verbal Action Scenes are best for casual, fast-paced games. During such games, players may still keep notes that summarize the important moments during a round, but most of the gaming activity is spoken.

Written Action Scenes are best for more serious storytelling sessions, when the word choices really matter to the players. Each may scan previous scenes to find story elements that might be exploited in the moment or later. Writing Action Scenes also makes playing online in e-mails or within forum posts easy. What's more, when a written game is completed, the Action Scenes form an invaluable record of the adventure – an original, collaborative adventure story that captures everything that has happened to the heroes!

Whether spoken or written, once a player's Action Scene is accepted by his or her opponent, it becomes a story "reality," and the players must live with its consequences for the rest of the game.

The first Action Scene of each round is made by the Hero Player to establish the location of the story chosen from the World Player's Adventure Locations. No special rules exist for this "move" of the game, so the Hero Player should start out strong!

Let's watch as Sir Charles de Ruelle begins his adventure:

Hero Player – Round 1, Establish Adventure Location
Hopshire Village

As he rode into Hopshire on his uneasy steed, Sir Charles de Ruelle could feel the dread that hung over the little village. The night was unnaturally quiet; even the crickets seemed to have abandoned the place. No one walked Hopshire's little streets, and every home seemed deathly still. Sir Charles knew what this meant.

Evil had come to Hopshire.

The worldly Cavalier climbed down from his horse and observed his surroundings carefully. If the stories he had heard back in Covington were true, Hopshire was under the threat of terrible creatures that stole souls in the night. Some had whispered that these "Moon Wraiths" were the work of the Vampire-Princess's minions seeking revenge for their mistress's defeat, but others had placed the blame on Good Saint Luna whom Sir Charles followed faithfully. That accusation worried the brave Cavalier most, especially since he knew he was standing on land ruled by his former liege, Lord Crowley.

As he whispered a prayer to the half-moon above, Sir Charles touched the pommel of his sword knowing full well that prayer alone would not purge the darkness that

hung over Hopshire and its innocent inhabitants. He gritted his teeth; hopefully, he wasn't too late to help.

Sir Charles has arrived in style as the Hero Player sets an ominous tone for the action to come! Of course, the Hero Player could have simply stated, "Sir Charles rode into Hopshire at night," but that would not have been as entertaining for the players. In a storytelling game, every opportunity to layer moments with mood and emotion should be taken, even when it's just travel to a new location.

Once at an Adventure Location, the hero will remain there for the entirety of the round. Between rounds, the Hero Player may travel to a new location or remain in the one from the previous round. Locations may be visited again even after leaving them in previous rounds. The amount of "time" that passes between rounds is up to the Hero Player.

After the location has been established, the storytelling turns begin!

The World Player takes the top five cards from the Game Deck and places them face up on the table for both players to see. This is the "Tableau" that lets the players know what they may use from their prepared material to create their Action Scenes during this round.

Both players have the same objective during a round: to make Action Scenes that add to the development of the current plot by describing the effects of one story element on the other current story elements. The basic idea is a simple one, but Action Scenes must be made with care! Play alternates scene-for-scene, and any concept, character, or condition described may be used afterwards by the other player!

So, when a player makes a particular scene is just as important as what that scene is about! As the round progresses, concepts will evolve, plot and characterization will advance, and anything is possible!

All Action Scenes made during a round include the following:
- The primary subject of the scene determined by the rank or suit of the card that the active player has just accessed;
- Previously-stated story elements from the current round. This includes any heroes, conflict characters, or conflict elements mentioned thus far. Location details – landscape, buildings, flora, fauna – may be created at any time by either player to include environmental flavor that is consistent with the context of the world and is useful to the story;
- Descriptive language that rises up to but is not greater than the impact level allowed by the card(s).

So, after Sir Charles arrives in Hopshire at the beginning of his adventure there, here is the Tableau drawn through which the World Player and the Hero Player may develop their individual story elements:

<div align="center">

3 of Clubs (3C) • 4 of Clubs (4C) • 7 of Spades (7S)

3 of Diamonds (3D) • King of Hearts (KH)

</div>

Accessing Conflict Lists

Before making an Action Scene, a player must first "access" a story element through one of the five cards in the Tableau.

Accessing a card on each turn is mandatory!

The World Player takes the first turn after the Hero Player establishes the round's location. This is a definite advantage; getting the chance to access the Tableau first will put the forces of evil in control of the opening direction of the story!

The card ranks in this Tableau give the World Player permission to access four different entries on the "Hopshire Village" Conflict List, including "Entry 3: Evidence of ritualistic activity left behind possibly by members of the local Church of Luna, including white candles, sacred circles, or moon crystals;" "Entry 4: Warding symbols – on objects or on the person of a villager – against the influence and magic of Good Saint Luna or her followers;" "Entry 7: Augustus, Human Hex Master of Hopshire;" and, since Face Cards count as 10's for the World Player, "Entry 10: Moon Wraith(s)." Nothing else from that Conflict List may be used during this round!

How much of an impact one of those Conflict List entries actually has on the other story elements is determined by the item's placement on the Conflict List. Entries at positions one, two, or three have a Low Impact; entries at positions four, five, and six have a Moderate Impact; entries at positions seven, eight, and nine have a High Impact, and the entry at the tenth position has an Extreme Impact.

Basic impact is not static, though, and may be increased. Once a card is accessed, the World Player may "use" cards in the Tableau that match the accessed card's rank for an impact bonus. For every additional matching rank card used with the first accessed rank card, the World Player may increase the impact of an Action Scene by one level, to a maximum of Extreme Impact.

So, for the World Player controlling the conflicts that are about to confront Sir Charles, there are some very interesting options available. The one that stands out the most is "Entry 3: Evidence of ritualistic activity left behind possibly by members of the local Church of Luna, including white candles, sacred circles, or moon crystals."

When Sir Charles arrived in the previous scene, the Hero Player mentioned that he had whispered a prayer to Good Saint Luna as he embarked on his righteous investigation of the rumors of evil in Hopshire. The World Player, eager to start strong, thinks that chipping away at Sir Charles's faith in Luna might make a fitting first strike!

Moreover, there are two cards in the Tableau with a rank of 3. That means that the basic Low Impact of Entry 3 may be increased one impact level by accessing one of the 3-cards and by using the other! Now, the evidence implicating the Church of Luna can have a greater impact on Sir Charles!

The World Player places a marker on the 3 of Clubs, declares what is being accessed and used and at what impact level, and then makes this Action Scene:

World Player – Round 1, Turn 1

Access 3C, Use 3D – Evidence against Church of Luna, Moderate Impact

At the opening of Hopshire's empty stables not far from the feet of Sir Charles lay a smoldering clutter of white and shiny objects which seemed particularly good at capturing the silvery beams of moonlight cutting through the darkness. The objects' glittering presence would have caught anyone's attention, especially anyone surveying the cold, still atmosphere that engulfed the village this very night.

The sparkling objects were an array of translucent crystalline rocks and white candles that had only just been burning minutes ago. Wisps of smoke continued to exude from the blackened wicks, and their pale, wax bodies appeared yet to hold some magical glow within them. Though the crystals and candles were strewn about the ground as if scattered in a hurry, they all still fell within a carefully marked circle of white powder. The white powder glistened like the crystals, reflecting the light of the half-moon with intensified brilliance.

Any follower of Good Saint Luna would recognize the trappings of a sacred summoning circle, the ritual that dared to reach into the ether to call upon moon spirits for guidance and appeals. But any follower of Good Saint Luna would also recognize that in the dirt outside of a stable was no place for such powerful magic. Its appearance there could only mean that the rumors of the local Church of Luna being involved in the attacks of the Moon Wraiths might very well be true.

Any follower of Good Saint Luna would also feel his very faith shaken within his breast at that terrible thought.

With that Action Scene, the World Player has drawn first blood!

Notice what the World Player has done. Using details from the Hero Player's previous scene (the half-moon light and Sir Charles surveying the village) and then adding the primary subject accessed from the Conflict List (the evidence of Church magic), the World Player has woven together an attack on the hero's personal beliefs by implying that even Sir Charles would "feel his very faith shaken within his breast at that terrible thought" of Luna's followers' involvement in evil acts. Though only a "moderate" attack, the Hero Player will have to counter the implication immediately or accept that Sir Charles de Ruelle's faith has been negatively affected by the evidence of Church of Luna corruption!

Remember, the Hero Player does not know what is on the Conflict Lists, so every Action Scene by the World Player is a potential surprise! This incriminating Action Scene would most certainly fall into that category.

Now, the storytelling competition really begins!

Accessing Suit Abilities

When presented with a World Player's Action Scene that poses any sort of a problem for a hero – which will happen all the time – the Hero Player needs to counter with an Action Scene of an equal or higher impact value that describes a course of

action that resolves the issue in an appropriate manner. If unable to do so, the hero will suffer the consequences.

Sometimes, the cards in the Tableau will only permit a response of a lesser impact value. In that case, the Action Scene made by the Hero Player must be of an exceptionally clever nature to make up the difference, allowing the Hero Player to argue success in the attempt to resolve the task.

The outcome of the task or challenge would be described in the Hero Player's Action Scene as a response to that task or challenge. This scene would also include the consequences of failure if unable to completely overcome the challenge. Once addressed, the Hero Player may continue on with the Action Scene to continue trying to develop the story in his or her favor.

So, the Hero Player controlling Sir Charles must find a way to use what the Tableau allows to save our hero from losing his religion!

The current Tableau permits the Hero Player to use all of Sir Charles de Ruelle's Suit Abilities because all three of their associated suit symbols – Clubs, Spades, and Hearts – appear in the Tableau. Because all cards in a Tableau must be accessed by both players, the Hero Player will need to use a special rule to utilize the Diamonds card in the Tableau during this round since Sir Charles has no Suit Ability of Diamonds. Right now, though, the Hero Player is mainly concerned with maximizing impact.

For the Hero Player, the impact of an Action Scene is determined by the total number of cards of the same suit that can be accessed and used in a single turn.

For every card used with an accessed card of the same suit, the Hero Player may increase the impact of the Action Scene by one level, to a maximum of the Suit Ability's original impact value. One accessed card yields Low Impact; an accessed suit card and one matching used card yield Moderate Impact; an accessed suit card and two matching used cards yield High Impact; and an accessed suit card and three matching used cards yield Extreme Impact. No matter how many matching suit cards can be used, the maximum impact of a Suit Ability is determined by the numerical impact value of a Suit Ability on the Hero Profile.

For example, if there were two cards in the current Tableau with the Hearts suit, Sir Charles would not be allowed to access one and use the other when making his Suit Ability "Hearts [1] - Chosen of Luna, invokes deity for guidance" the primary subject of an Action Scene because its impact value is only [1] – Low Impact.

There are two other rules that affect the Hero Player's strategy, one concerning Aces and the other concerning face cards.

Aces and Face Cards

For the World Player, an Ace is a one, but for the Hero Player, an Ace may be accessed and used for its suit as per standard rules, or the Hero Player may instead

choose to access the Ace to create an Action Scene that introduces into the story an "Ally," a character that aids the heroes' objectives in the current round of the game.

The Ally created in the Action Scene will impact the action in a way that is consistent with the suit's physical or metaphysical representation, much like a hero's Suit Ability. Other cards in the Tableau that match an accessed Ace's suit may increase the impact of the Ally's Action Scene as per standard rules. The Ally's appearance on the scene should make complete sense to the present plot.

The Ally will only impact the action of the round in which it is created. The World Player may never access or use an Ally, but the World Player's conflicts may target the ally in the same way as they target a hero.

For the World Player, a face card is a ten, but for the Hero Player, face cards may be accessed and used for their suits, or if the face card matched a hero's Special FX in both rank and suit, the Hero Player could access that card and automatically use the Special FX in an Action Scene of Extreme Impact! No other suit cards need to be used for the Special FX to have Extreme Impact.

Because of the way the Game Deck is set up, a Special FX moment is rare, indeed, so the Hero Player should make the most of it when it happens!

Unfortunately for Sir Charles, the current Tableau does not have his Special FX card – King of Clubs – in it. There is a King of Hearts, but it does not match the suit of the hero's Special FX.

Nevertheless, that's the card the Hero Player will access anyway to use the Suit Ability "Hearts [1] - Chosen of Luna" Suit Ability to counter or minimize the attack on the faith of Sir Charles. The ability can only be used for Low Impact, but the World Player's previous scene was one of Moderate Impact, so the Hero Player will have to be extra creative to make up the difference or Sir Charles will suffer! Will the Hero Player be able to overcome the challenge?

The Hero Player places a marker on the King of Hearts, and declares an action:

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 1
Access KH – Sir Charles, Chosen of Luna, invokes deity for guidance, Low Impact

"This cannot be right," Sir Charles muttered to himself as he eyed the summoning circle more closely. Slowly, he stepped toward the crystals and smoking candles as his drawing hand wrapped around the grip of his sword.

"Luna, I invoke thee," he declared. "Show me if this is your work or the work of your faithful."

The stillness of the air suddenly stirred as a small breeze kissed the wicks of the candles, ceasing their smoldering.

"What does this mean?" Sir Charles asked the half-moon. "Is this an answer or coincidence?"

Nothing more happened.

Sir Charles wanted to believe that Luna had indicated her displeasure at the summoning circle by extinguishing the candles, but he could not be certain. For now, he would have to rely on something more tangible than his faith.

He drew his sword.

The creator of the circle could not be far off. In fact, Sir Charles was sure that his appearance moments ago in Hopshire had been the cause of the circle-maker's hasty departure.

With steely resolve, Sir Charles mentally prepared himself for a confrontation and entered the stable.

Disputes

If the Hero Player had stated that Sir Charles had made an invocation to Luna that not only countered the doubt implied by the World Player, but also made his faith stronger, that would have gone far beyond the Low Impact allowed by the Suit Ability. The World Player could have objected to the scene with a "dispute."

Any Action Scene that appears to contradict the current context of the story may be disputed.

When a dispute is called, the non-active player gives the reasons for the dispute, citing narrative precedent and the relative strength of impact values. The active player has one and only one chance to respond to the arguments. The non-active player may accept the reasons and keep the Action Scene in play, or reject the reasons, forcing the Active Player to make a new Action Scene with the same accessed card. The new scene may also be disputed.

Disputes about impact can be tricky because of the subjective nature of the creative process. Add to that the imaginative qualities of the world, its characters, and the magical elements, and everything might seem arguable!

Disputes are based mostly on the mutual narrative expectations of the players. During creation of the World Description, the players would have decided upon the style, tone, level of humor, and graphic nature of the action that would take place during the storytelling. This does not mean the outcome of the story had been decided in advance by the players; rather, the players would have agreed upon a narrative common ground that should remain consistent throughout gameplay. In WvH, cooperation and competition exist in equal parts!

The best way that players can ensure that they are not disputing each other's scenes every turn is to take a "progressive" attitude toward story-building. Add new details and narrative flourishes little-by-little rather than in "hefty" amounts. Let the storytelling experience grow and develop gradually as the world and characters become more familiar.

Developing the Story

The Hero Player did not bolster the Low Impact Action Scene with a clever twist, so the consequences of Sir Charles' limited failure are conveyed within the Action Scene. In the spirit of the storytelling tradition, the Hero Player has accepted the hero's weakness and incorporated it into the narrative.

What has just happened in the game is that the players have unintentionally begun developing the theme of uncertainty in the ideals of a hero by introducing doubt into the main character's mind. Within just two turns, an intriguing layer of characterization has already manifested around Sir Charles de Ruelle. Now, he'll not only have to contend with the Moon Wraiths, but he will also have to fight against his own religious reservations. This is excellent storytelling material!

Such a development was only possible because the World Player deliberately introduced material tied to the hero into the Adventure Premise and the Conflict List. Though the World Player did not know how it would all work out, the potential for internal conflict and personal drama amid the battle of good versus evil was always there waiting to be exhumed!

So, the Hero Player has used the stables that the World Player mentioned in the previous scene to walk Sir Charles into…something. How might the World Player continue to apply the pressure to the hero?

Because there is another card with a 3-rank available to be accessed in the Tableau, the World Player could create another Moderate Impact Action Scene about the summoning circle. However, the World Player wants to take an opportunity that the Hero Player has just unwittingly provided.

Sir Charles is walking into the stable and is thinking that the "creator of the circle could not be far off." This was an interesting leap of logic that the Hero Player took, implying that Sir Charles might already be on the trail of the guilty party.

But, what if it was the thing summoned by the circle that was not far off?

Maybe it's time for a Moon Wraith!

Or is it? Since it will only be the World Player's second turn of the first round, perhaps it is too early for a Moon Wraith to make an appearance. However, all cards and their corresponding story elements in a Tableau must be accessed during a round, so the King of Hearts – "Entry 10: Moon Wraith(s)" – will have to be brought into the adventure eventually. What can the World Player do?

Indirect Impact

If the World Player believes that it is too soon for a particular Conflict List entry to make an appearance or the player seeks a more subtle approach to a conflict or if that conflict entry has already been "defeated," the impact of the World Player's Action Scene may be indirect. "Indirect impact" means that the accessed Conflict List entry is somehow influencing events without actually being present.

So, although "Entry 10: Moon Wraith(s)" will have to be accessed, the World Player could create an Action Scene that expresses the Moon Wraith's indirect impact on what is happening by using other already established story elements to create a scene with Extreme Impact, but without the Moon Wraith:

At the mention of the Moon Wraiths, all of villagers simultaneously fled from Sir Charles, screaming "He is in league with Luna! He is in league with the moon monsters!"

That would be extreme!

Of course, no villagers have appeared in the story, yet. All the World Player has to work with are a quiet town, a suspicious summoning circle, and a stable. Perhaps it would be best to have an actual Moon Wraith appear! It would further pressure the faith of Sir Charles if it looked like the Moon Wraith had, in fact, come from one of Luna's summoning circles! Also, a bit of early action in an adventure story is never a bad thing!

So, the World Player intends to have one Moon Wraith appear and attack Sir Charles in the stable. Given the current Tableau, the Extreme Impact of the attack could prove overwhelming to the hero because the Tableau's available suit cards would not give the Hero Player the chance to counter an extreme challenge.

Fortunately for Sir Charles, heroes are protected from harm during the early rounds of play thanks to the game's "Round Guidelines."

Round Guidelines

Round Guidelines are the guiding principles of WvH. Because WvH is a storytelling game, gameplay should be directed by the expectations of narrative structure. Narrative structures may vary from genre to genre, but all hero stories feature elements that are fairly consistent regardless of genre and style. Those structural elements and expectations are incorporated into the following Round Guidelines:

ROUNDS 1 & 2: Unless the Adventure Premise includes a scenario that clearly defines how the heroes and the conflict elements have entered into opposition, players must establish their antagonism in these two rounds. Their initial confrontation needs to be structured in the form of an incident that sets the plot in motion. Because the Tableau is random, the plot that is incited may not exactly be the one that the players expected, but go with it! By the end of Round 2, the plot, after twenty-two Action Scenes, could very well be headed in a surprising new direction! As long as

everything remains reasonably consistent with the Adventure Premise, the rest of the game will go as the players hoped while still being surprising! During Rounds 1 and 2, heroes may not be incapacitated, seriously injured, or killed.

ROUNDS 3 & 4: During these rounds, the World Player should come on strong in opposition to the Hero Player's advances. Only in cases of egregious violations of the story's context is the Hero Player allowed to dispute any Action Scene made by the World Player. Conflict elements can get away with a lot during these scenes, even extending a bit beyond their established impact levels. By the end of Round 4, the heroes should be at their lowest point, and the plot should take a whole new direction. During Rounds 3 and 4, a hero may be incapacitated, but may not be seriously injured or killed.

ROUNDS 5 & 6: During these rounds, the Hero Player must cope with the previous difficulties and begin to prevail. The Hero Player must quickly come to terms with how badly things most certainly have become and must be clever in his or her Action Scenes to help the heroes reverse their fortunes. Now, only in cases of egregious violations of context is the World Player allowed to dispute any Action Scene made by the Hero Player, so gameplay balances out here. The heroes should be bold and dare the impossible, even if the risks seem overwhelming, and they now may extend their actions a bit beyond their normal impact values. That boldness will help to carry the plot toward the final rounds and an exciting climax! During Rounds 5 and 6, a hero may be incapacitated or seriously injured, but may not be killed.

ROUNDS 7 & 8: If the adventure has been dynamic in plot and thrilling in action, whether physical or metaphysical, these are the showdown rounds. Build to the climax, face-off in final battle, and bring to fruition the ultimate promise of storytelling – to create a grand finale! During Rounds 7 and 8, a hero may be incapacitated, seriously injured, or killed. When a Hero Player controls only one hero, that hero may not be killed until Round 8.

The Round Guidelines ensure exciting adventures, but they also ensure that heroes will be able to make it to the end of the adventure in true storytelling fashion.

As stated before, WvH takes hero mortality seriously and does not leave a hero's ultimate fate to chance. When the Hero Player does not have the ability to make an Action Scene to counter one that implies harm, the hero's health status could change, possibly permanently. The Round Guidelines are clear about when a hero can be "Incapacitated," "Seriously Injured," or "Killed" by the implication of the World Player's Action Scene, but, just because permission is granted, it does not mean that the hero should suffer. If the Hero Player wants a hero to continue on to other adventures and the World Player agrees, the option to kill is no longer allowed.

Harming Heroes

"Incapacitated," "Seriously Injured," and even "Killed" may be interpreted in a variety of ways by the World Player and the Hero Player. Let the current story situation, the content and context of the adventure, and creativity aid the players in deciding when and how the hero injury really affects the hero. Though an injury sounds like a bad thing, remember that these individuals are only called "heroes" because they are extraordinarily capable of enduring physical and metaphysical punishment while staying true to their convictions and the cause of their adventures.

The following are ways to interpret the three grades of harm:

Grades of Harm

Incapacitated means that a hero has been restricted from freely acting. Imprisonment, a loss of consciousness, a curse, and a minor physical impairment are all forms of incapacitation. When the World Player implies this condition, the Hero Player needs to counter it successfully or the hero may not change his or her Adventure Location at the beginning of a new round without assistance from another character.

Seriously injured means that a hero has sustained a grievous physical, mental, or emotional wound that will diminish his or her capability to use abilities at their highest impact level. When the World Player implies this condition, the Hero Player must counter it or accept that the injured hero will no longer be able to access anything at an impact level above Moderate, except for a Special FX.

Killed means dead. When the World Player implies this condition, the Hero Player must counter it or be done with that hero. The Hero Player may no longer make Action Scenes once the last hero is killed.

So, the World Player must eventually access the Moon Wraith from the Conflict List to craft an Action Scene of Extreme Impact and wants to do so now, but the monster may not incapacitate, injure, or kill Sir Charles. Should the World Player reconsider indirect impact and not actually have a Moon Wraith make an appearance, yet?

No! With only one card in the Tableau allowing an Action Scene with the Moon Wraith, now is the right time for the Hero Player to get a peak at what Sir Charles is up against!

Place a token on the King of Hearts and cue the Moon Wraith!

World Player – Round 1, Turn 2

Access KH – Moon Wraith(s), Extreme Impact

In one of the stalls, a shining mass huddled in a corner slowly rose up, accompanied by the awful sound of bone scraping on bone. The shape grew in size, taking on a grotesque form, and its unearthly inner light cast a sickly greenish glow on the wooden walls of the stable.

"Llllluuuunnnnaaaa!" wailed the deformed abomination as its grotesque bulk of misshapen bones suddenly loomed over Sir Charles. It was a Moon Wraith!

The Moon Wraith turned its twisted, skinless face and empty eye sockets upon Sir Charles and hissed wrathfully! Raising its bony arms to the roof of the stable, the monster suddenly began to scream, wildly slashing at its confinement and tearing savagely through the wooden structure with its long, bony claws!

With one great final effort, the Moon Wraith pushed its entire deformed being through the slashed roof beams, splintering the stable's ceiling as it floated into the night sky. With the half-moon behind it, the Wraith looked down at Sir Charles and hissed once more.

"Llllluuuunnnnaaaa!" it wailed, and then disappeared into the darkness.

Even without a direct physical attack on Sir Charles, this was definitely a moment of Extreme Impact, and one that was certainly extremely surprising to the Hero Player!

This was also a moment out of which the Hero Player could attempt to make some significant meaning.

According to the rules, the creature could not harm Sir Charles and it could only make an impact in one Action Scene this round, but, more importantly, the World Player voluntarily chose to make it cause a ruckus, yell Luna's name at Sir Charles, and then disappear.

Could the Moon Wraith have been afraid of a follower of Luna?

Certainly, the World Player did not mean for that to be the case when deciding on the Moon Wraith's behavior, but the previous Action Scene has left the hero's encounter with the monster open to interpretation. The Hero Player now has an opportunity to make something out of the creature's behavior to tip the adventure back in the hero's favor! The next card accessed must be a strategically good one to take advantage of this!

The four cards remaining in the current Tableau feature Clubs, Spades, and Diamonds.

The Clubs cards could be accessed and used for a Moderate Impact Action Scene with the Suit Ability "Clubs [3] - Sword Master, owns a superior arming sword" as the primary subject. However, there's nothing Sir Charles can threaten or chop at with his sword. The Moon Wraith is gone.

The Spades card could be accessed for a Low Impact Action Scene with the Suit Ability "Spades [1] - Night Stalker, expert tracker in moonlight" as the primary subject. Unfortunately, the Moon Wraith flew away and cannot be tracked through the sky.

The Hero Player could use the Night Stalker ability to start tracking the creator of the summoning circle, but if the intention is to make something out of what just happened with the Moon Wraith, the Diamonds card will have to be played. But, without a Suit Ability of Diamonds, what can Sir Charles do?

Character Assumptions

When accessing a card for a hero that does not have an ability of a matching suit, place a marker as normal and make a "Character Assumption," an Action Scene that references any information in the Hero Profile – name, type, race, affiliation, or description – that could be relevant to the current action of the round and is consistent with the suit's physical or metaphysical representation. Low Impact is the usual impact level for this effect, but the Hero Player could argue for a higher impact level if the current situational context justifies it. In a storytelling game, anything with descriptive potential can be and should be tapped to enhance every scene of action whenever possible!

So, the Hero Player tries to find something within the Hero Profile of Sir Charles that fits with what Diamonds represent – intelligence and mental faculties. When that angle is found, and the Hero Player places a marker on the 3 of Diamonds, the next Action Scene might very well successfully exploit the Moon Wraith's bizarre behavior.

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 2

Access 3D – Sir Charles, Character Assumption, memories of the War of the Crooked Saint, Low Impact

Sir Charles brushed the splinters of wood from his armor as he looked through the new opening in the roof of the stable. The Wraith had disappeared, but the sound of its screams still echoed in his memory.

That memory joined the many others that still haunted Sir Charles from all that he had endured during the War of the Crooked Saint. Battling the Vampire-Princess's minions had been the most difficult time of his life, and he would bear the physical and emotional scars of that conflict for the rest of his days. However, despite all of the hardships, despite all of the pain, Sir Charles had learned much about human courage during those dark days.

He had also learned much about evil's cowardice. Creatures of darkness – like the ones that roamed the Nightfields of Tannaron in search of a way to bring the vile Qala back to life – were pathetic wretches at their core. This Moon Wraith had behaved like a cornered animal, afraid of something. It had called out Luna's name for a reason.

Had Luna been with Sir Charles, protecting him? Was it Sir Charles himself who had frightened the beast?

Clearly, these Moon Wraiths, though quite hideous, were not the terrors that the rumors made them out to be!

Great play! The Hero Player has hinted at a potential weakness in the Moon Wraiths without violating the impact value of the Action Scene made!

Not to be outdone or outwitted, the World Player will want to take back control from the Hero Player, and distracting Sir Charles is the best "move" to make before the Hero Player finds a way to develop the assumptions in the previous Action Scene into proven fact later on. There needs to be a more direct effect of the dramatic exit of the Moon Wraith than just leaving Sir Charles pensive in the shattered stable.

Someone had to have heard all that noise…

World Player – Round 1, Turn 3

Access 7S – Augustus, Human Hex Master of Hopshire, High Impact

Suddenly, Sir Charles found himself surrounded by the ghostly apparitions of translucent white horses! The spirit horses whirled around the Cavalier, disappearing and reappearing through the broken walls of the stables and the hard, cold ground. Echoing, frightful neighing filled the night air in a disorienting cacophony!

"Who are you, knight?" asked a booming voice over the whinnying of the spirit steeds. "Strangers are not welcomed in Hopshire, especially those who destroy our stables!"

The spirit horses abruptly burst into blazing light, and then, in their place standing before Sir Charles was a grizzled, scar-faced older man wearing a haphazard combination of Hex Master robes and leather armor.

"I know you," the Hex Master said, scrutinizing Sir Charles carefully. "Charles de Ruelle. You were one of the champions at the Battle of Icewild Falls. We were allies, then." The Hex Master's eyes glowed menacingly. "But you are Luna's champion, now, and I am the Hex Master of Hopshire – and that makes us enemies!"

The World Player certainly achieved High Impact in Augustus's first Action Scene. In the Conflict List, Augustus had been given the Metaphysical Ability "Spirit Summoner," and the World Player ingeniously uses that magical skill by having the Hex Master summon horse spirits in the stable!

That's why the players should always be free to wield magic in creative and meaningful ways – to create the most dynamic and fitting effects as possible!

Also, Augustus had been titled "Veteran of the War of the Crooked Saint," and that played into the High Impact of the scene as well. By creating a background connection to Sir Charles – revealing that both men had fought at the "Battle of Icewild Falls" – the World Player adds more depth to the potential conflict relationship developing between the Hex Master and the Cavalier. This fact, though, did not appear in the original Hero Profile of Sir Charles, so the Hero Player would be free to accept or refute the revelation later in the game.

As it stands, it looks like Augustus is ready to attack again even though there are no more cards left in the Tableau to allow him to be the primary subject of a scene. By the way the Action Scene has ended with Augustus taking such a bold stand against Sir Charles, the Hero Player knows that the World Player must have something clever planned!

The Hero Player must try to throw the World Player off, and that could mean a fight!

Combat

Combat situations are resolved like other tasks or challenges in WvH, but since they might result in injury or death for a hero, it is important for players to heed the Round Guidelines and the impact levels of Conflict List entries and Suit Abilities.

When threatened by a World Player's Action Scene that implies incapacitation, serious injury, or death, the Hero Player needs to counter the implication with a scene of equal or higher impact that describes a defense against the attack. However, if the only available defensive maneuver is of a lesser impact value, the scene needs to be especially creative to make up the difference or the targeted heroes will have to accept the consequences of the harmful situation.

Combat situations do not have to be resolved in a single response by the Hero Player to the World Player's threat, nor is the World Player the only one allowed to initiate battle. The players are free to use as many Action Scenes to describe combat situations as they want, provide they can access relevant cards.

When injuries are suffered in battle, the nature of those injuries should be expressed in an Action Scene immediately following the attack much like in the resolution of a failed task. The Hero Player characterizes the damage, but the World Player may dispute the description, citing the impact level of the attack versus the impact or suitability of the response.

Sir Charles' Hero Player knows that the previous scene cannot be matched impact-for-impact. To resolve this challenge, a Moderate Impact Action Scene will have to be extra special to deal with Augustus's High Impact threat!

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 3
Access 3C, Use 4C – Sir Charles, Sword Master, Moderate Impact

"I am no good man's enemy, and neither is Luna," Sir Charles exclaimed as he unsheathed his arming sword, "but, if you were truly at the Battle of Icewild Falls, Hex Master, you would know that those who are my enemies swiftly fall!"

With all his might, Sir Charles swung his weapon into the closest stable wall wrecked by the Moon Wraith, chopping into the wood and scattering debris of chunks, bits, and splinters into the face of the Hex Master – enough to distract any mage from concentrating on a new hex formula.

"Enough magic! I am here to help! Will you accept my aid?"

Though brief, this was a good play by the Hero Player, who accepted the reference to the "Battle of Icewild Falls" as a part of the history of Sir Charles and found a creative way to deal with the spellcaster.

With Sir Charles unable to truly best Augustus in impact levels, the moderate attack on the wall at least minimized what the World Player could do from a conceptual standpoint, implying the need for concentration to cast magic. Stating that the debris was "enough to distract any mage from concentrating on a new hex formula," the Hero Player altered conditions – adding the new concept of a "hex formula" to the world of Tannaron – while staying within the boundaries of the storytelling rules, resolving the threat…at least momentarily...

World Player – Round 1, Turn 4
Access 4C – Warding symbols – on objects or on the person of a villager – against the influence and magic of Good Saint Luna or her followers, Moderate Impact

In one deft motion, Augustus brushed away the pieces of wood from his face and pulled out an amulet from beneath his tunic, snapping the cord that kept the object around his neck. He held the warding symbol out toward Sir Charles.

"Your help is not needed, here! No man who holds a Moon Ward can be harmed by a follower of Luna," Augustus proclaimed as he dangled the finely-crafted symbol of a red moon before him. "With enough of these and the protection of Lord Crowley's cavaliers, your mistress's magic will harm us no more!

"Leave here now, Sir Charles! Out of respect for your service in the War, I will not summon the guard, but if you persist in your wanton destruction of our village, I will place this ward upon your person, cutting you off from your supposed Good Saint forever!"

Though the World Player lets Augustus do the talking, it is the warding symbol that creates the impact of the scene. The warding symbol's powers are described in two places – once as a protective artifact, and then as a severer of divine ties – and this information may be used later in the game if the warding symbol entry appears in a subsequent round.

The World Player could have continued the "combat" of the round by making the warding symbol more offensive, implying a harming effect on Sir Charles even though the Round Guidelines protect heroes in the earliest parts of the game. Stating a harming effect now would leave that effect available for later use when the Round Guidelines make heroes more vulnerable. Instead, the player chooses to add a touch of characterization to Augustus in the form of war veteran camaraderie. "Out of respect for your service in the War," he gives Sir Charles the chance to leave. However, the Hero Player only accepted the concept that Sir Charles had fought at Icewild Falls and did not have the hero recognize Augustus. So, whether Augustus's momentary compassion is genuine or not remains to be seen.

So, with Sir Charles facing kind words and a deadly amulet, how will the Hero Player respond?

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 4
Access 4C, Use 3C – Sir Charles, Sword Master, Moderate Impact

Sir Charles flung his sword outward, sending the weapon spinning toward the Hex Master's hand! The sword sliced through the warding symbol's cord and became embedded into the far wall. The finely-crafted warding symbol fell to the cold, hard dirt floor and cracked in half as it hit the ground.

"I am not guilty of this destruction! A Moon Wraith appeared in here and did this when I confronted it! I assure you; such a vile creature would never be the work of Luna!"

How the Hero Player describes Sir Charles using his Sword Master ability in this Action Scene is exciting, but it's also very disputable!

The Tableau only has two Clubs in it, so the Action Scene can be, at most, only of Moderate Impact. The Hero Player's description of an absolutely perfect, non-lethal sword throw that results in the breaking of the warding symbol could easily be argued as having a High Impact on the other story elements.

Had there been more past storytelling moments that included the masterful use of a sword by Sir Charles or others, the players might agree that the sword-throwing in the previous scene was indeed "moderate" when compared to previous sword usage. Since this is the first adventure in Tannaron and with Sir Charles, there are no precedents. The sword-throw is incredibly perfect, the warding symbol is destroyed, and Augustus is left without his most potent threat against followers of Luna – and, right now, that's a lot of impact. The World Player would be justified in disputing the previous Action Scene, causing the Hero Player to remake it.

However, the World Player chooses to let the scene stand because the response to that scene is going to make life difficult for our hero, anyway…

World Player – Round 1, Turn 5
Access 3D, Use 3C – Evidence against Church of Luna, Moderate Impact

Augustus pointed at the summoning circle.
"Then, how do you explain that?" he asked.

Varying Action Scene Length

For the World Player's last turn of the round, the Action Scene is only two-sentences long! This is barely a "scene" in the conventional sense, but in WvH, a tactic like this packs quite a punch! The hero's attention is returned through inference to the thing that caused him to doubt his faith at the beginning of the round, and the World Player was probably very glad to have left the second reference to the evidence for later!

It is also sometimes a good strategy to state as little as possible in an Action Scene when it can be made to be really poignant, as in this case. With little extraneous material with which to work, the opponent will be less likely to use a player's own descriptions against him or her. The opponent is challenged to further the plot with a lesser amount of new story elements, making it especially hard for the Hero Player to resolve a task in a hero's favor.

The Hero Player is now faced with the last turn of the round, and only one card remains to be accessed. How will Sir Charles end this chapter of his adventure?

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 5
Access 7S – Sir Charles, Night Stalker, Low Impact

Sir Charles looked down at the summoning circle and sighed. The battle-ready tension in his body had already begun to dissipate.

"I will admit that the summoning circle is troubling," he said. "Finding a Moon Wraith so close to it troubles me even more. We need to quickly find those guilty of bringing this evil creature into our world!

"In the dirt around the circle, there are faint traces of footprints. They are difficult to follow well because of the uproar made by the Wraith, but it is clear to my trained eye that – whether you believe me or not – whoever made this summoning circle headed out into the forest just minutes ago."

Sir Charles knelt down, examining the prints more closely.

"Yes," he muttered with dismay to the Hex Master, "they headed into the forest…toward the Little Church of Luna."

The round may have ended with a Low Impact Action Scene, but it leaves us eagerly wanting to carry on, craving to learn the truth behind the Moon Wraith attack on Hopshire.

With this round of play completed, the Tableau is discarded, and the markers are returned to the players. The Hero Player starts off the second round by making an Action Scene that establishes the next round's location. The Hero Player could choose to leave Sir Charles in Hopshire to further investigate the town and its goings on, or Sir Charles could move on to the Little Church of Luna, as it seemed to be indicating by the final words of the round that he would.

Whatever the case, there are still seven more rounds to play – that's 77 more Action Scenes left to create – and a long way for Sir Charles to go before he has discovered the truth!

Of course, the World Player might not even know what that truth is yet, but the first round has certainly provided a lot of interesting possibilities by randomly authorizing the conflict elements that the World Player could shape in an order that promoted meaningful improvisation. That order really mattered because it affected the order of abilities chosen by the Hero Player. A different order of accessing might have produced a very different story.

The story also would have developed along different plotlines if the Hero Player would have used more than just one hero. As previously stated, the Hero Player may control up to four heroes. The more heroes available, the more variety of abilities there are to impact the story, causing the World Player to use conflicts in a very different way to address those multiple champions. As it was, the adventure demonstrated was very much about Sir Charles and the personal struggles that seem to be inexorably tied to the strange happenings in a town he has never been to before.

At the End

Despite the way an adventure turns out by the final round, the players may still find that not all of the loose ends of the plot are tied up neatly when the last Action Scene is made. Though the last two rounds must settle the main conflicts of the adventure, the randomized nature of conflict selection throughout gameplay could leave a few unanswered questions lingering. The players may deal with those unanswered questions in two ways.

First, the players might choose to jointly make a final "Epilogue Action Scene" to tidy up some of the loose bits of the plot. The Epilogue Action Scene is a passage of any length that is not meant to be a replacement for the finale – which should have occurred in the last two rounds of the game – but rather is meant to leave both players satisfied with the final outcome of the plot of the adventure and the themes conveyed by all that transpired.

Second, the players might choose to not tie up the loose ends after all! The World Player could take the plot questions that never got answered and use them as the basis for a new Adventure Premise! In this way, the next adventure of the surviving heroes could be an even more meaningful and richly-crafted storytelling experience because of the history behind it – a history collaboratively created by both players!

Whatever the players decide to do, they will surely be left in wonder at what they have accomplished together!

The combination of imagination, randomization, improvisation, competition, and collaboration will have left them with a unique creation that will fascinate them for years to come!

Just as unique, there isn't a "winner" in WvH in the conventional sense.

Both players win if the collaborative adventure was challenging to develop, thrilling to create, and satisfying at its conclusion. What's more, if the players are anxious to continue the adventures of the heroes and villains involved, the win is even greater! Sir Charles de Ruelle will certainly be adventuring for a long time to come!

In case you were wondering, Sir Charles did indeed save Hopshire from the threat of the Moon Wraiths!

With help from an ally – the Hex Master's young apprentice Aubin – Sir Charles routed the plans of a desperate old priest of Luna who had promised Augustus the magic to perfect his summoning in exchange for his secret aid. The plan: frame the Little Church of Luna with the Moon Wraiths to cause Lord Crowley's men to desecrate the church, thereby undoing the protective spells blocking the entrance to a forgotten dungeon beneath the sacred building. Inside that dungeon was a reserve of Qala's family blood, an elixir for eternal life! Unfortunately, also inside were demonic bat creatures eager for the chance to be free to spread an ancient plague that would have helped Qala's minions to speed the Vampire-Princess's return! Sir Charles defeated them all and was rewarded when he found Nocturne's Cloak in the dungeon, granting him the ability to fly!

Ultimately in WvH, the "competition" isn't really between the World Player and Hero Player; it is between the players and the cards, between intention and fate.

Let the cards inspire you! Let them bring you to places that become even more fantastic than you had expected!

Let the power of your actions make the randomness of the universe feel like all that has happened was destiny!

CHAPTER FIVE
OPTIONAL RULES

World vs. Hero is customizable in a great many ways. The following variants show just how flexible WvH can be. Go to www.worldvshero.com for even more great ideas on expanding your game!

Random Hero Generation

For an added challenge to the opening steps of game set-up, the Hero Player can try designing one or more heroes and their Suit Abilities from random deck draws! Make sure the players have generated hero types, races, and affiliations to make the randomized process easier to tailor to the world.

Remove the face cards from a standard deck of cards, creating two separate decks.

For each hero being randomly created, draw five cards from the non-face card deck. The suit of each drawn card represents a suit symbol that must be used to create the hero's Suit Abilities. Similar suits do not have to be used together for the same Suit Ability and may be applied in any combination.

For each hero being randomly created, draw one card from the face card deck. This is the card that will be used for the Special FX. No two randomly-created heroes will have the same Special FX card.

From the World Description, the hero lists, and the suits and face cards drawn, the Hero Player builds a hero following the standard rules. The challenge is to create a hero that is so fully realized and so full of potential that the final product does not look at all like it had been random!

Sometimes, such a challenge generates more ideas than when the Hero Player has complete creative freedom!

Sidekicks

Often, when a hero is alone, it would be quite helpful to get some long-term assistance along the way. If both players agree, a hero may be allowed to acquire a "Sidekick" during an adventure.

A Sidekick is an Ally that becomes a minor hero usable by the Hero Player throughout a game upon that Ally's creation during the round in which it first appears. The Sidekick is treated by both players in the same manner as a hero.

To create a Sidekick, follow the rules for using an Ace to access an Ally, but the Hero Player must additionally include a rationale in an Action Scene during that round

for why that Ally becomes the hero's sidekick. The World Player may dispute the statement as per usual rules.

When an Ally is accepted as a Sidekick, the Hero Player must create a "Sidekick Profile" similar to a Hero Profile for the new character. A Sidekick may only ever be given one Suit Ability of [1] matching the suit symbol of the Ace from which it was originally derived. A Sidekick may never be given a Special FX. The Hero Player may make Character Assumptions during a game using the Sidekick's description as per the standard rules.

A Sidekick may not be created before an adventure, but one that has been created during a previous adventure and has survived may be used at the beginning of a subsequent adventure with the same hero. Only one Sidekick at a time may ever be created for any one hero. A Sidekick may have his or her description and Suit Ability advanced using the same rules for hero advancement.

Here is an example of a Sidekick that might have been created for Sir Charles de Ruelle during the "Madness of the Moon Wraiths" adventure:

Sidekick Example

Aubin Rene
Sidekick, Hex Master Apprentice

After learning of the involvement of his mentor Augustus in a nefarious plot involving the summoning of terrible Moon Wraiths, young Aubin turned on his teacher and aided Sir Charles de Ruelle in saving Hopshire from a terrifying fate. With little reason to remain in his small village and with a sense of adventure in his heart, the book-loving Aubin joined Sir Charles in his travels to save the Nightfields of Tannaron.

SUIT ABILITY
Diamonds [1] – Young Summoner, summons children's spirits only

Upon a hero's demise or retirement from adventuring, his or her Sidekick may be upgraded to hero status if both players agree. Add description and give the Sidekick the normal amount of starting Suit Abilities and a Special FX.

Recurring Locations

For players using the same setting for multiple adventures, certain locations might become regular stops for the heroes. For these Adventure Locations, the players could create a "Recurring Location" template. This is a Conflict List with six permanent entry items that are specific to the Recurring Location and will always have the

potential to impact any visit by the heroes. The other four entry positions are left blank until the World Player is ready to customize the location for an adventure. These four positions are filled with items that are particular to that adventure.

Both players may contribute to the creation of the permanent entry items of a Recurring Location. Most of the time, these items would be known to the people of that world, anyway. If the World Player wanted to create an original Recurring Location that is an unknown place at the beginning of an adventure but will figure into play in subsequent adventures, the template would be shared after the first adventure of its use.

To create a Recurring Location that is consistent in its unique characteristics but still open to the conflict elements of a current adventure, create a Recurring Location "template" according to the following set-up:

1 – Recurring Location conflict element
2 – Recurring Location conflict element
3 – Adventure conflict element
4 – Recurring Location conflict element
5 – Recurring Location conflict element
6 – Adventure conflict element
7 – Recurring Location conflict element
8 – Recurring Location conflict element
9 – Adventure conflict element
10 – Adventure conflict element

Spontaneous Locations

If the World Player is up for a challenge, the players may use one "Spontaneous Location" during an adventure.

A Spontaneous Location is a location that has not been created in advance by the World Player during the adventure design process. At the beginning of a round when the Hero Player creates his or her Action Scene establishing the location for this round, the Hero Player may suggest a place that is totally original and does not appear on the World Player's list of Adventure Locations. The suggested location must be appropriate to the adventure and must fit the context and content of the storyline thus far. The World Player may dispute the suggestion of a Spontaneous Location.

Upon acceptance of the Spontaneous Location, the World Player must be given time to generate a Conflict List for it. Once the conflicts are created, play proceeds as usual.

The benefit of allowing a Spontaneous Location is that it adds an extra layer of strategy and surprise to the game. The World Player will have to think quickly to create relevant challenges for the Hero Player to face. Additionally, Spontaneous Locations allow the Hero Player to more actively contribute to the evolution of the world, giving both players a different experience of "exploration" during gameplay.

Longer Games

To double the amount of rounds and extend an adventure, use the following guidelines:

First, the World Player will need to prepare more locations. Increase the amount from 3-5 to 6-8.

Next, the standard Game Deck is doubled from 40 to 80.

Remove the face cards from two standard decks of 52 playing cards and shuffle the remaining cards together. Do the same with the face cards. Remove eight cards from the 80-card deck. Do not look at them. Place those cards in a face-down discard pile; they will not be used in the game.

Remove eight face cards from the 24-card deck without looking at them and shuffle them into the other deck, bringing it back up to 80 cards. The remaining face cards are placed face-down in the discard pile and will not be used in the game.

The Tableau for each round remains the same at five cards.

Round rules also function in the same way, but at different intervals. Rounds 1 to 4 follow the guidelines for standard Rounds 1 and 2; Rounds 5 to 8 follow the guidelines for standard Rounds 3 and 4; Rounds 9 to 12 follow the guidelines for standard Rounds 5 and 6; and Rounds 13 to 16 follow the guidelines for standard Rounds 7 and 8.

Deeper Games

A "deeper" game of WvH is one in which the number of rounds remains the same at eight, but the number of cards in the Tableau is doubled to 10.

Prepare the Game Deck as per the optional rules for a longer game.

Each player is given 10 markers instead of five.

When the World Player lays out the Tableau for each round, he or she places 10 cards instead of five.

Gameplay proceeds as usual.

The difference between a standard game and a deeper one is that both players are given more of an opportunity to access their characters and conflicts. With more ranks and suits in the Tableau, more High and Extreme Impact moments occur, and the action can easily go over-the-top. Nevertheless, the Round Guidelines must still be followed.

Because there are fewer limitations as in a standard game, decision-making in a deeper game is less about strategy and more about proportionately increasing dynamics. The players will have to be ready to rein in the growing chaos, but the end result will still be a lot of fun!

Importing Worlds

If a setting from a published RPG campaign source book is familiar to all of the players, then there is no reason why it could not be used in WvH.

For WvH, the best way to utilize such texts is to first select a few specific aspects of the published world that appeal to the players, like one region, some intriguing sites, and a few adventure hooks. Using the selected material, draft a World Description or just excerpt the source book. Use the short description to establish the gaming elements of the first adventure to be played.

If the players decide to continue within the world beyond the first adventure and wish to expand the environment to include more cool stuff from the source book, it will be extremely easy to read through the published material, select what they like, and add new material as it becomes necessary.

This is a great way to get more for your money out of an expensive campaign setting book. RPG world books are often brilliant works of imagination that fans cannot wait to experience. Because WvH games are easy to set up and fast to play, players can enjoy entire adventures much more quickly and, therefore, have a better chance to experience more of the amazing places within the campaign setting!

Importing Heroes

Player Characters from RPGs can be easily modified for use in a game of WvH without losing any of their power or individuality.

When importing one of these characters into a Hero Profile, focus on the heart of the hero rather than the statistical minutiae; the minor details can probably be incorporated into the character's type, race, or affiliations, or might not even be worth including at all. Consider what makes the character truly special in his or her world and put it into the description. Judge which powers and abilities make the character unique and formidable and turn them into Suit Abilities.

Keeping the basic meaning behind suit symbols in mind should make for easy conversions of powers and traits into Suit Abilities. Use proportionate impact levels to adjust for strengths.

Special traits, weapons, or gear could grant the hero powers beyond the starting limit of five points worth of Suit Ability values.

Be certain to choose something really awesome for the Special FX!

Importing Adventures

Just like creating a World Description or Hero Profile from a published game system, all parts of an adventure in WvH can be harvested from a published game module with relative ease. The one major alteration the World Player will have to make when scavenging material from the module is that any expressed plot that the module might force on the players will have to be distilled into a more open premise from which the World Player will be able to develop many possible plots during gameplay.

Often, published adventure modules have a very linear storyline; the player characters are given little choice as to the courses of action they might take. The Game Master is provided with all of the hooks to pull the players along to the pre-planned end, and the GM can access those hooks at almost any time.

Since Conflict Lists are randomly utilized, the World Player cannot be sure what hooks will be available and cannot force the Hero Player down one road; the World Player must be ready to improvise along the way. So, a published adventure module will need to have its most promising material extracted away from the confines of plot and scattered amid the Conflict Lists that the World Player creates for the Adventure Locations taken from the module.

Wildcards

Jokers can be used as wildcards if the players wish to increase the possibility of more extreme scenes.

During set-up before shuffling the four drawn face cards into the Game Deck, replace one or two of them with one or two jokers.

If jokers are not available, each player may declare a specific non-face card as a wildcard before the game begins that either may use as a wildcard during gameplay.

When any wildcard appears in a Tableau, it may be accessed or used as any card the active player wants, even a card that is currently in the Tableau. The wildcard's suit and rank may also change with each turn, allowing it to be used again and again as a different card!

PBeM

The turn-based, narrative nature of WvH makes it perfectly suited for Play-By-e-Mail or forum posts, especially since it's a two-player game!

The only real adjustment that needs to be made is an issue of trust. In a PBeM game, only one of the players will be drawing from the actual Game Deck and reporting its results, probably the World Player. As long as the players trust one another, the game can proceed as normal, with each e-mail exchange being a new Action Scene.

An online game is set up as normal, with initial exchanges of World Descriptions, Hero Profiles, and the Adventure Premise. After the Hero Player makes a statement about the round's location, the player with the Game Deck reports the Tableau in a new message, and exchanges of Action Scenes begin.

During the game, the subject line of a message would note the round and turn number for each player with shorthand conveying play intentions. So, "HP 5, 2; 3H & 6H, 8H; Vlad, Spell Weaver, High" means that during Round 5 on the Hero Player's second turn, he or she is accessing the 3 of Hearts and using two other heart cards to make an Action Scene of High Impact about the hero Vlad's Spell Weaver Suit Ability. The body of the message would contain the text of the Action Scene.

Play proceeds as normal. The best part about PBeM or play-by-post WvH is that, by the end of an adventure, the transcript of the story remains, leaving behind an exciting record of what has transpired, easy to share instantly with anyone in the world!

Alternative Narratives

The third-person narrative style of "Madness of the Moon Wraiths" is not the only storytelling mode possible in a game of World vs. Hero.

When keeping track of the Action Scenes during gameplay, the players may take all sorts of liberties with the way that the story is actually crafted. Nothing is off-limits to innovative players! First-person narratives, multiple-person narratives, epistolary accounts, storyboards or comic panels, journal entries, and even movie script formats are all possible by-products of a WvH experience!

When players have the same aims in mind, they'll find that the more personalized and creative the style of the Action Scenes, the more rewarding the gaming experience.

Storytelling has been an important pursuit for mankind since ancient times because the tales told mattered to the tellers and the listeners. Make every element of WvH personal, and let the game engine take you and your characters to exciting places in whatever style you choose!

What follows is an example of a creative application of WvH:

UFO Girls

Dear Diary,

OhmyGodohmyGodohmyGod! This is so cool! I talk into the ship's controls, and it, like, writes all my words! Awesome!

Okay! So, these nice aliens gave the Earth's governments a bunch of flying saucers 'cause there's, like, some wicked bad coming to our planet soon. BUT – and it's a BIG BUTT, just like Simone's – the only humans who can work the saucers are 13 to 16 year old girls! Nobody knows why, but that ROCKS because I'm 15 and I played Richmond Hill Junior High Girls' Volleyball last year and you have to be a girl to play, so I can fly a spaceship! Awesome! I'm captain 'cause the ship likes me best, which is really cool 'cause, like a million girls tried out, and I got it! In your face, Tracey Wilkins!

Okay! So, here's my crew: There's me, CAPTAIN KIMMI! I'm fun and cool and I'm a good organizer, so the ship likes when I figure out stuff for it!

Then there's NOT-Captain Simone, who's supposed to be the one to talk to aliens when we meet them. She's 15, too, and, like, really serious all the time. We don't get along 'cause she thinks she should be captain and she doesn't know why the ship likes me better. I don't either. Oh, wait! I remember now: 'CAUSE I'M AWESOME! YEAH!

The other girl on the ship is Caitlin. She's 13 and she grew up on a farm, but I really, really like her 'cause she's funny. Well, her accent is funny, but she's cute – oh, and she's really good at shooting things. They must shoot a lot of stuff on farms. Anyway, she's our weapon person! Cool!

Oh, and the last person on my crew is some robot that came with the ship. We call him Trey 'cause he looks like a Trey even though he really looks like a guy in a helmet with a bunch of gadgets on his suit. We put some stickers and stuff on him to make him less robot-y, but it didn't really work. He only talks to other computers. CREEEEEPY.

Speaking of computers, the ship's computer spit out this stuff about us:

Kimmi: Navigation Officer, Cool Kid
D[3] – Strategic Savant; S[2] – Teen Athlete
QD – Impossibly Brilliant Deduction

Simone:Communications Officer, Nerd
D[3] – Fast Learner; H[2] – Body Language Reader
QH – Perfect Alien Culture Analysis

Caitlin: Security Officer, All-American Girl
C[2] – Melee Weapon User; S[2] – Ray Gunner; H[1] – Animal Handler
QS – Deadshot

Trey: Tech Officer, Robot
S[4] – Ray Gunner; D[1] – Computer Systems Communicator
KD – Computer Systems Takeover

Probably isn't important. Whatever.
Okay, so, we had to go to Mars yesterday on, like, a mission-thing, and – Oh! Wait! Here's my top-ten list of things that suck about flying through the Mars Space Sector: 1 – Space garbage. Ewww; 2 – Confusing "ghost-voice" interference picked up in space; 3 – Mini gravimetric forces that pull ships the wrong way; 4 – The Mikroboroid Armada, an itsy-bitsy delusional alien battle fleet obsessed with conquering the universe, but small enough to be defeated by a sneeze; 5 – Comets; 6 – Mysterious Mars defenses that scramble telemetry; 7 – Larger gravimetric forces that pull ships the wrong way; 8 – The Dark Flyer, a sleek alien ship that has been buzzing around UFO Girls' saucers, origin unknown; 9 – Space Dragons, some sort of star-filled snake-things miles and miles long that have a taste for flying saucers; 10 – Russian UFO Girls' saucer, with Mila, Alina, Helenka, and Robot, trying to steal American UFO Girls' mission objectives any way they can!

[Log Codes: AS, 2S, 2D, 4D, 5D] At first, things weren't so bad. I got us around some old space garbage pretty easily (it was mostly hairspray cans from the '70's). Then, Caitlin used the ship's ray guns to scare away a Mikroboroid War Fleet that wanted to conquer one of the hairspray cans and thought we wanted to do that, too. (They're so dumb!) While she was on the guns, Caitlin blew up a comet, too, and that's when we started hearing weird voices on the communicator. Miss-Know-It-All Simone had no idea where the voices were coming from, and even Trey couldn't use his computer connections to make sense out of it. I just figured it was some old messages bouncing around space, so I changed course and headed to Mars in a different direction.

[Log Codes: 6S, 7S, 8D, AH, QH] That's when things got worse! We saw more hairspray cans – lots of them! It was so freaky – like a trail! So, I decided to make

the ship follow them, but it turned out to be leading to a gravimetric force that started pulling at us! (My bad!) We got away 'cause Caitlin used the ray guns to give us a push out of the gravimetric force, but we were a little out of control on the wrong side of Mars, and then the Dark Flyer showed up, like, playing chicken with us or something. Simone was sure he was warning us to go away, like protecting us. (I guess she knows what aliens are thinking 'cause she looks like one.) I got us past him, and then we got attacked by some defense system coming out of the Mars atmosphere that messed with our computer systems. (Hmm. Maybe she was right. Maybe he was trying to help.) Then those snotty Russian UFO Girls flew past us and totally knocked us out of Mars orbit. I HATE THEM!

So, diary, what's up with Mars? We're supposed to be going to the Ark, the first terra-forming colony, to pick something up, but it's like stupid Mars space won't let us get there! We can't let Mila and her butch-squad get there first, but Trey needed time to recalibrate the systems, so we had to wait a while. We should be back on our way soon.

Diary, do you think the Dark Flyer is cute? He did try to help us after all. I think I TOTALLY have a crush on him!

I hope he's a him.

Okay! Going to the Ark! I'll write tomorrow! Bye!

XOXOXOXOXO,
Captain Kimmi

CHAPTER SIX
APPENDIX

What follows are several examples of World Descriptions, Hero Profiles, and an unusual adventure to illustrate just how versatile World vs. Hero can be! Hopefully, these samples will showcase the richness of the game's potential and truly inspire your own boundless creativity!

Grey Mansion

Genre: Modern Gothic Horror
Size: Large building with surrounding property

Built in 1895, the estate of Madeline Carver Grey sits like a bloated stone demon brooding over jagged New England cliffs at the dark sea beyond. Mocking the 21st century with its archaic arched windows and macabre statuary, Grey Mansion is an ugly, obscene thing from another time, a defiant monument to Mrs. Grey's unspeakable debauchery and excesses – and it will not go away, somehow rebuffing all attempts by locals and the state to sell or demolish it. Abandoned for decades, its 40 rooms wait patiently for new visitors to explore their dark mysteries and perverse past. If the rumors are true, the accumulated wealth of Madeline Carver Grey remains hidden in those rooms, untouched since her disappearance in 1921. However, "abandoned" does not mean "empty," and other rumors speak of unnamable horrors that wander within Grey Mansion's walls…

"Grey Mansion" is a classic haunted house environment and, as such, seems fairly restrictive. The "world" is a very large house on a cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, and that's about it.

However, there is a lot of evocative and provocative material within this description from which incredible adventures could be derived. The house is far from ordinary, and the paragraph's striking depiction is the perfect fuel for the creative engine of the imagination. With 40 rooms to explore and the opportunity for the players to shape the very architecture of the place as they spin their tales, Grey Mansion could easily become more than just a one-time destination.

Consider the following questions derived by the description:

Who was Madeline Carver Grey, and what became of her? How has her mansion survived after all of these years? What went on in that place during Grey's lifetime?

Is her wealth really still in there? What horrors, if any, are to be found inside the

mansion? What would motivate a sane person to enter Grey Mansion? If, indeed, Grey Mansion contains "unnamable horrors," what special skills would be needed to survive spending time in the house? Is Grey Mansion truly indestructible?

When a single paragraph can generate that many intriguing story questions, the World Description is a success!

So, who would be crazy enough to go inside this awful piece of real estate? Meet Olivia Grace…

Olivia Grace
Occultist, Carver Family Descendent

After embarking on an uncommonly successful career in advertising, Olivia soon learned that occultism was in her blood – literally. She was a direct descendent of Madeline Carver Grey's brother Jonathan and a woman referred to in an old newspaper article as his "tropical bride." At 25 years of age, the beautiful Olivia now feels compelled to learn about her great-great grandparents and the charm powers that have come naturally to her throughout her career as an ad exec. She also needs to learn if the voices that sometimes speak to her in the night originate from Heaven or from Hell. All of her research thus far has told her that the answers she seeks will probably be found in Grey Mansion.

SUIT ABILITIES
Diamonds [3] – Charmer, casts spells affecting emotions
Clubs [2] – Exotic Beauty, gets attention everywhere

SPECIAL FX
Queen of Diamonds – Witch Kiss: Compels evil beings to obey her

The Bitter Kingdoms

Genre: Martial Arts Fantasy
Size: Kingdoms, countryside, and an unexplored region

The people of the two Bitter Kingdoms – Silver Lion and the Jade Citadel – had honored their clan pact and settled into an uneasy peace, reluctantly sharing for many generations the bounty of their homeland, Kun Shou Lo, while leaving their bloody rivalry in the past. Nevertheless, after suffering through the Ice Plague, an unnaturally savage winter that lasted for an entire year, resources have become scarce, and the pact no longer appears secure. In the hope of discovering new sources of sustenance for their people, the Bitter Kingdoms' greatest warriors now plunge into the northern reaches of the Wildlands, a region into which, since ancient times, the sages of both kingdoms have forbidden entrance for fear of disturbing things with great hunger. As explorers dare to ignore that decree, and as the clan pact begins to crumble, the Bitter Kingdoms enter an age of uncertainty from which they may never emerge…

"The Bitter Kingdoms" is an invitation for players to explore the wildest wuxia action they can imagine! Light-as-air assassins clashing with armored war masters across vast fields of multi-colored blooms can be an ordinary day in this world! Couple with that all of the inspiration players might draw from literature and films, and there could be no end to the adventures in this mystical place!

Consider the following questions derived by the description:

What will happen as the clan pact begins to dissolve? Who are the leaders of Silver Lion and the Jade Citadel? Is war between the kingdoms or a new era of cooperation on the horizon? Should the warriors be more concerned with defending their respective allegiances or exploring the northern reaches? Why did the sages forbid entrance into the Wildlands? What's really out there? What exactly is a "Warrior of the Bitter Kingdoms"? How realistic or over-the-top-crazy-insane are the martial arts combat skills of these warriors?

Is "Brother Hu" a true warrior of the Bitter Kingdoms? Decide for yourself…

Brother Hu
Warrior Monk, Four Whirlwinds Practitioner

Years ago, Zhang Hu left his home to study the Four Whirlwinds physical disciplines at the mountain temple of the Ngmui monks. After the Ice Plague ravaged the countryside, he returned to find his family's farmland devastated by the disaster and pillaged by land rivals from the Jade Citadel. Feeling as though he should have been there to help all along, Brother Hu swore to his family that he would find a way to save all of the people of Silver Lion. Rather than returning to the Ngmui Monks, he would take what he had learned from them and travel into the Wildlands to search for anything or anyone that could help those suffering back home.

SUIT ABILITIES
Spades [2] – Four Whirlwinds Master, practices unarmed combat
Hearts [2] – Philosopher of the Fist of Peace, is versed in ancient truths
Diamonds [1] – Herbalist, can locate medicinal flora

SPECIAL FX
Jack of Spades – Gust Kick: Knocks down all opponents

Carnival Star Gehenna

Genre: Dark Science Fiction
Size: Alien galaxy

When a pyranium cruiser collided with the Space-Tastic Carnival Mega Station – a star-class entertainment satellite in the Tibor System – the ensuing force blast sent the station hurtling into the transitory wormhole designated "Gehenna-725." The entertainers and animals on board were exposed to huge quantities of unknown energies as the station careened uncontrollably through the time-space distortion. Emerging into an unknown star system, the damaged space carnival and its bizarrely-altered occupants found themselves fixed in geosynchronous orbit with the capital city of a strange world in an alien galaxy filled with things no human had ever seen before. Surrounded by several planets of hostile creatures and coping with the hostilities that wormhole mutation has created within its own inhabitants, the variously transformed members of the Carnival Mega Station are breaking into factions, trying to survive…

In "Carnival Star Gehenna," we are presented with a whole galaxy of possibilities, literally, and that's a good thing! But some might feel as though there just aren't enough specifics with which to get a good storytelling adventure game started.

Consider that the same sort of complaint could be made about Grey Mansion. That World Description did not explicitly depict what all 40 rooms contained. In WvH, world creation should be about providing creative opportunities for the players, not explicitly delineating every blade of grass in a world before the heroes have even stepped foot into it.

So, for "Carnival Star Gehenna," consider these questions: How helpful or harmful have the transformations on the space carnival been? What kinds of "heroes" will surface in a dark sci-fi story about mutated carnies and animals? How much more disturbing can clowns become after being exposed to time-space distortions? Why is the carnival station orbiting above a specific alien city? What lives on the alien worlds in this new galaxy, and what level of technology do they possess? Will the space carnival ever get home?

Just a few sentences were enough to spark the questions that will spark the imaginations of the players, and lead to great creations, like the very unusual hero, "Samson Saturna"...

Samson Saturna
Mutated Strongman

When the Carnival Mega Station met its fate in the wormhole, Samson went from being a standard sideshow strongman to an upper-body powerhouse of obscene proportions. His arm muscles tripled in size, and his barrel chest became a tank-like solid mass. Despite the new raw power, Samson is still a gentle giant at heart and misses the performances he used to put on for the youngest members of his audience. Now in this alien landscape, Samson is ready to become a reluctant fighter, but he will only side with those who stand for civility and goodness. Every faction hopes to get Samson's strength on its side, but even Samson is not sure which side he will choose.

SUIT ABILITIES
Clubs [4] – Strongman, wields massive arm strength
Clubs [1] – Thick-Skinned, is resilient to piercing damage

SPECIAL FX
King of Clubs – Tank Punch: Obliterates any target

To really give you a taste of the creative freedom that players have when playing WvH, what follows is the first round of an adventure in a game world called "Sunshine Valley Apocalypse," a bizarre mix of children's talking-animal stories with a zombie apocalypse!

The heroes are squirrels, and their adventures may appear to be somewhat demented, but that's the point of including this material – to stress how free players are in this storytelling game!

Welcome to Sunshine Valley! But watch out for the shrews…

Sunshine Valley Apocalypse

Genre: Fairy Tale & Horror
Size: Countryside

Once upon a time, there was a special place with rolling green fields, clear, cool streams, and cozy copses called Sunshine Valley. Sunshine Valley had remained an unspoiled natural sanctuary for as long as its furry inhabitants could remember. Then, one summer night, when a tiny, glowing rock fell from the sky, everything changed. The animals of the valley who had gathered around to examine the Sky Rock became horribly altered! Now, zombie rabbits craving flesh hop around on rotting legs; vampire moles burrow under unsuspecting victims, taking them away; and the spiders, once quiet, have become something altogether more talkative… and more monstrous. The hedgehogs, the red squirrels, and their outcast cousins the grey and black squirrels are learning that they must fight to destroy the new woodland monsters before these abominations leave the valley and spread an undead Hell to the human farms beyond, dooming all of Creation…

Hero Types
AVENGER
Fighter, Hearty, Seeking Vengeance
PRESERVER
Mystic, Protective, Seeking Harmony
SURVIVOR
Rogue, Individualistic, Seeking Security

Hero Races
HEDGEHOG
Proud, long family lines;
Nocturnal, lives in dens;
Spine-covered;
For defense, rolls into a ball or puts a new scent on its spines.
RED SQUIRREL
Brave, but private;
Tree-dweller;
Has curved claws for climbing, leaps between tree gaps, swims well.
GREY/BLACK SQUIRREL
Devious, cunning;
Fierce fighter;
Has curved claws for climbing, leaps between tree gaps;
Greys are crude, blacks are stealthy.

Bax-Jack
Red Squirrel, Avenger of the Old Oak

Bax-Jack is a solitary squirrel, but also a believer in the fable of the Old Oak, a mythical tree that produces an unending supply of acorns. The legend says that the Old Oak will appear when all of the squirrels of Sunshine Valley are worthy, so Bax-Jack tries to keep his brethren honest by policing the valley for hoard thieves who steal acorns from the stores of others. Recently, Bax-Jack has heard of a corruption moving through the valley, and he has wondered if the rumors of monsters are a sign that the Old Oak may never appear, or if the rumors are a sign of something even worse.

SUIT ABILITIES
Clubs [3] – Weapons Improviser, uses objects in fights
Hearts [2] – Lore Keeper, understands valley myths

SPECIAL FX
King of Hearts – Mythos: can decipher Nature's secrets

Ren Ricker
Black Squirrel, Young Survivor

Though quite young, Ren-Ricker has already proven that he is a most talented and cunning black squirrel. Stealing his first meals from his own litter mates and then shifting the blame to someone else, Ren-Ricker learned early on of the value of thinking ahead and sticking to a plan. Despite his youth, he is now as independent as any adult black squirrel, and even more successful. Doubting he will ever meet his match, the clever youngling seeks challenges within Sunshine Valley, and he wonders if recent stories of monsters will provide opportunities for him to exercise his crafty mind.

SUIT ABILITIES
Diamonds [3] – Clever Boy, thinks and acts quickly
Spades [1] – Stealth Master, unseen in the shadows
Spades [1] – Escape Artist, eludes threats with ease

SPECIAL FX
Jack of Diamonds – Perfect Lie: all will believe his story

Dead of Summer
As the horrific effects of the Sky Rock slowly creep across Sunshine Valley, a squirrel prophet emerges, promising to take all who follow him to the Old Oak. Squirrel-believers need only be "anointed" by this prophet, and bliss will be theirs. But with strange scents in the air and terrible perversions of nature abounding, will Tinner-Winn the prophet lead the squirrels of Sunshine Valley to a promised end or to a dark doom?

The Over-Water Log [known] – a hollow log "bridge" over the Long Water, the valley's most prominent stream; used by many small woodland animals for travel and as a meeting place.

Shrew Fields [known] – the densest population of shrews are here among foliage and in some burrows; each is territorial, unwelcoming of other shrews.

The Derby Woodlot [known, limited] – on the outskirts of the valley; a small forested area with a very thick tree canopy; sunlight barely makes it through; most inhabitants keep clear of the area out of fear.

Hero Player – Round 1, Establish Adventure Location
The Over-Water Log

"Hoard thief!" Bax-Jack squealed as he chased the small, black squirrel away from Dunn-Dunley's buried stash. "Work for your own acorns, Ren-Ricker!" Bax hated hoard thieves, especially when they were as arrogant as this young one. To dig after another squirrel's stash was shameful, but to have the audacity to do it in broad daylight was even worse.

"I wasn't thieving," laughed the little black squirrel speedily eluding Bax, "yet! I just needed to know if I was getting warm! Thanks for confirming it for me, sucker!"

Bax-Jack's eyes widened. He had been tricked! Ren had only been guessing the site of Dunn-Dunley's hoard! Bax growled. It was behavior like this in young squirrels that would keep the fabled Old Oak from ever appearing, and that angered him even more! He dug his tiny claws into the earth and chased on!

As the two squirrels darted like blurry streaks of black and red across the valley's green expanse, neither paid attention to their direction. Quite abruptly, they came to a skittering halt when they found themselves in front of the Over-Water Log.

The Over-Water Log
1. Repulsive, distracting smells carried on the wind.
2. Scared red squirrels fearful of rumors of monsters.
3. A strange, moving fungus on the Over-Water Log.
4. TWELVE SHREW WRAITHS, undead shrews infected by the Sky Rock; rotting in appearance; blind, using echolocation to hunt; Physical Abilities – piercing sonar; large, sharp incisors; hard to kill.
5. Faithful red squirrels that trust Tinner-Winn.
6. Rumors of black squirrel cannibals.
7. GIANT SHREW WRAITH, undead shrew with same characteristics as smaller ones, but hovers over the ground and has the size and hunger of a dog.
8. Zealous red squirrels that will fight for Tinner-Winn.
9. Outright rejection of the traditional myths of the valley by the gathered squirrels.
10. TINNER-WINN, Red Squirrel Prophet; claims to know the way to the Old Oak; wants to "anoint" believers in a ceremony at the Derby Woodlot; Meta-physical Abilities – Persuasive speaker, accelerates rot in and destroys undead with his paws.

Tableau, Round 1
5 of Clubs (5C) • King of Clubs (KC) • 4 of Spades (4S)
10 of Spades (10S) • 4 of Hearts (4H)

World Player – Round 1, Turn 1

Access 10S - Tinner-Winn, Extreme Impact

Standing atop the Over-Water Log was a long-bodied red squirrel with a slick tail and piercing white eyes. "Red, black, or grey," proclaimed the squirrel, "all will be welcomed to the Old Oak if you follow me and become anointed!"

A dozen or so red squirrels standing on either side of the Long Water listened attentively to the red on the Log, their mouths hanging open in near rapture. His words seemed to have the most profound effect upon them

"I, Tinner-Winn, have seen our valley changed by the Sky Rock, and I know you have all heard the rumors of monsters! I tell you now, these rumors are true!" Tinner-Winn's eyes flashed brightly. "But what is false is the idea that we are helpless! What has happened to Sunshine Valley is not a curse! It is a test! To pass this test is to know the joy of the Old Oak! To know joy is to be anointed!"

The spectators chattered in agreement, and then Tinner turned his bright gaze toward Bax and Ren.

"All must follow me…or be lost!"

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 1

Access 4H – Bax, Lore Keeper, Low Impact

The words of Tinner-Winn hit Bax-Jack like a sudden winter snap. Chills ran through his body which still heaved in pants from the chase with Ren-Ricker. What Tinner was saying could not be true in any way! Bax was a Lore Keeper and as close to an expert in the stories of the valley as any squirrel had ever been. Tinner's promise could never be fulfilled.

"But the Old Oak can only appear when all squirrels are worthy and good," Bax-Jack called out, avoiding Tinner-Winn's gaze and looking out at the other squirrels. "You all have heard the stories! Every little squirrel has!"

Bax's arguments seemed to have little effect as the other squirrels stared dumbly at his interruption of Tinner-Winn.

"I don't know what's going on here, but I know the lore, and I know the Old Oak can't appear yet. There are still unworthy squirrels among us." Bax tilted his head toward Ren.

Ren stuck his tongue out at Bax.

World Player – Round 1, Turn 2

Access 5C – Faithful red squirrels that trust Tinner-Winn, Moderate Impact

"We know you keep the lore, Bax-Jack," one red squirrel replied, "but Tinner-Winn has proven to us that the world is different now."

"Yes!" another red squirrel chimed in. "Tinner-Winn was anointed, and he has shown us that we do not have to fear the monsters."

The other squirrels muttered words of agreement, nodded approvingly, or looked up at the smiling Tinner in admiration.

"We have been waiting for generations for the Old Oak to come," a third red squirrel submitted. "It has never appeared. Perhaps it is because as Tinner said; we misunderstood the stories."

The third speaker continued. "Bax, we all may have to accept it – even you. Maybe we got the stories wrong all along."

"Yes," said the first squirrel. "Your lore is false!"

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 2
Access 5C & Use KC – Bax, Weapons Improviser, Moderate Impact

With exceptional speed, Bax-Jack tangled Ren-Ricker's wrists in Long Water reed stalks, binding them tightly behind the young black squirrel's back.

"This black," he called out toward the crowd, "is a hoard thief! He tried to steal from a red's winter stash! If I had not chased him away, Dunn-Dunley would have been without food!"

The crowd seemed to take Bax a little more seriously. There had always been animosity between the reds and blacks, and, now that they were seeing Bax in action nabbing a hoard thief, the crowd paid more attention than they had to his previous words.

"Even if some of the lore isn't true, there are still unworthy squirrels in this valley. I don't know what this 'anointing' is, but there can't be a quick fix to such a problem. There can't be such an easy road to the Old Oak. Something that good has to be earned!"

Some of the squirrels began to chatter restlessly. It seemed that Bax had made a break-through.

World Player – Round 1, Turn 3
Access 4S & Use 4H – Twelve Shrew Wraiths, High Impact

Suddenly, an ear-splitting squealing filled the air, causing instant pain in the heads of all of the squirrels! Coming out of the brush and heading toward the Over-Water Log were a dozen blind and grotesque shrews using a piercing echolocation that stunned the senses!

[The Hero Player proactively disputes any incapacitation caused to the heroes by the "ear-splitting squealing" because that sort of injury is not allowed by the Round 1 Guidelines. The World Player acknowledges.]

The Shrew Wraiths crawled toward the crowd of dazed squirrels slowly but intently, squealing along the way. They were not like shrews anyone had ever seen before! These creatures had extra long claws and teeth, and their dragging limbs reeked of rotting flesh. They were small creatures that were alive and dead at the same time, and their obscene, puckering mouths seemed poised to dig sharp fangs into fresh squirrel skin, something normal shrews would never do.

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 3
Access 4S – Ren, Escape Artist, Low Impact

"Those are the ugliest shrews I've ever seen," Ren-Ricker casually commented to Bax, betraying not the least bit of dread at the sight of the Shrew Wraiths.

Bax, however, stood tall and frozen, his spine as straight as could be, his furry ears twitching at every sound. *"They're monsters,"* he whispered in awe.

Ren rolled his eyes. *"Sure."* The little black squirrel contorted his torso and, in a second, the reed bindings fell to the ground. Ren turned around and looked at the twisted reeds with disgust.

"You used reeds to capture me?!? What an insult! I'm Ren-Ricker, baby! I'm the slickest squirrel in the valley!"

Bax still stared at the oncoming squealing shrews, ignoring Ren's rant. *"Ren…they're monsters."*

Ren tilted his head, seeming perplexed as he looked up at Bax's face. Then, he climbed up the petrified red squirrel's back, stood on his shoulders, and looked out at the shrews.

Ren's jaw dropped. *"Monsters…"*

World Player – Round 1, Turn 4
Access 4H & Use 4S – Twelve Shrew Wraiths, High Impact

The lead Shrew Wraiths dug their front claws into the ground and used the leverage to thrust their rotting forms at the nearest stunned squirrels. With foul maws open, the shrews plunged their huge incisors into the bodies of the helpless red squirrels.

The squirrels cried out in agony, but still could not move, and the shrews took advantage, gnawing away.

The rest of the Shrew Wraiths continued to emit their piercing sonar screams as the inexorable, sickening march carried on. It seemed that, despite the small size and physical deterioration of the shrews' revolting forms, no one was going to escape them.

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 4
Access KC & Use 5C – Bax, Weapons Improviser, Moderate Impact

Bax leapt into action, tossing Ren off his shoulders and grabbing a twig in each paw.

He lunged at the first Shrew Wraith whose mouth was attached to a squirrel and poked it in the face. Jumping over the monster while keeping the twigs stuck in the creature's face, Bax twisted its head around, snapping its neck.

[The World Player disputes the impact of Bax's maneuver. The Hero Player agrees that it exceeds a Moderate Impact level and restates the action.]

Jumping over the monster while keeping the twigs stuck in the creature's face, Bax twisted its head around, dislodging the shrew's teeth from its victim and turning it on its back.

"Run!" Bax shouted to the cowering red squirrels. Some of them listened, while others still remained incapacitated.

Bax stood ready with twigs in paw.

World Player – Round 1, Turn 5
Access KC – Tinner-Winn, Extreme Impact

"Vile creatures, be gone!" proclaimed Tinner-Winn from the top of the Over-Water Log. His front paws were raised high above his head, and his eyes glowed even more brightly.

At Tinner's command, the Shrew Wraiths suddenly ceased their attacks and began to convulse, thrashing about on the ground. The rotting in their flesh began to accelerate so quickly that the eye could see the deterioration spreading across their grotesque bodies. In a few moments, the abominations were fleshless dried skeletons, and, in a few moments more, they were nothing but dust.

"He saved us!" shouted the squirrels. "Tinner saved us!"

"That's why I am here," Tinner said as he smiled at the squirrels beneath him. "I am here to save us all." He looked at Bax-Jack. "Your Lore Keeper means well, but he does not have what it takes to deliver us from this evil. I do. Follow me, and I will take you to the Old Oak!"

Hero Player – Round 1, Turn 5
Access 10S – Ren, Stealth Master, Low Impact

As Tinner charmed the crowd of wounded and frightened squirrels, he had not noticed the little black squirrel lurking in the shadow of the Over-Water Log.

Ren had been eyeing Tinner carefully as the prophet wielded his supposed spiritual power over the Shrew Wraiths, and, even better, Ren was close enough to get a good sniff.

Something about Tinner-Winn seemed very unusual, and not just because of his sudden feat of mysticism. Being closer than anyone else, Ren was sure he was sensing something that the others could not notice from where they were. The little black squirrel just did not know what it was.

"I don't like squirrels that are trickier than I am," Ren muttered to himself. "This guy's not right."

He skulked back out of the shadow and looked in the direction of Bax-Jack, who stood impotent with the now-useless twigs in his paws.

"I've got to tell Bax!"

And that's the end of Round 1. With seven rounds of storytelling and two locations remaining, a lot more is going to happen to Bax and Ren as they try to solve the mystery of the squirrel prophet Tinner-Winn.

As for this first round, even the World Player did not know in advance how events would unfold. The Tableau determined the conflict elements and the hero abilities that could be utilized, but the order of use was up to the players. Had the World Player started the action with the Shrew Wraith attack on Bax and Ren instead of Tinner-Winn's sermon to the red squirrels, the Hero Player would have reacted differently and used a different order of abilities, and the plot would have evolved along new lines leading to a new Round 1 conclusion.

Thus, this sample round of WvH is a great example of how strategic storytelling and wild imagination challenge the players from the very first Action Scene to the very last. Every new scene and every new development matters to the future direction of the adventure!

So, what actually happens to Bax and Ren during the rest of this adventure? Does Tinner-Winn really know how to lead everyone to the Old Oak?

Take over from here and find out!

CHAPTER SEVEN
GLOSSARY

Access: To activate a card in a Tableau in order to use what the card represents as the primary subject of an Action Scene. Place a marker on the card at the time of accessing. All cards in a Tableau must be accessed by each player.

Action Scene: A written or spoken description that develops the action occurring in a round of gameplay. An Action Scene must be one or more sentences long and may be made of several paragraphs. It is comprised of a primary subject, previously-stated story elements, and descriptive language.

Adventure Location: Brief summary of a place where the adventure may occur.

Adventure Premise: A short paragraph that sets up one or more conflicts for an adventure.

Ally: A helpful character created by the Hero Player during gameplay when an Ace is accessed.

Character Assumption: An Action Scene that references any information in the Hero Profile – name, type, race, affiliation, or description – that could be relevant to the current action of the round and is consistent with an accessed card's suit's physical or metaphysical representation. Low Impact is the usual impact level for this effect, but the Hero Player could argue for a higher impact level if the current situational context justifies it.

Conflict List: The adversarial entities that oppose the heroes at specific Adventure Locations during each round of gameplay. Entry numbers on a Conflict List correspond to card ranks and impact values.

Dispute: A formal objection to an Action Scene that appears to contradict the current context of the story.

Epilogue Action Scene: A passage that ties up loose ends after a game, leaving both players satisfied with the final outcome of the plot.

Game Deck: Prepared deck of 40 random cards. In a standard game, 36 cards are numerical and four are face cards.

Genre: A category of fiction determined by the style and subject matter of the story.

Hero: The character controlled by the Hero Player.

Hero Affiliation: A hero's membership in a group, organization, or family. Optional part of a Hero Profile.

Hero Description: Brief paragraph that is part biography, part psychological report and establishes the hero's motivation for adventuring. Mandatory part of a Hero Profile.

Hero Player: The player making Action Scenes for one to four heroes in a game of World vs. Hero.

Hero Profile: The organized information the Hero Player references to make Action Scenes for a hero during a round of gameplay. It is comprised of the hero's title, description, Suit Abilities, and Special FX.

Hero Race: The ethnic, cultural, or species background of a hero. Only mandatory in a Hero Profile when the world is richly varied.

Hero's Title: Comprised of the hero's name and type, and race and affiliation, if any. Mandatory part of a Hero Profile.

Hero Type: The role, class, or occupation of a hero. Mandatory part of a Hero Profile.

Impact Value: The relative potency of the effect the primary subject of an Action Scene has on the other story elements established thus far during gameplay.

Incapacitated: Condition implied by the Action Scene of a Conflict List entry that restricts an affected hero from freely acting. An incapacitated hero may not change his or her Adventure Location at the beginning of a new round without assistance from another character.

Indirect Impact: When an accessed Conflict List entry is influencing events without actually being present in the scene.

Killed: Condition implied by the Action Scene of a Conflict List entry that leaves a hero dead.

Known Location: An Adventure Location familiar to a hero. The Hero Player will be given information about it.

Recurring Location: A Conflict List with six permanent entry items that are specific to one place. The other four entry positions are left blank until the World Player is ready to customize the location for an adventure. Optional rule.

Round: Segment of gameplay during which the Hero Player makes an Action Scene establishing the Adventure Location, and then players alternate making Action Scenes in competition. There are eight rounds of play in a standard game.

Round Guidelines: Guiding principles of storytelling gameplay based on the expectations of hero narratives, greatly affecting the ability to dispute.

Secret Location: An Adventure Location unknown to a hero. The Hero Player will be given no information about it.

Seriously Injured: Condition implied by the Action Scene of a Conflict List entry that gives a hero a grievous physical, mental, or emotional wound. A seriously injured hero will no longer be able to access anything at an impact level above Moderate, except for a Special FX.

Sidekick: An Ally that becomes a minor hero usable by the Hero Player throughout a game. Optional rule.

Special FX: A rare and powerful hero effect denoted by a specific face card. Always used at Extreme Impact.

Spontaneous Location: A location that has not been created in advance by the World Player and is suggested by the Hero Player. Optional rule.

Suit Abilities: Denoted by the name of a suit from a standard deck of cards and a number, they represent the skills, powers, and feats a hero possesses. Mandatory part of a Hero Profile.

Tableau: Five cards drawn from the Game Deck and laid out face-up. They determine what story elements the players may use in a round.

Tied Locations: Known or Secret Locations that are connected such that heroes may only travel to one of those locations after first traveling to the other for at least one round.

Use: To apply a card from the Tableau that matches the appropriate rank or suit of an accessed card in order to increase the impact value of an Action Scene.

Wildcard: A joker or pre-selected card that may be accessed or used as any card the active player wants, even a card that is currently in the Tableau. Optional rule.

World Description: A descriptive paragraph of about five sentences that provides the setting for a adventure. It is not a plot, and it must use evocative and provocative vocabulary.

World Player: The player making Action Scenes for entries on a Conflict List in a game of World vs. Hero.

WORLDS OF ADVENTURE AWAIT!

World vs. Hero is the two-player storytelling game system that pits the World Player's insidious conflicts against the Hero Player's bold champions in a duel of strategic creativity! From magical fantasy to superhero action to mind-bending horror, World vs. Hero is fully customizable and ready for anything players can dream up!

- Create worlds in minutes or use your favorite published settings instantly!

- Develop heroic characters that are as boundless as your own imagination!

- Design adventures that will surprise both players as the plot twists and turns!

World vs. Hero's objective is as collaborative as it is competitive: both players attempt to craft an incredible adventure story together, but the World Player's intentions do not necessarily include a happy ending for the Hero Player's champions!

With easy-to-learn rules and a unique gaming engine, World vs. Hero guarantees memorable experiences for anyone looking for a new challenge, for RPG players seeking a casual alternative, and for fans of play-by-post or play-by-e-mail games longing for a game meant for them!

WORLD VS HERO