

Threadbare

STITCHPUNK RPG



PLAY A BROKEN TOY IN A BROKEN WORLD

Threadbare

STITCHPUNK RPG

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WELCOME TO THREADBARE

PLUSHIE OR PLASTIC, MATE?

Threadbare RPG is a role-playing game in which you play a jury-rigged toy in a hazardous world. In the world of Softies and Mekka, you'll try to rescue yourself, patch yourself up, invent new devices, and maybe, just maybe, build a better world out of the broken one you've inherited.

WHAT IS THREADBARE?

Threadbare is a stitchpunk role-playing game set in a broken world populated by broken toys. Your character starts out as a Mekka (a hard-shelled, plastic or metal toy), a Sock (a single sock, often thought to have been lost in the laundry), or a Softie (a soft-filled toy).

The rules mechanics are lightweight and err on the side of simplicity. When you take an action, called a Move, you roll two six-sided dice (2d6) and add a modifier based on your character's abilities or other resources. If the result is 10 or higher, you succeed at whatever you were doing. If the result is 7-9, you succeed, but there's some kind of complication. If the result is 6 or less, your character gets damaged: the gamemaster (GM) decides what happens, and whatever it is, it'll make the adventure more challenging. There's a benefit to failure though: you will also gain a Hold, a bonus that you can use in the game later on.

In the world of Threadbare, there are no humans—although they once existed, long ago and perhaps in another place. No one really knows where they went, and few toys wonder about their fate.

As you progress in Threadbare, your character changes. Every time you are damaged and repaired, you change your character's description and, in some cases, their personality!

For more about this setting, see *The World of Threadbare* on page 43.

WHAT IS STITCHPUNK?

Stitchpunk is a loose term for a modge-podge aesthetic of stitching and fabrication that is exemplified in the excellent movie *9* and in the video game *Little Big Planet*. It borrows from the steampunk aesthetic of openly displaying analog mechanisms, but has a more sewn-together feel.

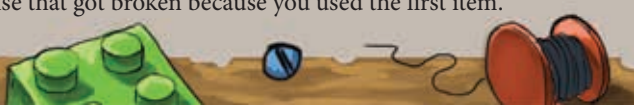
WHAT IS THIS GAME ABOUT?

This game is about repairing things that are broken. From the characters, their stuff, their vehicles, even the world itself—everything is damaged in some way. The players' job is to fix it.

Unlike many RPGs, this game is not about breaking and killing things, and characters in Threadbare do not die. They have body parts that can be damaged, but those Parts can then be repaired and upgraded indefinitely. Lose an arm? Sure, you're going to be a little hindered. But you won't be incapacitated, and it's really an opportunity to make a new arm. Better. Stronger. Faster. With more glitter.

This game is also not about owning stuff. Stuff (with a capital S) is ephemeral—you either have some or you don't, and when you don't, you can go look for some pretty easily. That said, sometimes objects are important for the story, and those Things (as opposed to Stuff) aren't so easy to find. We'll get to the difference between Stuff, Things, and Devices on page 5.

A not-uncommon story in Threadbare is fixing something that's broken, using it, and then fixing something else that got broken because you used the first item.



IS THERE COMBAT IN THREADBARE?

Threadbare's focus is on building, making, repairing, and friendship, so the Moves drive the game towards those actions.

Threadbare stays low-combat by removing combat Moves mechanically from the game, putting them entirely into a quick, narrative "montage" that the players control.

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

A role-playing game is Make Believe, but with rules.

A role-playing game, or RPG, is a game in which you pretend you are a character in a fictional story that you make up during the game. It's like playing Make Believe, but with rules. You take on the voice and mannerisms of your character, and when you want to do something that might be risky or especially interesting, you might roll dice or use some other method (cards, Jenga towers, rock-paper-scissors, etc) to determine if you succeed, and how well.

Because this is a game of Make Believe, you are not the same person as your character, and vice versa. So you can play a character who is not like you, and try out what it might be like to be them.

BOUNDARIES AND CONTENT NOTES

Although this is a game about toys, it ventures through some pretty weird areas. Dismemberment, body horror, and "cannibalism" are parts of daily life for Threadbare characters. That can lead to some very uncomfortable themes, and those themes are hard to completely eliminate, given the damage-repair cycle of the game.

If dismemberment, cannibalism, and body horror are uncomfortable or "squicky" for you, you should not play this game without alteration.

Because Threadbare characters do not have genitals, sex as a physical act doesn't exist and gender is entirely manufactured. A fashion doll can easily be male, female, agender, genderqueer, or non-binary, as the player sees fit. Only the Dented tone level introduces physical intimacy as an off-screen option, though love (platonic, romantic, fraternal, etc) between characters is certainly an important part of the Threadbare story.

Ableism and disability are also different concepts in a world where everybody has adaptations. A character with no eyes can still perceive the world, and not every toy chooses to repair damaged Parts. A toy might leave a Part forever broken. Others create new Parts with different functionality, instead of repairing a damaged one.

In Threadbare, -isms and -phobias do not exist as they do in the real world. Don't bring them to the table.

"Race" is limited to the differences between Mekka, Softies, and Socks, and their various Forms. There is no inherent difference in their social class or innate abilities beyond the Type and Form Moves, and "racism" is a concept invented by humans.

The concept of "Them" and "Us," of "Insiders" and "Outsiders" can certainly be a theme in Threadbare, but it doesn't have to be.

CROSSING THE LINE

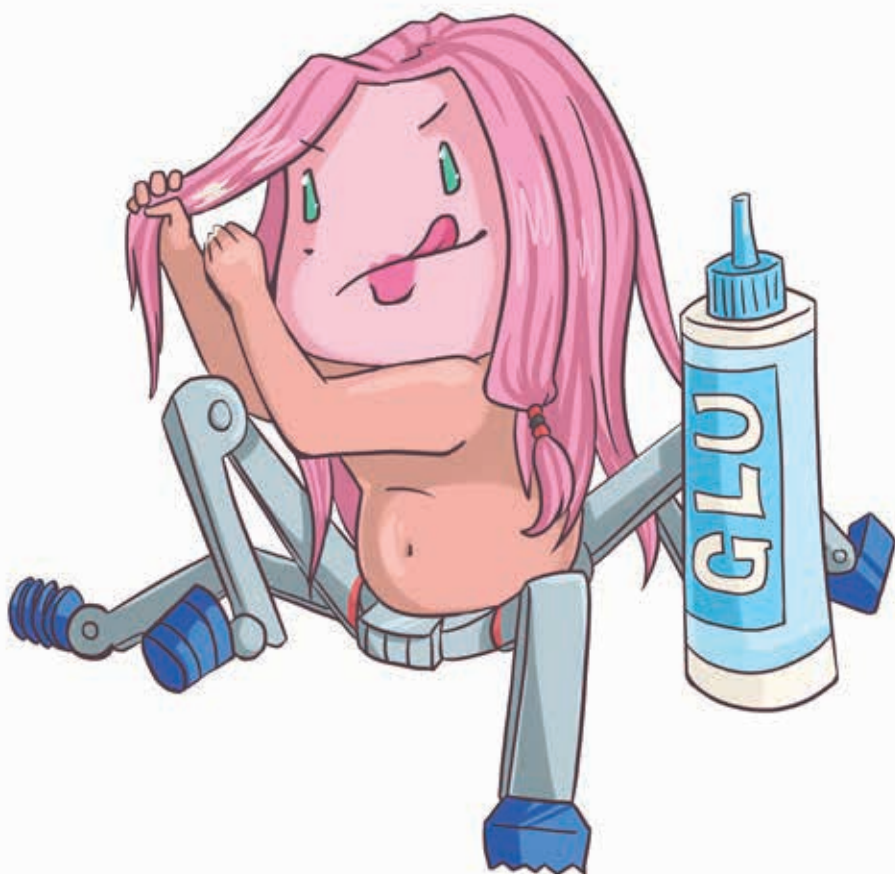
If something is uncomfortable, stop! It's important to remember that you are playing with friends, whom you care about. If anyone is uncomfortable with a particular theme or action, stop immediately and correct the story. That thing didn't happen, something else did, and the story will move in a different direction.

Role-playing groups use various tools for this, and you're encouraged to try them out at the table to see which ones work best for you and your group.

- **X-CARDS BY JOHN STAVROPOLOUS**: <http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>
- **LINES AND VEILS**: <http://blog.ukg.co.uk/anonymous-lines-veils/>
- **SCRIPT CHANGE BY BRIE SHELDON**: <http://www.briecs.com/p/script-change-rpg-tool.html>

Threadbare works just fine when you rewind and change an action to be better for all the players (including the GM).

It is possible to play Threadbare with children, teens, and adults, and the game will have very different boundaries with each group. For example, you could decide in a group of adult players that physical intimacy can and does happen, or you can decide it doesn't; the toys in Threadbare may or may not have the Parts or sensation for that activity.



how to play

The rhythm of a Threadbare game is that the adventure starts out with some peril that needs to be addressed. You take actions to resolve the peril, and it either resolves, or something breaks, or some new peril shows up! Things break more or less constantly, and you spend a lot of time fixing them, yourselves, and each other.

PLAYING TOGETHER

The most important thing to remember when you play this game is that you're trying to tell an interesting story together. Your character is not the only hero. Characters will change during the story. They may change bodies as well as personalities, and the story will get better with each new aspect of your characters.

SET THE STAGE

Before you create characters, set the stage by talking about what “tone” you want to use in the game. The tone will determine what kinds of stories are available to you, and might influence character Ties and starting questions for your adventures.

- **FLUFFY** 🐻: There is no combat and the GM should never present a conflict that can only be resolved with violence. This is like a G-rated movie. When taking damage, players decide which Part is damaged.
- **SCRUFFY** 🐻: Just a little bit darker than Fluffy, conflicts may resolve with violence. This is more like a PG-13 movie rating. When taking damage, players decide which Part is damaged.
- **DENTED** 🐻: Combat is a frequent option in conflicts, and there may be threats that are hostile and cannot be reasoned with. There might be interparty conflict as well. This is like an R-rated movie. When characters take damage, the GM determines which Part is damaged.

Threadbare works best in the Scruffy tone, with the possibility for violence, but the characters generally want to cooperate with each other. The Fluffy tone is excellent for a more friendship-oriented game, while Dented can be fun when you want to explore a dark story with disturbing dangers.

In all Threadbare games, you are easily broken, and so is the world. The story you want to tell in that setting determines the tone.

After you talk about the level of violence you want in your game, also talk about how much love, intimacy, and sex you want to present in the game. Is this a game where love is represented platonically, or is intimate love available, though “off-screen”? On-screen explicit sex doesn't really have a place in Threadbare as written; this game more deals with emotions and affection.

TELLING THE STORY

The game starts out with a series of questions that will establish if you have any damage at the beginning of the game, whether you have Stuff, what your quest or mission is, and so forth.

As you and your fellow players tell the story, the GM will give you choices and scenarios and ask you “What do you do?” when something happens. Don't look at your playbook for the answer! Just answer with what you think your character would do.

Most of the time, you will just do it, and the GM will either ask you more questions, or ask another player some questions. You auto-succeed at whatever you are doing until something you do triggers a Move.

IMPROV TIP 🐻: When something happens, unless it is icky or uncomfortable for you or another player (see Boundaries on page 2), try to accept it. Say “yes, and” a lot, whether you are a player or the GM.

MAKING MOVES

You trigger a Move when you do something specified in the Move description on the Basic Moves Reference Sheet or in your character's playbook. The trigger is usually phrased as "when you...."

FOR EXAMPLE:

MAKE FRIENDS

When you approach a GM character with an open and earnest heart, roll+Smile. On a 10+, they regard you as friendly and you may form a Tie with them. On a 7-9, choose one from the following list:

- You have to give them something (the GM will tell you what it is).
- They don't like your friends.
- They want you to go somewhere (the GM will tell you where).

NOTE: This Move cannot be used on player characters, or on hostile and non-thinking characters. See your Friendship Move for building ties with other player characters.

When you trigger a Move, the description of that Move will say "roll+Score" where the "Score" is one of your character's numbered ability scores listed in your playbook, such as Scrounge, Smile, or Strongarm. For all dice rolls, you roll two 6-sided dice (2d6) and add the modifier specified in that Move.

You might have a bonus for your ability score or a special Move from an Upgrade. If you've been sufficiently damaged, the GM may say that you are hindered in some way (for example, you might have a -1 penalty on your roll to move fast if you don't have any legs or wheels left).

If you roll a 10 or higher (after modifications), you succeed at what you were doing in the way you wanted to succeed. Congratulations!

If you roll 7-9, you succeed at what you were doing, but there's some kind of cost or complication involved. Sometimes, you'll have to choose a consequence to your success.

If you roll a 6 or less, you take some damage to one of your Parts. Mark it in your playbook so you know which Part to fix later! You also gain a "Hold" which you can spend in some way that is specific to what kind of toy you are. You can hang onto this Hold until later. Holds expire at the end of the game session.

Some Moves are special and don't require a roll. For example, there are two repair Moves that you can trigger "once per session" under the right circumstances. You only need to say "I'm doing this now" and describe how you're doing it, in order to make it happen.

STUFF, THINGS, AND DEVICES

Everything in Threadbare is made of various materials and junk: hacked, glued, and stitched together to make a whole.

Stuff refers to the bits and pieces of flotsam that characters pick up in their journeys. Stuff is very abstract in Threadbare. It can be used in a Jury-Rig Move, to repair Parts, to barter with other characters, to build something, or whatever is needed. Stuff is usually used up during a relevant Move, but more Stuff is easy to come by—the world is full of junk, after all.

There is no need to keep track of how *much* Stuff you have. Player characters either have some Stuff they've scrounged, or they don't. That's it. You can use poker chips that you pass back to the GM, a token or coin you flip over, or checkmarks in your playbook or any kind of "toggle" to show that you do or do not have Stuff. When you have Stuff, there's no need to identify what it is until you need it, and you can use it in a Jury-Rig Move to repair a damaged Part back to its full functionality.

When you name your Stuff, it becomes a **Thing**. You remove the checkbox or toggle that says you have Stuff, and write down the name of the Thing you now have.

Sometimes, characters need something specific, usually because there's a need in their story, or they've determined that they are questing for a particular Thing. In this case, the Thing is already identified by the players or the GM. For example: "A Pill Bottle with No Child Safety Cap." You can't make your Stuff into a Thing that has already been named by someone else. Instead, you must go and find the already named Thing if you want it. There's no theoretical limit to the number of Things a character can have, but Things can be broken or lost through GM moves, and you need to be able to explain where you keep your Things.

The cost of naming a Thing on your own is that you can't use it to repair yourself. However, Things can be used when Upgrading.

Finally, there are a group of items called **Devices**. Devices are Things which have specific Moves associated with them. They can be tools, structures, or vehicles. Read more about Devices on page 32.

Stuff is little bits and pieces that you either have or you don't, and can be used to repair your Parts to normal functionality. **Things** are specific items you need to complete a task, quest, mission, or make an Upgrade or a Device.

YOUR BODY PARTS, DAMAGE, REPAIR, AND UPGRADES

You start every session with all your Parts undamaged. That means your arms and legs are fully stitched on. Your battery is as charged as it's going to be. Everything is where it should be, and you are ready to roll!

When the GM asks the adventure starter questions, you might take some damage. That's great! Damage is an opportunity to make changes to your character. Now it's time to repair. You may even Upgrade yourself in the process!

DAMAGE

As toys, you are very easily damaged. You can damage a Part from fighting or failing, from a GM Move, or from rolling a 6 or lower on your dice. Stitching and gluing yourself back together is a more or less constant process for all characters in Threadbare.


If you are sufficiently damaged—for example, both of your legs or all your wheels or treads have been broken—the GM might tell you that you are hindered. A hindrance applies to one specific Move: Run Away, in the example of losing all your wheels. You can have more than one hindrance if you have a lot of damage (both arms and both legs? Might be time to ask for some help!)

When a consequence is to "Damage one Part," cross out one of your Parts in your playbook. You might repair it later, or you might replace it with an entirely new Part. Role play as though that Part is gone or unavailable.

Hindrances give a -1 to a specific Move.

PERSONALITY PARTS

When you select your Parts, you have the option of including aspects of your personality as Parts that can be damaged. When damage to a Part that affects your personality, you'll need to role play "forgetting" that bit of yourself for a while. Repairing something as nebulous as "my favorite color" could be a little bit vague, but don't worry about it. Successfully doing the Jury Rig Move restores that bit of yourself. It "brings you back around," or de-stresses you, or helps you reset. And if you want, that bit of your personality might change a little bit during the repair.



If you don't like the possibility of damaging a particular aspect of your personality and having to repair it, you can avoid it entirely by saying that certain aspects of your personality simply aren't "Parts" that can be damaged. Try to only use this for parts of your personality that are central to your identity. Having your character be able to change and grow is a big part of the game!

SPECIAL REPAIR MOVES

There are a few ways to repair yourself in Threadbare. The most common is the Jury Rig Move, which lets you repair yourself or someone else.

However, there are two special once-per-session repair Moves that automatically succeed: Minor Fix-Up, which you can do on yourself or someone else, and which you do at the same

You can automatically repair two damaged Parts each session with **Minor Fix-Up** and **Take a Breather**.

time you attempt a Jury-Rig, and Take a Breather, which you do on yourself with no other Move required. Note that Minor Fix-Up succeeds even if you roll a 6 or less on the Jury-Rig Move (see page 10).

SHAPELESSNESS

When you have no more Parts left, you become "shapeless" and are incoherent or unconscious. You remain that way until you are repaired, until the next scene, or until the GM says you wake up.

Because you can regain consciousness before you get repaired, this might mean that you are like the barrel without any monkeys, a pile of fluff waiting to be stuffed into a body, the rusted hull of an RC boat that may never float again.

As you regain Parts, you might start to resemble quite the Frankenstein's toy—a teddy bear with headlights for eyes, a jumble of toy soldiers from every regiment through history, or even a ball of fluff that has picked up stuff and stuck it to itself in random, almost magical ways.

Barring an extreme event, Threadbare characters do not die.

In the rare event that there is a character death, it must drive the story forward and must be decided on by both the person playing that character and the GM.

INFLUENCING OTHERS

There are very few ways to "force" someone else to act the way you want them to in Threadbare. For the most part, you can influence other characters through role playing and talking to them to try and convince them.

- Bossy is a specific Move that Softies have. It allows them to coerce a character into doing something they want. Bossy cannot be used to force other player characters into doing something, but if the target of the Bossy Move cooperates, they gain a benefit.
- Make Friends is a Basic Move that anyone can use to diplomatically encourage a GM character into being helpful.
- Bribe is a Basic Move that anyone can use to trade Stuff for cooperation from GM characters.
- When Wool Socks (a type of Sock character) roll a 6 or less, they gain a Hold that allows them to deceive another character.
- When Ragdolls (a type of Softie character) roll a 6 or less, they gain a Hold that allows them to ask a question from another character and receive a truthful answer.

Keep good improv impulses in mind: try to say "yes" or "yes, and" as your group tells the story, keeping within the tone boundaries you set up at the start of the game.

LEVELING UP: UPGRADES

There are no experience point or levels in Threadbare. Instead, you Upgrade by creating new Parts and using the Jury-Rig Move to apply them.

Your starting maximum number of Parts is not a hard limit! Later Upgrades to your body might add a Part beyond your starting maximum. That's okay!

BASIC MOVES

When you begin play, you have all the Moves on the Basic Moves list, plus your Type Moves and the Hold you get from your Form. Holds that you get from your Form automatically succeed.

HELP SOMEONE

When you help someone do something, roll+Ties with that character. On a 10+, choose three from the following list. On a 7-9, choose one:

- Grant a +1 on their next Move (+2 for Socks helping Socks).
- Take the consequences of a failure on their next Move for yourself.
- Nothing breaks as a result of your help!
- Someone else can help, too! Point to the next Helper.

NOTE: In one-shot games, all player characters begin with one Tie with each other. You can use this move even if you have no Ties with a character, just add +0 to your dice roll.

MAKE FRIENDS

When you approach a GM character with an open and earnest heart, roll+Smile. On a 10+, they regard you as friendly and you may form a Tie with them. On a 7-9, they regard you as friendly, but are wary. Choose one from the following list:

- You have to give them something (the GM will tell you what it is).
- They don't like your friends.
- They want you to go somewhere (the GM will tell you where).

NOTE: This Move cannot be used on player characters, or on hostile and non-thinking characters. See your Friendship Move for building ties with other player characters.

LOOK FIERCE!

When you stand up to a bully, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you are fierce! The bully backs down and gives you something to make you go away (their player or the GM decides). On a 7-9, they back down, but are still wary of you.

NOTE: Players can only bully each other in Dented campaigns, so you can only use Look Fierce! against another player in those campaigns. You can use Look Fierce! against GM characters in any campaign.

BRIBE

When you try to buy an unfriendly character's cooperation, roll+Smile and give up something of value. On a 10+, they take an action to help you out. On a 7-9, they begrudgingly help you; choose one from the following list:

- They also demand a valuable secret. Reveal it now.
- You owe them a favor in addition to the thing you gave them. The GM will tell you what it is now.
- They don't trust you to keep your side of the deal.

NOTE: Bribe is for when you want a GM character to do something, not when you want them to give you a material thing. Use Make a Bargain for that.

LEAD A CHEER!

When you try to change someone's mood, tell them a good story and roll+Smile. On a hit, you change their mood in the way you hoped. On a 7-9, choose one from the following list:

- They need you to listen to their complaints for a very long time.
- They don't want you to leave.
- They don't believe your story is true.

NOTE This can be used on player characters and GM characters. Players must consent before having this move used on their characters.

PLAY A GAME

When you play a game with someone, describe or play the game and determine if you won or lost it, then roll+Smile. On a 10+, choose three from the following list. On a 7-9, choose one:

- You won a wager! Describe what was on the line and what you won.
- Your opponent respects your skill and treats you with respect from here on out.
- You discovered something new about this game. What is it?
- You feel really good about yourself. Nothing can tear you down! The next time you roll a 6-, you do not damage a Part.

NOTE If you played out a nano-game, such as Grab Bag (page 87), to perform this Move, treat any success as a 10+.

MAKE A BARGAIN

When you engage in trade with a GM character, roll+Scrounge and give up something of value (such as a Thing, a Device, or something intangible that you or the GM character values). On a 10+, you get all of the following. On a 7-9, choose two:

- They give you what you want.
- What you want is not already broken.
- They are willing to trade with you again in the future.

CANNIBALIZE

When you break something to get Stuff out of it, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you get the Stuff easily. On a 7-9, you get the Stuff, but... choose one from the following list:

- It already belonged to someone (the GM will tell you who)!
- You break something else as well (the GM will tell you what).
- It's rude to break things! Take -1 on your next Smile roll.

FIND SOMETHING

When you search for useful Stuff or Things, roll+Scrounge. If you succeed, you gain Stuff. On a 10+, pick two. On a 7-9, pick one.

- It's exactly what you were looking for.
- It isn't dangerous.
- Nobody else wants it.

THINK IT THROUGH

When you reveal to the GM a fact about a problem or mystery, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you are completely accurate. On a 7-9, the GM will tell you one thing that is false in your statement.



JURY-RIG

When you use **Stuff** or **Things** to repair or Upgrade a Part, including your own, roll+Scrounge. On a 10+, choose three from the following list. On a 7-9, choose one:

- You successfully repair or modify the Part.
- The target gains a Move (the GM will tell you what it is).
- It doesn't use up your Stuff.
- It doesn't draw unwanted attention.

NOTE You can use this Move on an unbroken Part to Upgrade it (for adding a useful Move on a 7-9). You can also choose to gain a Move on a still-broken Part. Most likely, this will result in an undesirable Move, known as a **Glitch** (see page 37).

MINOR FIX-UP

Once per session, while you perform a Jury-Rig Move, if you are not also Running Away, you can describe yourself doing an additional minor repair on a different Part than the Jury-Rig's target. The target's Part is restored to its normal functionality.

TAKE A BREATHER

Once per session, when you are not Running Away, you can describe yourself doing a minor repair on yourself. One of your Parts is restored to its normal functionality.

MAKE A DEVICE

When you build a new Device, if you have all the Stuff, Things, and Helpers needed to make it according to the GM, name it and roll + Helpers (the number of characters helping you make it). On a 10+, it uses up any Things you needed to make it and gains one Move, choose three from the following list. On a 7-9, it uses up your Things, and choose one:

- It doesn't use up your Stuff.
- It gains a second Move.
- It can be made again in the future.
- Nobody knows you made it.

PUSH OR PULL

When you try to move something that is bigger than you, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you move it where you want to. On a 7-9, it moves, but you fall down and choose one from the following list:

- Take damage to a Part.
- Drop whatever you're carrying.
- Get lost and separated from the rest of the player characters.

RUN AWAY!

When you act to avoid getting physically damaged, (which could mean running away, dodging, or otherwise acting to avoid a danger) roll+Scrounge. On a 10+, you avoid the danger completely. On a 7-9, you escape but the GM will give you either a minor consequence or tough choice.

FIGHT SONG

When you engage in a contest of violence (combat), performance, or sport, all characters damage one Part. The players describe what "winning" means and how they successfully won the contest. For Fluffy games, the contest must be performance or sport, such as a kickball game or dance-off.

CHARACTERS AND WHAT THEY CAN DO

You're an animated, sentient creature that resembles a toy—a soft-filled creature of fabric and thread (“Softies”), a hard-shelled plastic, metal, or rubber toy (“Mekka”), or an unpaired Sock.

At the beginning of the game, every player character has some basic ability scores that they use when making one of the Basic Moves. They also have a character “type,” like Mekka, Sock, or Softie, a form-- like “Ragdoll” and some special moves that are specific to their character type and form. Every character has a number of **Parts**, as discussed on page 6. And finally, every character has some connections, or **Ties**, to other characters played by other players and the GM.

When you're ready to make a character, print out the Character Playbooks at the back of this book, or from the PDFs available at <http://www.threadbarerpg.com>.

MAKING A CHARACTER

STEP ONE: CHOOSE A TYPE OF CHARACTER

Look through the Mekka, Sock, and Softie playbooks and the Character Types section to decide which Type and Form you'd like to play. Your group doesn't need to have one of each type, and it's okay for more than one player to choose the same Character Type and even Character Form.

- **MEKKA** are made of hardened materials, such as plastic, metal, or rubber, but sometimes even papier mache. Toy trucks, fashion dolls, and action figures fall into the “Mekka” category.
- **SOCKS** are the lost gym socks, the stockings, the stray nylons of the world. They sometimes appear like an unfilled Softie, but might also appear to have an illusionary “hand” inside, moving them about and forming a mouth for them.
- **SOFTIES** are made of fabric, thread, and soft stuffing. Teddy bears and ragdolls fall into the “Softie” category.

If you aren't immediately sure what Type to choose, feel free to read the sections on Basic Moves, Your Body: Parts, Damage, Repair, and Upgrades, and Influencing Others to see how the character options work in Threadbare.

STEP TWO: SELECT ABILITY SCORES

All characters have the following ability scores:


- **SCROUNGE**: Your ability to find and use materials, such as yarn, cloth, metal, plastic, and glue, to repair, Upgrade, or craft stuff.
- **SMILES**: Your friendliness and ability to influence others.
- **STRONGARM**: Your ability to push the world around.

Assign the following modifiers to each ability score as you wish: +2 (you are very good at this), +1 (you are pretty good at this), -1 (you are not so good at this).

STEP THREE: PICK A FORM AND DESCRIBE YOURSELF

Pick a Form from the list in your character's playbook. This describes what Parts you have, what “damage” means to you, and what special ability you have because of your Form.

Each Form has a special ability that triggers when you roll a 6 or less on the dice. You gain a “Hold” that you can spend later to take an action. The action doesn't require a dice roll—it succeeds automatically. You can save your Holds until you need them, and you can have more than one Hold, although you can only spend one at a time. At the end of the session, your Holds expire and do not carry over to the next session.



Select and describe your Parts. Each Form has a list of suggested Parts, and a maximum number of starting Parts. You don't have to have the maximum number of Parts. You cannot die, so even if you lose all your Parts, the part of you that is "you" remains connected to whatever tattered and broken Parts are left.

You are not limited to the suggestions for your Form or Type—if you want one of your Parts to be the cuff of a sock, even though you are a Mekka Toy Truck, go with it.

PERSONALITY PARTS ☞ You may include aspects of your personality in your Parts if you wish, and each Form has at least one example of such a Part you could choose. For example, you might have a catch phrase that's stored on a sound chip in your body.

Parts are the bits of you that can specifically be targeted, damaged, lost, upgraded, and *changed*. If it's really super important to what makes you "you," don't add it in the playbook as a Part. Write it in your Description instead.

UNBREAKABLE PARTS ☞ You can also decide that you have a sound chip that isn't specifically a Part, if you want to have it without it being breakable; in this case, put it in your character's Description, but do not write it in your Parts list. It cannot be lost or damaged, but it is also of limited impact on the world; for example, if you say "I have a shotgun," it is an entirely decorative item that cannot fire bullets. Unbreakable Parts are best for quirks of your personality and descriptive bits that you really want to maintain.

BE DESCRIPTIVE ☞ Include the color of your fur or plastic, what condition you're in, what you use to perceive the world around you (headlamps? a speaker that lets you hear? ping pong balls that you glued into place where your eyes used to be? no parts needed, you just can?)

Your starting maximum number of Parts is not a hard limit. Later Upgrades to your body might add a Part beyond your maximum. That's okay. In addition, each limb can be a separate Part, or you can group them together.

What you look like is a big part of who you are in Threadbare. Write out a brief description of your Form and any modifications that have already been applied to your body (these descriptions don't add Moves, but future modifications may). If you wish, you can draw a picture or use a physical toy to represent your character.

As you take damage, make a note of which Part was damaged. When you repair, note what you did to fix yourself.

For example, a teddy bear that has been through a few adventures might describe themselves as "A medium-sized stuffed bear with brown fur, with an eye patch, and one arm has been replaced with a knotted rope."

OPTIONAL AVATAR RULE ☞ In ongoing campaigns, if you bring a toy that represents your character, including having been modified as the character changes over time, you gain one Hold at the start of the session. You may spend that Hold as if you had rolled a six, or to give yourself a +1 to any Move after you roll the dice.

PICK A PRONOUN ☞ Threadbare characters don't really have gender or sexes. You can use any pronoun you like.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF ☞ Using an index card or scrap paper, make a name tag or tent card with your character's name, a short description, and your pronouns. Put it in front of you so the other players and GM can see it. It'll make it easier for them to talk to you or about you in character.

STEP FOUR: MAKE TIES WITH OTHER CHARACTERS

After everyone has been introduced, if you plan to play an ongoing campaign (or if you aren't sure), pick some Ties or connections to the other characters. At least one tie must be with another player character. At least one tie must be with a GM character. You get to name this GM character whatever you want, so make it evocative! There's a list of GM character names you can put together in the List of GM Characters found on page 108.

ties FOR ONE-SHOTS In a single-session game, you start with one Tie with each other player character, unless the adventure starter says otherwise. You can create Ties during the game session using your Friendship Move.

ties IN A CAMPAIGN Each level of Tone changes the types of inter-personal connections you might have with the other characters. Pick some Ties from the list for the Tone of your campaign, or write your own. At least one of your ties must be with another player character. At least one of your ties must be with a GM character. Name the GM character.

During the game, you will have opportunities to create new Ties with both player characters and GM characters. You don't need to choose these from the ones listed below. Instead, write them out freeform, based on what's happening in the story. Any player you make a Tie with must agree to the Tie (or else you have to rewrite it) and the GM must agree to Ties with GM characters.

FLUFFY TIES

_____ and I used to be really close friends.

I learned about a cool machine from _____. I hope someday to build it!

I admire _____'s _____.

I love to play with _____. They're such a good sport!

SCRUFFY TIES

I owe _____ a huge debt!

_____ has never really shown me much respect.

_____ doesn't understand the world. It's my responsibility to teach them.

I will never forget what _____ did for me.

DENTED TIES

I'm envious of _____ because they have _____.

I wish _____ cared about me.

I owe _____ a debt, all right. They aren't going to like how I repay it.

I told _____ an important secret. I wonder if I can trust them.

MEKKA

Mekka are made of hardened materials, such as plastic, metal, or rubber, but sometimes even papier maché. Toy trucks, fashion dolls, and action figures fall into the “Mekka” category.

MEKKA MOVE ▢ SALVAGE PARTS

When you are the target of a Jury-Rig Move, you can use up Stuff (in addition to any needed for the Move) to gain a new Move, even if you didn't choose that result. You can only gain one new Move from any successful Jury-Rig. Note that, in general, you either have Stuff or you don't, so you will need another character to give you their Stuff to use this Move.

MEKKA FRIENDSHIP MOVE

Once per session, when you play a game or playfight (for example, headbutting without intending any damage) with someone else, they learn something new about their own capabilities (this may result in a Move), and you create a Tie with them.

BUNCHA LITTLE GUYS ▢ You are a swarm of tiny plastic toys. You're a crack team of green army men, more fun than a barrel of monkeys, or an entire farm's worth of barnyard animals. **When you roll a 6-**, one of your “guys” becomes separated. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can spend to ask the GM a question when you're seeking information about the world around you. They must answer you honestly. You can have up to twelve starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS ▢ *Tiny individual but similar toys (one for each part), a central leader, hive mind.*



DOLLFACE ▢ You're a hard-plastic doll with an array of exciting accessories! **When you roll a 6-**, you lose or sacrifice one of your accessories to the cause. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can spend to trigger a Jury-Rig move, even if you don't have any Stuff. You can have up to seven starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS ▢ *Head, arms, legs, body, outfit, hair, accessories (name them!), list of things I collect.*



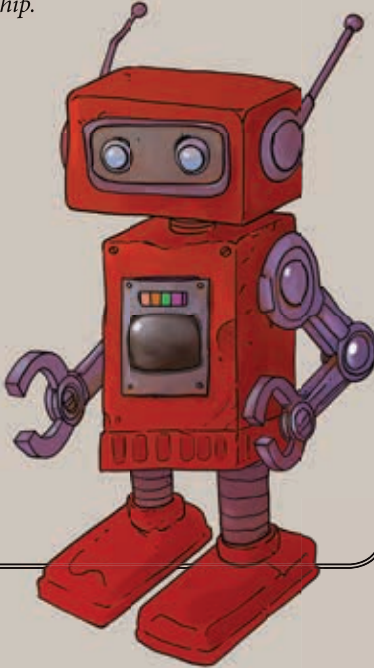
YOUR FORM

Pick one of the Forms from the boxes below. Your Form determines the maximum number of Parts you can start with, as well as the Hold you gain when you roll a 6 or less (after modifiers) on the dice.

BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED ☞ You're a battery-operated machine that moves, talks, or lights up. **When you roll a 6-**, your batteries start to run low and you go into power save mode. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can spend to appear silent and motionless for a short time, even if moving slowly. You can have up to six starting Parts.

NOTE ☞ You can be a battery-powered toy that is awake and alive through the mystical energy that has awakened other toys and does not need batteries as a Part. You might still have batteries as a Part, or even as a power source if you wish.

SUGGESTIONS ☞ *Wheels, treads, cargo, lights, speaker, windshield, window, steering wheel, pulley mechanism, antenna, catch phrase chip.*



NO STRINGS ATTACHED ☞ Once upon a time, there was a puppetmaker who made you out of wood, ceramics, and clothed you in tiny stitched clothing. You had carefully-articulated joints, strings, and a series of beams for easily making you move and dance! Even before the Awakening, you had personality, although it was enslaved to the wishes of whomever pulled your strings! **When you roll a 6-**, another string is cut from your past. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can spend to escape something that is trapping you. You can have up to seven starting Parts.

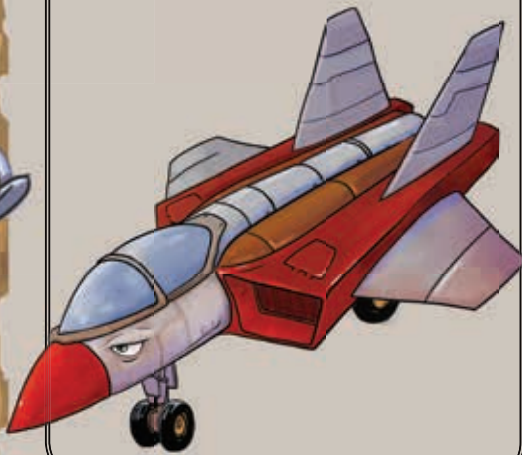
SUGGESTIONS ☞ *Head, arms, legs, body, outfit, strings, control bar, a dramatic script.*



VROOOM! You go fast! You're a wheeled vehicle that's built for speed! **When you roll a 6-**, you fall behind! Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can use to notice something that was overlooked in others' haste. You can have up to six Starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS: *Wheels, windshield, doors, headlights, bumpers, fenders, a favorite surface to roll on.*

NOTE: *There might be some overlap between a Vrooom! toy and a Buncha Little Guys if the Buncha Little Guys are a collection of small cars. If you're more than one car, pick Buncha Little Guys. If you're just one, pick Vrooom!*



MORE THAN MEETS THE EYES! Are you a truck? Are you a human-looking scientist? Maybe you're both! You have two faces you show the world-- what are they? **When you roll a 6-**, you involuntarily transform too fast! Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can use to pretend to be someone you're not. You can have up to six Starting Parts:

SUGGESTIONS: *Wheels, headlights, a face, a second face, claws, bumpers, an outfit, a song.*



ROCK SOLID! You're a solid friend with no moving parts, at all. You might be a solid plastic dinosaur, a pet rock, or even a logoed tchotchke from a long-past trade show. **When you roll a 6-**, damage one Part or Device that isn't your starting part (if you have one) and gain +1 Hold which you can use to resist someone trying to force you to do something or go somewhere. You can have only one starting part, which cannot be damaged.

SUGGESTIONS: *A hard plastic dinosaur, a pet rock, a child's pottery sculpture, a character from pop culture, a chew toy.*

NOTE: *If you don't have additional parts, you do not damage anything, but still gain the Hold; the GM makes a move as usual.*



SOCKS

Socks are the lost gym socks, the stockings, the stray nylons of the world. They sometimes appear like an unfilled Softie, but might also appear to have an illusionary "hand" inside, moving them about and forming a mouth for them.

SOCK MOVE ² PAIRED UP

When you Help Someone, treat a 7-9 partial success as a 10+. If the target is another Sock, they get to roll 3d6 and pick the highest two dice.

SOCK FRIENDSHIP MOVE

Once per session, when you ask for help from someone else for something you can't do by yourself, if they help you, they feel better about themselves. They may repair a Part, and you also may create a Tie with them.

YOUR FORM

Pick one of the Forms from the list below. Your Form determines the maximum number of Parts you can start with, as well as the type of bonus you gain when you roll a 6 or less (after modifiers) on the dice.

ATHLETIC SOCK ² Hup hup, soldier!

You're a sturdy, pragmatic sock with a solidity to you that belies your floppy nature. When you roll a 6-, the starch weakens and you fold like a nylon. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold, which you can use to get into a spot or space that you normally wouldn't be able to reach or fit inside. You can have up to five starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS ² Toe, cuff, stripes, heel, reinforced athletic sole, patches, cheer slogan.



CHRISTMAS STOCKING ² You are

the sentinel. The sparkly guardian of cold winter nights. You are the stocking hung by the chimney, ever vigilant, expectant of a bounty you will disgorge at dawn like a mockery of sockness. You have no mate. When you roll 6-, a bit of the jingle goes out of your bells. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can use to inspire, cheer, or encourage another character. You can have up to seven starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS ² Toe, cuff, jingle bells, tinsel, felt applique, beads, embroidery, a child's name, quilting, favorite song.



WOOL SOCK ☞ Sturdy, well-built, you are a sock to be reckoned with! You're also deceptively unfashionable. **When you roll a 6-**, you felt a little bit more. Damage one Part and gain one Hold which you may use to deceive a GM character (they don't call it "pulling the wool over his eyes" for nothing!) You can have up to six starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS ☞ *Toe, cuff, heel, instep, gusset, lace, patterning, patches, a "tell."*



SOCK PUPPET ☞ All it took were some googly eyes and a felt tongue, and suddenly you're a whole new Sock! **When you roll a 6-**, you lose a little bit of your personal style. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can use to blend into a crowd and be overlooked by someone trying to single you out. You can have up to seven Starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS ☞ *Face, cuff, eyes, tongue, outfit, floppy limbs, hair, a political agenda.*



FINGER PUPPETS ☞ Like a Buncha Little Guys, you are a group of tiny "socks," each with its own personality and look! **When you roll a 6-**, one of your puppets finds a new home! Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can use to establish a minor fact about someone you just met. You can have up to ten starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS ☞ *An ensemble of various finger puppets of different appearances (describe them!), a bandana backdrop, a theme song.*



TIGHTS ☞ Joined at the hip, literally, you're a two-headed character is some-times at odds with itself. But you are also your own best friend! **When you roll a 6-**, you get all tangled up in yourself! Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can spend to catch something and hold onto it. You can have up to four Starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS ☞ *Right leg, left leg, torso, run, toes, haughty demeanor.*



SOFTIES

Softies are made of fabric, thread, and soft stuffing. Teddy bears and ragdolls fall into the “Softie” category.

SOFTIE MOVE: BOSSY

When you try to convince someone that your way is best, roll+Smile. If they are a GM character: on a 10+, they are convinced! They do what you want. On a 7-9, they do what you want, but you must give them something (similar to the Bribe move). If they are a player character, on a 10+, if they do what you want, they gain a Hold as if they'd rolled a 6- (but without the damage). On a 7-9, if they do what you want, you owe them a favor.

SOFTIE FRIENDSHIP MOVE

Once per session, when you put someone else's needs before your own, they tell you how they are weak, afraid, or vulnerable, and you tell them a secret of your own. You also may create a Tie with them.

YOUR FORM

Pick one of the Forms from the list of Softie Forms. Your Form determines the maximum number of Parts you can start with, as well as the bonus you gain when you roll a 6 or less (after modifiers) on the dice.

RAGDOLL: Stitches can be witches... you're the enigmatic, always-smiling secret-keeper. **When you roll a 6-**, you unravel a secret. Damage one Part, but gain +1 Hold which you can spend to ask a character one question. GM characters must answer truthfully. Player characters may deceive you, but you will know they are not telling the truth. You can have up to seven starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS: *Head, arms, legs, body, outfit, stuffing, hair, favorite color.*



BUILT LIKE A BEAR: You're an artisan-crafted heirloom stuffed animal. Yeah, you might have a few scuffs and surgical scars, but you're custom-made and built to last. You have a lifetime guarantee! **When you roll a 6-**, you doubt your origins and wonder if you really are “all new materials.” Damage one Part, but gain +1 Hold which you can spend to divine the history or origin of a person or item. You can have up to eight starting Parts.

SUGGESTIONS: *Head, arms, legs, tail, body, outfit, stuffing, ears, the books you want to read.*



CARNIVAL PRIZE 🎪 You're awesome! You're BIG! And WEIRD! Your seams are hot-glued together! You've got pellets for stuffing! You might not even look like a real creature! **When you roll a 6-**, your stuffing comes loose and leaves a trail. Damage one Part and gain oneHold which you can spend to find your way if you are lost. You can start with up to nine Parts.

SUGGESTIONS 🎪 *Head, arms, legs, tail, body, eyes, antennae, ears, stuffing, weird things (describe it!), carnival barking phrase ("Step right up!" etc.)*



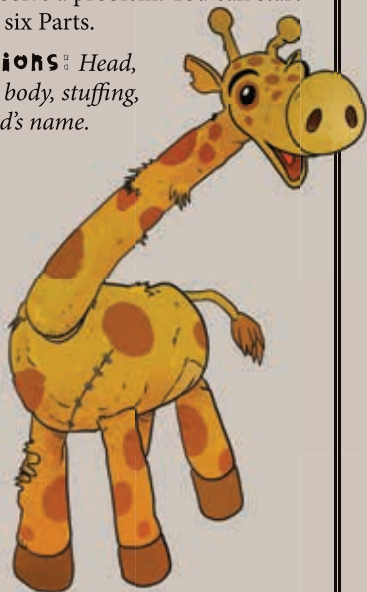
UNHAND ME! 🍪 Don't let the soft fur and big eyes fool anyone-- you're one smart cookie-eating monster! **When you roll a 6-**, you become nostalgic for the days when you told stories instead of living them. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can spend to entertain a group of Toys by telling a short, amusing story with heroes they identify with. You can start with up to eight Parts.

SUGGESTIONS 🍪 *Head, body, eyes, arms, ears, mouth, outfit, weird things (describe them!), a bad habit.*



I'M "REAL." Whether you remember or not (and many choose to forget!), you were deeply, unfathomably loved, once upon a time. You were so beloved, you Awoke before the humans were gone. Your fur is worn bare, you have been restitched by a mother's hands, and you've absorbed a child's tears and laughter in great measure. **When you roll a 6-**, you remember something from the long-ago past that makes you sad. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can use to apply "real world" logic or science to solve a problem. You can start with up to six Parts.

SUGGESTIONS: *Head, limbs, tail, body, stuffing, eyes, a child's name.*



CONTENT NOTE: *I'm Real can be a disturbing form to play, due to its memories of humans and having lived through whatever ended human life on Earth. Not recommended for games with younger players.*

This form dances in the pathos of the end of The Velveteen Rabbit, and applies "meta" knowledge to the game. Using this form's Hold requires the player to use the science and logic of the real world, not the Threadbare world (problems in Threadbare can use illogical solutions with the Think it Through move).

SOFT SCULPTURE: You are a work of art! Felted or stitched together, you might be too "abstract" for others to appreciate, but you know you're a valuable piece of culture. **When you roll a 6-**, you sense the line between "art" and "kitch" is a little too close for comfort. Damage one Part and gain +1 Hold which you can use to know the original value of something you can hold. You can start with up to six Parts.

SUGGESTIONS: *Bobbles, spirals, wings, eyes, mouth, lumps, woobly bits, mushed face, a french accent.*



FOR the GAME MASTER

The world of Threadbare is cluttered, needlessly so, but everything is junk. It's hard to find something that works or can be repaired, or can even be used for repair. And all that junk is dirty, broken, and stuck to other junk. Entropy is more than a law of physics—it's a hostile entity in Threadbare.

As the Game Master, or GM, it's your job to represent that world to the players and give them plenty of room and material for them explore, interact with, and change the world around them.

GM PRINCIPLES

The "GM Principles" for Threadbare are based on other Powered by the Apocalypse games. Principles are the guiding concepts behind the game. They help you understand the "why" behind the mechanics, so you can let those shine through in the story.

- Be a fan of the characters.
- Provide spotlight time to all players.
- Complicate the character's lives.
- Players can change the way the world works.
- Give the players opportunities and reasons to work together.
- GM characters never blame one character for the actions of another in Fluffy and Scruffy tones.

Use Moves that focus on breaking and losing stuff, adding to confusion and chaos, and generally creating the feeling of a world where being careful means you only trip and fall on your face once or twice a day.

BE A FAN OF THE CHARACTERS

As the GM, you are telling a story with the players about their characters. Their characters are the protagonists of the tale—you are playing all the side characters, antagonists, allies, and the environment. Because the story is about the protagonists, you want to be a fan of them and encourage them to have goals and try to achieve them.

How does "being a fan of the characters" look when you're running a game of Threadbare?

For starters, it means that when you ask the players what happens, you listen to their answers and describe the world reacting accordingly. It means that the players drive the action. If they want to go off in a new direction, you let them.

Don't take their successes away from them, or negate them with your hard choices and consequences. If a player rolls a 10 to befriend the Big Bad Guy, who you have been building up as a really big threat to the entire way of Threadbare life... then the Big Bad Guy becomes their friend. He's still Big and Bad... but now he's on that character's side (even though he might not like the other toys.) This might take all the "teeth" out of your adventure, and that's fine. Ask the players what they want to do now, with their new friend. Perhaps they'd like to help Big Bad do something productive or useful? Or make amends for his past? Or maybe now that he's seen the light, maybe he reveals that he'd been working on something really dangerous—and they'd better act to stop it before it's too late!

On a 7-9, where there's a qualified success, it's important not to let the hard choices you offer be so hard that the player might as well have rolled a 6. Sometimes the choices listed in the Move are exactly what the player wanted in the first place, so they'll take those choices. That's fine. There is nothing wrong with easy choices once in a while!

What you don't want to do is present a choice between actually failing to do what they wanted to do, or kinda-failing. A 7-9 is a success! It's just a success at a minor cost or one which makes life more difficult for them.

GIVE EACH PLAYER THE SPOTLIGHT

Encourage all players to share and enjoy the spotlight.

Character “spotlight” refers to the time when a character has the GM’s and the other player’s attention and is most able to influence the story. They might be making a Move, describing something new, or asking a bunch of questions of the GM.

One of the most important things a GM can do is keep the “spotlight” rotating around the table. There will be players who are less energetic about telling the story, and that’s okay. It’s important for them to have the opportunity, even if they choose not to do much with it. Some players will tell a more internal story, thinking about the thoughts and feelings of their character. If they don’t want to take a direct action, encourage them to share that story with the players and tell how their character is feeling.

You can shift the spotlight from one player to another by asking a direct question of the next player.

Be aware of players who interrupt, talk over, or jump in when quiet players pause or don’t speak up right away. Feel free to ask the quiet player for confirmation that that’s what they want to happen, and then follow up by asking them a clarification question.

COMPLICATE CHARACTERS’ LIVES

You make GM Moves when the players roll a 6 or less on the dice (modified), or when the action has stalled. In other Powered by the Apocalypse games, you make Moves when “the players look at you for guidance,” but Threadbare gives the players a bit more scenery to chew on. Give them enough “down time” to feel like they can catch their breath and interact with each other, but not enough to let them be bored.

When the players roll a 6 or less, pick the most interesting thing from this list and describe it happening. If it makes for a good progression of the story, whatever they were attempting to do also succeeds.

- They fall (on their face, down a hole, down the mountain of junk, onto something sharp, or under something dangerous).
- They lose something (temporarily, not valuable, permanent, valuable). The “something” could be tangible, such as a Thing, or it could be intangible, such as a friend, a memory, or a secret.
- Something breaks (the thing you were holding, a device the group owns, the bridge you were about to cross, an ally’s trust, or something else important).
- They get lost (it’s too dark and scary, there’s a maze of garbage, there are no signs, they have no map, the map was wrong, or the scout lied).
- They have an opportunity to use up their Form Holds.
- Their Move backfires.
- Danger approaches (If playing with the Dented option: the danger might only be solvable with violence).
- The environment endangers them (use an environment Move).

A 6- roll is a good time to set up a cliffhanger and then shift the character spotlight. For example, losing the tool you were using to jury rig a repair could be a great setup to shift focus to someone else, who can now spring into action and save the day!

Any 6- roll also means the character has damaged their body. That means something broke! In the Fluffy and Scruffy tones, ask the player to describe what Part has broken and how. In the Dented tone, you (as the GM) decide what Part broke. Because every 6- roll already damages a Part, it’s a little mean to use “something breaks” on the character’s Parts as well. Use sparingly.

When players roll a 6 or less, they gain a Hold, which they can spend later. Be aware of your players' Holds. When a player has a Hold, see if you can give them a chance to use it!

TRACKING CHARACTERS' HOLDS

You might find it challenging as a GM to keep track of whether a character has Stuff, how many Holds they have, what they can or cannot do, and whether they have had enough time in the spotlight.

During character creation, jot down on a piece of paper or worksheet the characters' names, something the players tell you about them that seems important or unusual, and what their Holds mean. Leave plenty of space around each character's name and description (four to a page isn't unreasonable), and then lay the page flat on the table.

Use two types of tokens or markers. You'll need one token to track spotlight for each player, and two to four tokens per player to track Holds. As you play, put a token on the character tracker to note when something happens.

When a player rolls a 6-, place a "hold" token on top of that character's tracker space.

When a player has the spotlight, place a "spotlight" token on top of that character's tracker space. When all the characters have a spotlight token, remove the spotlight tokens so they can be placed again.

If a character already has a spotlight token on the tracker, either hold off on giving them the spotlight again, or keep their spotlight short, and look for any characters who haven't had the spotlight yet. Give those characters the spotlight focus next, and clear the tokens as normal.

LET PLAYERS CHANGE THE WORLD

One of the three ability scores characters have is called "Strongarm", but it has little to do with physical strength. Although it can be used for pushing and pulling things around, its real value is metaphysical.

Strongarm is the ability score that says how much a character, and therefore the player, can directly change how the world works.

Players have plenty of ways to influence GM characters or each other, and to change themselves through Parts and Upgrades. But they also have some very strong ways to change how the world functions.

At the beginning of any game session or adventure, you will ask the players a series of questions. These questions highlight what they're doing, where they are, what they want to get out of the adventure. They help you establish the players' goals and build background characters that might show up later in the adventure.

At some point, a player will tell you something about the world that isn't already written down. For example: "And the island is made up of candy." And you may pause for a second and tilt your head, and be tempted to look in this book and see if, in fact, the island really is made of candy.

Don't do that!

Unless there's a compelling reason why Candy Island is a bad idea, just nod and say "yes. It is made of candy!" And think of things that complicate matters if the characters are on an island made of candy. Does it melt in the sun? What happens if it rains? Are there insects that want this island for themselves?

What if there is a compelling reason not to simply accept the player's world-making statement? Here's an example from a game I ran:

The toys are in The Machine, hurtling towards a deep chasm that will surely damage them when they fall into it. Buzzsaw Lightyear is dangerously close to throwing his Panic Mode switch and starting a rampage. Alice the China Doll is trembling, afraid that she will shatter on impact.

Fluffy the Sock ponders the situation and then declares "Hey, everyone! If we all take a deep breath and hold it, we'll lift The Machine and float across the chasm safely!"

This is assuredly a type of avoiding danger, but it's avoiding danger by rewriting the laws of physics! I tell Fluffy she needs to roll Think it Through—she's revealing something about a problem that we didn't know before.

She rolls an 11. It is now factual—perhaps holding our collective breath is like magic. Perhaps there's a higher amount of helium in the air, now that the humans are gone. Whatever the rationale, for purposes of the world as it stands now, this is now a fact—holding our breath can make us float. If we work together.

Now, once the fact has been established, it need not stay true forever. Threadbare is a world of entropy, after all. Perhaps a storm blows all the lighter-than-air gasses out of the nearby area. Perhaps the characters' toy "lungs" cease to work. Breaking a fact of the world is a possible consequence of the players rolling a 6 or less, and counts as a GM Move.

GIVE CHARACTERS OPPORTUNITIES AND REASONS TO WORK TOGETHER

All GM characters want things from the player characters. Even adversaries have things they want or need, and can be talked to, reasoned with, or learned about to find out what those needs are. These needs are leverage that the players can use to work for or with the GM characters. They essentially form "quest seeds" that the players can choose to pick up or ignore, at their discretion.

NOTE This principle applies in the Fluffy and Scruffy tones of Threadbare. In Dented, a GM character can be unreasonably hostile, unintelligent, or inscrutably alien to the point where its motives and desires are unknown and unknowable. Such threats should be few and far between, even in Dented, and they should form a threat that player characters might team up with otherwise-adversarial GM characters to defeat.

DON'T BLAME ONE CHARACTER FOR ANOTHER'S ACTIONS

The toys that make up "the rest of the world" in Threadbare can be standoffish, threatening, even hostile, to the player characters, but they have an innate sense of "fair" when it comes to dealing with individuals. As a result, if one player does something that would upset a GM character, the GM character will not take it out on a different player's character. Similarly, if one player befriends a GM character, that friendship does not automatically extend to the other player characters.

For example, Billo decides that he's had enough talking with the Queen of Scrap Heap. He's desperate to stitch up his Sock buddy, Jay. He's just going to head in and start digging around for the Stuff he needs to stop Jay's toe from continuing to fray. He rolls to stealthily Look for Stuff, and rolls a 6. The Queen sees Billo and gets really mad! She has Billo arrested by her ragdoll guards. The Queen does not, however, threaten Jay or otherwise punish Jay for what Billo has done. To Jay, she's neutral. Jay might even convince the Queen to stitch up her toe... for a price.

Even though player characters work together and cooperate often, GM characters always view them as individuals.

NOTE This principle applies in the Fluffy and Scruffy tones of Threadbare. In Dented, a GM character can shift blame from one character to another if it complicates things for the players. Doing so is considered a GM Move, especially if the consequences are severe enough.

RUNNING AN ADVENTURE

At the start of every one-shot adventure or campaign session, the toys are already in trouble. After you have asked the starting questions, they're probably already damaged. Since you don't want the first scene to be a round of "I repair myself," start by presenting an immediate threat or problem that they must deal with first.

Ask the players the adventure starter questions, or use these guidelines to make up your own:

- **BUILD SOMETHING TOGETHER** : A good Threadbare adventure starts out with a cooperative exercise where the players create something together that the characters will use. In Furry Road, it's a conveyance called The Machine, but it could be a home, a town, a Device, a library of knowledge—any shared resource. Ask each player a specific question about the resource.
- **ACTIVITY** : You might have an idea for an activity already, or you can present some activity options to the players and ask them which one they're doing. For example, Furry Road's activity is "we are carrying something important from one place to another."
- **MOTIVATION** : Threadbare characters tend to be motivated by one of a small handful of drives. They might be mercenary, humanitarian, or political. Present concrete choices related to the Activity that helps the players to identify why they are doing what they're doing.
- **ADVERSARY** : Someone or something is a distant adversary, someone they may fear, or simply need to deal with before the end of the adventure. Ask the players who the Adversary is!
- **SETBACK** : Threadbare adventures always start with something broken. Offer the players a choice of what's broken, and ask them how it broke.
- **IMMINENT DANGER** : It's never just a flat tire. It's a flat tire during a dust storm! Ask one of the players what the imminent danger is to the party. This should be different from both the Setback and the Adversary.

FIRST SCENE : The adventure opens with the Imminent Danger bearing down on the PCs and they must act now! The first scene gives them a chance to deal with or escape the immediate danger. Try to give them an opportunity to end this scene with some Stuff they can use for their repairs or Upgrades in the next scene.

SECOND SCENE : When the players hit a lull, give them a second to talk and catch their collective breath. This is usually a good time to remind them about the repair and Upgrade Moves.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE : Then, ask them what they do next. If they don't choose an action, suggest something that might move them towards their motivation (for example, if they are motivated by trade and aren't doing much, suggest that they could explore somewhere unknown (and possibly dangerous) for Stuff and Things.

When a GM character demands a price, the best options are ones that rely on the player characters building something or fixing something that was broken.

PRESENTING CONFLICTS : When the players roll a 6 or less on the dice, in addition to the character taking some damage and gaining a Hold, look at the list of GM Moves and pick the most interesting one that ties into the Setback, the Motivation, or the Adversary.

FINISHING THE STORY : The story ends when the characters achieve their goal or abandon it. Ideally, they've had a chance to engage their Adversary in a way that satisfies their motivation.

COMBAT AND CHALLENGE MONTAGES

In the Scruffy and Dented tones, combat is an option that your players might choose. In this case, the Fight Song Move can be a combat montage where the player characters physically harm GM characters.

In a Fight Song montage, the players decide how the fight or contest goes, how they win it, and how each character engaged in the contest, what they did, and how they sustained damage.

INITIATING A FIGHT SONG MONTAGE

When a player says “I hit him” or “I hurt him” or “I kick him” or stab, or shoot, or really anything that would result in harm to another character, look at the other players and ask them if they would like to do a combat montage.

If more than half of the other players agree, then the Montage is on.

If anyone is still talking or negotiating, they complete their conversation. This might resolve the cause of the montage without incident. More likely, the conversation ends up as a side conversation that occurs moments before, or even during, the montage itself.

Going in turns and starting with the player who initiated the montage, each player takes a moment to describe what “winning” means to them as a player. Each player gets to determine how involved in the conflict their character is, what they do, and what happens to them. Frequently, “winning” means getting out of the way of the brawl.

In some circumstances, the *players’* definition of “winning” might be something that moves the story forward, but the *characters* would think of it as a loss. For example, if a group of characters are in a fight where winning means they embarrass someone important, they might want to lose the fight instead!

“Winning” a fight montage could technically mean losing the fight, if the players think that is the most desirable outcome. The players decide what is a victory and how it happens.

At the end of the Fight Song Montage, all players damage one Part. Each player describes how their character got damaged.

Players are free to describe their characters as not participating in the combat. They are still damaged, but the damage occurs when they run away, hide, or do something other than fighting. The montage doesn’t have to be a physical conflict for everyone in the party.



In a Montage:

- At least half the players agree to participate.
- Anyone still talking or negotiating completes their conversation.
- Everyone damages one Part.
- Each player describes what “winning” means to them.
- Each player describes what their character did during the conflict or challenge.

NON-COMBAT MONTAGES

A Fight Song Montage can be a physical combat, but it doesn't have to be! Especially if you are playing a Fluffy game, think of all the other ways a large-scale conflict can be resolved.

Here are some ideas for non-combat Fight Song Montages you can use to resolve a conflict:

- A dance-off.
- A baseball game (or any team sport).
- A foot race (or car race, or any chase sequence).
- A tea party with elaborate etiquette rules.
- A singing competition.
- A Senate debate.
- A wrestling match.

PLAYBOOK CHOICE WILL TELL YOU WHAT YOUR PLAYERS WANT

Players have very few choices when they pick their playbooks, so the choices they make should help you understand what kind of game they want to play.

- **BUNCH A LITTLE GUYS** (MEKKA): Wants to be a swarm of characters with scouting abilities and able to take a very large amount of “damage.” Give them lots of opportunities to Find Something. Sometimes, the “something” will be a threat!
- **BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED** (MEKKA): Wants to have both a super-stealth mode and (most likely) some kind of super-annoying electronic effect. Give them opportunities to Avoid a Threat and let them role play their annoying electronics!
- **DOLLFACE** (MEKKA): Wants to mimic human-like dolls and be really good at repair. Give them plenty of opportunities to use up their accessories fixing other characters and Devices.
- **NO STRINGS ATTACHED** (MEKKA): Wants to tread a line between freedom and slavery. Give them opportunities to escape.
- **VROOM!** (MEKKA): Wants to be fast and clever. Give them opportunities to notice something amiss.
- **MORE THAN MEETS THE EYES** (MEKKA): Wants to be a master of disguise. Give them opportunities to deceive someone.
- **ROCK SOLID** (MEKKA): Wants to be solid and reliable. Give them opportunities to be unyielding or to resist being bullied around.
- **ATHLETIC SOCK** (SOCK): Wants to be the acrobat, able to stretch and compress and twist and tie. Make “it’s hard to reach” a frequent complication.
- **CHRISTMAS STOCKING** (SOCK): Wants to be the cheerleader or boost character. If you have a Christmas Stocking in your game, have at least one GM character who is perpetually sad or moody, or make sadness part of the impending dangers the characters face.
- **WOOL SOCK** (SOCK): Wants to be able to lie, very effectively, to other characters. When this character tells a believable lie to a GM character, have the GM character and anyone they have authority over, believe them.
- **SOCK PUPPET** (SOCK): Wants to be a rabble rouser in a crowd: unnoticed, but influencing others to act. Give them opportunities to gather a squad together and direct them.
- **FINGER PUPPETS** (SOCK): Wants to have a lot of narrative control over GM characters’ backstories. Give them opportunities to meet new people.
- **TIGHTS** (SOCK): Wants to have two “faces” they show the world, perhaps even two distinct personalities. Give them opportunities to catch something that’s about to get away from them (falling, escape, etc.)

- **RAGDOLL** (SOFTIE): Wants to be involved in interpersonal intrigue and secrets. This character will talk to GM characters a lot.
- **BUILT LIKE A BEAR** (SOFTIE): Wants to be more like an academic or sage, with knowledge about places and things, rather than secrets about individuals. Be prepared to provide or ask for lots of lore, and let them drive the narration in the Think About It Move.
- **CARNIVAL PRIZE** (SOFTIE): Wants to be a weird, seer-like character who can find their way, but more a sage fool rather than a competent scout. Use “Get Lost” a lot as a GM Move.
- **UNHAND ME** (SOFTIE): Wants to be a storyteller. Have them meet crowds of GM characters who are hungry for entertainment.
- **I'M REAL** (SOFTIE): Wants to tread the line between the game and the real world a bit more than usual. Give them opportunities to say “actually...” and provide a real-world fact or solution, even if it contradicts the fiction of the Threadbare world.
- **SOFT SCULPTURE** (SOFTIE): Wants to be materialistic, even a bit snobby or classist. Give them opportunities to lord over someone else (preferably a GM character).

Players will also surprise you with their playbook choices! A lot of players really want to visit a nostalgic character from their childhood. LET THEM!

GIVING HINDRANCES

It is possible for a Threadbare character to take a bunch of damage to their Parts and become unable to continue to function as originally manufactured. In that case, you might apply a hindrance to the character to reflect that disability.

Be generous about hindrances. Threadbare characters are resourceful, and they can “make do” with very little. But if someone is missing more than half of their Parts, it should be harder for them to do some things.

Here are some examples of Hindrances a character might get:

- Erased face: -1 to Smile when trying to sweet-talk a GM character.
- No legs or wheels: -1 to Scrounge when running from danger.
- Lost stuffing: -1 to Strongarm when Thinking It Through.

The Hindrance might be related to a single missing Part, but be triggered after the character loses other Parts. It's simply that, at a certain point, it became too hard to “hold themselves together.”

For Mekka with “Bunch a Guys” and Socks in general, it might be hard to figure out when someone has more than half of something and what the result might be. Be creative. Hindrances should be circumstantial—they affect one type of action, not the whole range of what that ability score does. Because Rock Solid toys start with one Part which cannot be lost, they are not susceptible to Hindrances.

In Scruffy or Dented tones, if a character loses more Parts, you can apply another Hindrance. Again, don't hand these out too much—even in Dented, a character

shouldn't end up with more than a couple of Hindrances, even if they lose everything except the bit of stuffing that contains what's left of “them.”

Repairing a Part or adding a new Part removes the Hindrance, even if the Part repaired or added doesn't directly apply. Think of it as the character tightened up the rest of their Parts while they were at it, or they quickly learned to use the new Part to compensate for a weakness elsewhere.

A Hindrance happens when a character loses more than half their Parts, and only affects one Move.

UPGRADE AND DEVICE MOVES

During gameplay, you might find, build, or Upgrade with Things, Parts, and Stuff. These Upgrades will give you additional Moves. This is also how you increase your abilities and can increase the number of Parts you have.

These example Upgrades, Devices, and Glitches are not meant to be an exhaustive list. Rather, they are suggestions for looking at what the players want to do, and what the GM can do to help them achieve it.

UPGRADES

In general, a Threadbare character has a certain number of Parts with some basic functionality. They can perceive the world around them through “sight” and “sound.” They can move themselves from one place to another. They can speak. They can manipulate objects well enough to use tools and repair themselves.

In other role-playing games, characters use experience to gain new abilities. In Threadbare, they use Upgrades and Devices.

Upgrades take a Part of a toy and make it a little bit “better.” When a toy uses the Jury-Rig Move, they can opt to add a Move to a Part. Doing so is considered an Upgrade, and adds functionality to the toy. There’s no need to be stingy with Upgrades. Note that Mekka have an easier time gaining Upgrades than other Types of toys.

Upgrades are the core “advancement” mechanic in Threadbare. They are always connected to a Part.

If the upgraded Part breaks for any reason (usually due to rolling a 6 or less), the Upgrade is no longer functional. If the toy repairs that Part (with the Jury-Rig, Minor Fix-Up, or Take a Breather Moves), the Upgrade returns to its functionality.

You can’t have two of the same Upgrade functioning at the same time; they don’t “stack.” For example, if you have Speedster Wheels, more Speedster Wheels won’t give you a +2 when you Run Away. If you have Speedster Wheels on your front wheels and you put Speedster Wheels on your back wheels, you’ll only get the +1. In that case, however, you will have a backup set of Speedster Wheels, in case one set breaks.

AUDIO CHIP 🎧: You have an audio recording that triggers when you want it to (and sometimes when you don’t!) What does it say? **When you use your audio to endear yourself to others**, roll+Smile. On a 10+, pick two. On a 7-9, pick one.


- You have a +1 on your next roll to Lead a Cheer.
- Someone friendly hears it and comes over to join you.
- You don’t annoy anyone around you.

NOTE 📌: If you took an audio chip as a Starting Part, you can use this Upgrade to give it a less irritating recording, or make it more controllable.

BUILT-IN RANDOMIZER 🎲: **When you Play a Game**, roll 3d6 and pick the best two for your result.

BUZZSAW 🪚: **When you cut through something too tough to tear**, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you slice through it like butter. On a 7-9, you cut through it, but the noise attracts unwanted attention; the GM will tell you who is annoyed and how they react.

CALCULATOR BRAIN 🧮: You have learned the ways of commerce and trade. **Gain the Trade ability score.** You start with +1 Trade, and can add it to your Scrounge ability when Making a Bargain, or use it in commerce Moves. (The players and GM can work together to make a whole



system of Commerce Moves specific to your campaign, if you are interested in this aspect of the world!)

CHARMING FACE ☞ +1 to Smile.

COMPASS ☞ You've installed a working compass, which always points to the squiggly line. You don't have to roll Think it Through to understand where you are in relation to your home.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE HUMAN WAYS ☞ You have studied the ways of the creatures that once dominated the world, and you know a few things about them. **When you Think it Through**, you as a player may use "meta knowledge" to understand things from a real-world perspective.

GLIDER WINGS ☞ You can glide by yourself for short distances, and not very high. If you want to glide for a long time, very high, or carry something weighing more than a little bit of Stuff, use the Push or Pull Move.

GOOGLY EYES ☞ Your eyes go in several directions, often all at once. **When you look around**, you cannot be surprised.

THE HEROIC WORKS OF STUPENDOUS GUY ☞ You have memorized a small library of thin, flimsy, colorful illustrated booklets which tell the stories of the great heroes of the past, such as the bat man, the marvelous girl, a Buncha Little Guys who are all blue, and so forth. **When you Lead a Cheer**, if you include elements from your comic books, that heroism bleeds through. If the target is another player character, they also gain a +1 to their next action. If the target is a GM character, the next action they take is in your best interest.

INFLUENTIAL SPIRIT ☞ +1 to Strongarm.

INSIDE OUT ☞ You can turn yourself inside out to get a new perspective on things! **When you turn yourself inside out**, roll+Scrounge. On a hit, you find something you didn't realize you had inside. What is it? On a 7-9, the GM will tell you how what you found is troubling.

LITERACY ☞ You've not only studied the relics of the past—you've read them! You have an elementary reading ability and are capable of reading signs; you can use that knowledge to avoid danger.

MAGNETIZED PARTS ☞ Your Parts are magnetized to be easier to disassemble and re-assemble! **Once per session**, you ignore the Part damage from a 6- roll (all other consequences of a 6- apply.)

NEW PAINT ☞ +1 to Smile when you Lead a Cheer.

POCKET ☞ There are no hard rules for how many Things you can carry in Threadbare, but by default, you can only either have or not have Stuff. With this Upgrade, you have secured a pocket where you can keep an extra complement of Stuff, which is handy if you do a lot of repairs! Add a checkbox to your "I have Stuff" section in your character's playbook.

RESOURCEFUL Attitude ☞ +1 to Scrounge.

SILLY PUTTY ☞ You can make a faithful copy of a two-dimensional image, such as a picture, newsprint, advertisement, or sign.

SPEEDSTER WHEELS ☞ Gain a +1 when you Run Away.

TOOLBOX ☞ You have one or more useful tools you might need for making and repairing things. You can substitute or ignore one of the ingredients of a recipe when making a Device. For example, if you need three "Things that can serve as cross beams," you can use your tools to make one of them work as two.

tutorials : You have knowledge about how to make things. Describe how you gained this knowledge (such as ancient recordings, diagrams, or reading if you have Literacy). **When you try to understand how to make a Device**, roll+Scrounge. On a hit, the GM will tell you the recipe needed to make the Device. On a 7-9, the recipe will be harder than you expected.

WATERPROOF COATING : Thanks to a superior Aquaphobic Coating, you are as comfortable underwater as you are on land, although you might move a little more slowly through water or other fluids. Any Parts that might be susceptible to damage from moisture (such as rust, decay, or disintegration) are protected due to your amphibious Upgrade.

DEVICES

A Device is a Thing that you can use as a temporary Upgrade, but it can be easily dropped, lost, given away, or traded. Devices might be tools, which can help when performing other Moves. They can be structures, which leave a permanent useful item in the landscape. Or they can be Vehicles, which transport characters over the landscape and obstacles with less effort than walking.

To craft a Device, you'll need to follow a special "recipe" of materials to craft and use the Make a Device move.

The suggested recipes for each of these Devices is listed with the device. In general, recipes include a number of Helpers, some required Stuff, and one or more Things:

- A Helper is one character using the Help Someone move to assist the character who is using the Make a Device move.
- Stuff is, well, Stuff—if the recipe calls for "two Stuff," then two characters (or one character with a pocket) must have Stuff and contribute it in order to complete the Device.
- Things are named items that a character might have found along the way. If a Thing's description doesn't match the recipe, it can't be used to make that Device.

When the players Think It Through to determine how to make a Device, the GM reveals the recipe to them and may modify the recipe based on the results of Think it Through. These recipes aren't set in stone; the GM might make a recipe harder or easier, depending on the campaign.

After the Device is made, the Things that were required to make the Device become its Parts.

Note that, when rolling a 6- while using a Device's Move, the Device is what breaks, and its Parts are what get damaged. Devices do not gain or grant Holds for 6- results.

TOOLS

Tool Devices help you accomplish some other task. They are similar to Upgrades, but they are not attached to a Part.

BLOWTORCH

RECIPE : one Helper, one Stuff, one Thing that can serve as a fire-safe canister, and one Thing that can serve as fuel.

A blowtorch starts with +1 Hold of expendable fuel. When you light something on fire, spend the blowtorch's Hold to make it go up in flames. You can replenish the Blowtorch with a Jury-Rig or Minor Fix-Up repair.

CATAPULT

RECIPE : three Helpers, two Stuff, and three Things that can form the base, arm, and bucket. When complete, the Catapult has two ability scores: **Velocity** and **Accuracy**. Assign a +1 to one of these, and a 0 to the other.

When you use the catapult to throw a payload to land safely on a target, roll +Accuracy. On a 10+, the payload lands directly on the target with no consequences. On a 7-9, the payload lands off-target; this may cause a complication if the target was small or high up!

- When you use the catapult to throw a payload to knock something down, roll+Velocity. On 10+, the payload hits with enough force to knock the target down. On a 7-9, choose one-
- The payload hits the target but doesn't knock it down.
 - The payload hits something else and knocks that down (the GM will offer some alternate targets, and you pick which).
 - The payload safely and harmlessly lands beyond the target.

GRAPPLING HOOK

RECIPE ^o one Helper, one Stuff, and one Thing that can serve as the hook.

When you traverse a distance or height that you normally cannot cross, deploy your grappling hook and roll+2. On a hit (7+), you reach where you were heading and there is now a rope connecting your departure spot to your landing, so others may traverse it without rolling. On a 7-9, the GM will tell you what complication or danger is there when you land.

HELPER-BOT

RECIPE ^o two Helpers, three Stuff, one Thing that can serve as the torso, one Thing that can serve as the head, two Things that can serve as arms, and any Device that helps when making or repairing something.

When you Make a Device, you need one fewer Helpers to assist you.

KNIFE

RECIPE ^o one Stuff, and one Thing that can serve as a sharp edge.

This cutting instrument is a sword, razor, or other sharp, simple bladed device. When you cut through something too tough to tear, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you cut your way through it with some work. On a 7-9, you cut through it, but it's very tiring.

NOTE ^o This is similar to the Buzzsaw Upgrade, but doesn't risk drawing unwanted attention and can be given to other characters.

MUSIC BOX

RECIPE ^o one Helper, two Stuff, and two Things that can be used for the music drum and the combs. This Device can be upgraded with a third Thing to add a windable crank so it can play unattended.

The music box is a small Device that, when activated, plays a little melody, looping over and over. When you play the music, roll+Smile. On a hit, everybody in listening range can dance along to the music. If they do so, they gain a +1 to helping each other, as if everyone had a Tie with each other. On a 7-9, however, something unfortunate happens while everyone is distracted by the dancing.

STRUCTURES

A Structure is a special type of Device that does not move, but is helpful to the world at large. It might be a quest to craft or repair one, as Structures can be very hard to create if you want them to withstand the strong winds of entropy in the world of Threadbare.

Because Structures add to the setting, they may have Environment Moves attached to them. These are Moves that the players or GM can make to move the story along.

BRIDGE

RECIPE ^o three Helpers, one Stuff, and three Things that can form the walkway and two side supports.

When complete, a bridge allows characters to cross from one side of a chasm, gap, or waterway to the other side.

DOCK

RECIPE [▢] one Helper, one Stuff, and two Things that can serve as a dock and pylon.

A dock is a stable Structure where a boat can be tied up without requiring an anchor. Docks are usually attached to dry land so passengers can get on and off the boat without getting wet.

HAMMOCK

RECIPE [▢] one Helper, and one Thing that can form a soft sling. This Structure must be attached to a stationary object (like a post, building, rock, wall, etc.)

A hammock provides a nice place for a toy to rest. At the end of a long day, isn't it nice to just swing in the breeze and relax? **When you rest in a hammock**, you may Take a Breather, even if you have already done so this session.

HOUSE

RECIPE [▢] one Helper and two Things that can form a roof and a wall.

Houses give shelter from the elements, a place to store their owners' Things, and a private space to meet friends.

RAILS

RECIPE [▢] three Helpers, three Stuff, two metal Things that can serve as rails, and four Things that can serve as ties.

Rails provide a "road" for vehicles with rail wheels, such as trains, carts, locomotives, cargo cars, and bogies.

ROAD

RECIPE [▢] three Helpers, three Stuff.

A road gives wheeled vehicles and characters somewhere to roll with fewer obstacles than an open space. **When operating a wheeled, non-train vehicle on a road**, that vehicle has a +1 to Speed.

VEHICLES

Vehicles are a special type of Device that can hold characters, and sometimes cargo, and transport them from place to place. Depending on the type, your Vehicle might be able to fly, roll, walk, tread, or float. Vehicles are never "alive" and must always have some kind of pilot or driver directing them, or they will crash.

Unless otherwise noted, Vehicles start with a number of Parts equal to the number of Things used to create them, though the Parts do not have to match the Things (for example, a boat's Parts could be rigging and a hull, even though the Things used to make it were a bucket and laundry bag to be used as a sail).


NOTE [▢] Some characters are toy vehicles in their own right. It is not unheard of for a "Vroom" toy to hitch a ride in another vehicle.

AEROPLANE

RECIPE [▢] three Helpers, two Stuff, one Thing that can be used as the fuselage, and two Things that can be used as wings.

An aeroplane uses aerodynamic principles to glide through the air, either using the environment, such as a glider's wings, or through a self-propelled mechanism, such as a propeller.

An aeroplane has three ability scores: **Lift**, **Maneuverability**, and **Visibility**. Assign a -1, 0, and +1 to these scores. It has up to four Parts, such as wings, body, tail, landing wheels, control stick, etc.




When you fly high, roll+Lift. On a 10+, you soar! On a 7-9, you get high enough, but it's dizzying and everyone inside the aeroplane is a little disoriented.

When you fly acrobatically, roll+Maneuverability. On a 10+, you are an acrobatic angel of the sky! On a 7-9, you maneuver well enough, but you aren't impressive and anything that goes wrong will be very dangerous!

When you fly fast, roll+Visibility. On a 10+, you can see everything. On a 7-9, you fly fast enough, but you didn't see something until it was too late! The GM will tell you what it is.

BALLOON

RECIPE  two Helpers, one Stuff, one Thing that can be used as the basket, one Thing that can be used as the balloon, and one Thing that grants lift (helium tank, hot air, etc.).


A balloon is a simple floating device that lets you slowly fly from one place to another, without much maneuverability.

A balloon has two ability scores: **Lift** and **Maneuverability**. Assign a +1 and -1 to these scores. It has up to three Parts, such as a balloon, basket, tethers, sandbags, heat source, etc.

When you float in a particular direction, roll+Maneuverability. On a 10+, you fly towards your target! On a 7-9, you drift a little aimlessly, but you'll get there. Eventually.

When you scout the area around you, roll+Lift. On a 10+, you can see the land around you as clear as day. On a 7-9, you spot something unwelcome.


BIKE

RECIPE  one Helper, one Stuff, one Thing that can be used as a frame, and one Thing that can be used for wheels.

You have a lightweight Vehicle! It has two or three wheels, but only enough capacity for one or two characters. It doesn't require any fuel. It is tiring to operate. It doesn't go very fast.

When you ride a bike, you move faster than you can run normally, and it's a lot of fun! You gain a Hold as if you had rolled a 6- (but without damaging a Part), if you don't already have one.

BOAT

RECIPE  two Helpers, two Stuff, one Thing that can be used as a hull, and one Thing that can be used as a sail or motor.


The boat has two ability scores: **Seaworthiness** and **Speed**. Assign a +1 and -1 to these abilities. The boat has up to three Parts, such as a hull, motor, sail, hold, prow, stern, rudder, steering wheel, anchor, rigging, etc.

You have a charming vessel that floats on water or other liquids (but not lava). You can use this vessel to traverse lakes, rivers, ponds, and so forth.

When you encounter rough seas, roll+Seaworthiness. On a 10+, you sail through without incident. On a 7-9, the GM will tell you something dramatic that happens. Describe how you and your crew act quickly to fix the problem!


When you need to get across the water quickly, roll+Speed. On a 10+, you make it there in time! On a 7-9, you make it just in time, but something on the boat just broke and needs to be fixed. You can sail on until you run out of Parts.

BUS

RECIPE  three Helpers, two Stuff, and three Things that can serve as the body, wheels, and seats.

The bus has two ability scores: **Capacity**, and **Power**. Assign a +1 and 0 to these abilities.


A bus transports many characters, well beyond the number that can cram into a car or boat!



When you take on more passengers, roll+Capacity. On a hit, they all fit. On a 7-9, some of your passengers will have to stand—drive carefully or they might get hurt!

When you drive through an obstacle, roll+Power. On a 10+, you barrel through it with no problem, destroying it in your wake. On a 7-9, you do so, but your passengers are shaken up!

CAR

RECIPE : two Helpers, two Stuff, and two Things that can serve as the body and wheels.


A car has two ability scores: **Speed** and **Fuel**. Assign a +1 and 0 to these abilities.

A car zooms around, sometimes fast, sometimes slowly, with one or more drivers and passengers.

When you drive fast, roll+Speed. On a hit, you drive as fast as you want! On a 7-9, you take a -1 to Fuel.

When Fuel is at -1, you stop. Refueling requires a successful repair.

TRAIN


RECIPE : three Helpers, three Stuff, and four Things that can serve as cars. The train has up to four Parts, which are generally the cars and wheels.

A train has three ability scores: **Fuel**, **Speed**, and **Power**. Put a +1, 0, and 0 in these scores.

A train is made of several connecting smaller vehicles, or cars. Trains can run on Rails, but many trains made by and of toys can also run on open ground and roads. If a toy can run only on Rails, it gains a +1 to Speed but will not move if it is derailed.


When you want to go the distance, roll+Fuel. On a hit, you keep going without spending any Fuel. On a 7-9, it takes a long time.

When you want to ride the express train, roll+Speed. On a hit, you go very fast! On a 7-9, you lose 1 Fuel.

NOTE : You can refuel through a Jury-Rig or Minor Fix-Up move.

When you want to barrel through an obstacle, roll+Power. On a hit, you blow right through it without damage! On a 7-9, one of the train's Parts is damaged.

TRUCK

RECIPE : three Helpers, two Stuff, one Thing that can serve as the cab, two Things that can serve as axles, and one Thing that can serve as the payload area.

A truck has three ability scores: **Fuel**, **Handling**, and **Horsepower**. Assign a +1, 0, and -1 to these scores as you see fit.

A truck is a powerful vehicle with extra room to carry its cargo. Speed isn't as important to a truck as its ability to carry non-alive cargo from one place to another. In general, unless the truck is very small, or its cargo is ridiculously large, a truck can be assumed to carry whatever cargo is put into it.

Trucks don't have a lot of passenger capacity, though. A truck can only carry two characters comfortably. Any extra passengers give the truck a -1 to all Moves.

When you carry cargo through an obstacle or over a steep incline, roll+Horsepower. On a 10+, you make it through with no consequences! On a 7-9, you spend 1 Fuel to make it.

When you try to outmaneuver something or move quickly, roll+Handling. On a 10+, you perform the stunt effortlessly; describe how! On a 7-9, you make it, but spend 1 Fuel to do so.

When Fuel is at -1, you stop. Refueling requires a successful repair move.

Glitches

A Glitch is an undesirable Move chosen when a character Jury-Rigs a broken Part and chooses to gain a Move, but does not choose the “successful repair” option. Glitches may have partial functionality, but they always have some kind of flaw.

This list of suggested Glitches is not comprehensive; GMs and players should feel free to come up with new Glitches that fit their characters and campaign.

As a GM, you should always want the Glitches to be far less desirable for the character to choose than a successful repair. However, sometimes a Glitch is darned fun to play, and they often lend themselves to interesting plotlines for the players.

Like Upgrades, Glitches are always attached to a Part. When that Part is broken, the Glitch stops functioning (unless otherwise noted). Always try to match the Glitch to an appropriate Part. For example, “Whee!” only makes sense if a player character has buttons (whether mechanical or sewing buttons).

A single Part can have both an Upgrade and a Glitch.

AHEM 🗨️ You sometimes cough up lint.

BAWLER 🗨️ Your eyes produce liquid “tears” that roll down your face, especially when you are very sad.

COLOR SURPRISE 🗨️ The Part affected by this Glitch changes color when wet.

FUNGUS AMONG US 🗨️ A few small, glowing mushrooms grow on your Part.

HOLIDAY CHEER 🗨️ When something passes by very close to you, you automatically wave and say “Merry Christmas!”

LED 🗨️ Your eyes glow, which makes it difficult to see anything, and makes you more visible. You cannot turn the lights off.

MARBLING 🗨️ There’s a marble hidden inside your Part. It rattles.

OVERCLOCKED 🗨️ When you need a burst of heat, you can sacrifice battery power to make yourself very, very hot. Immediately after, you must take action to cool down, or automatically break one Part.

PLUMP UP 🗨️ When you get wet, you greatly expand in size.

PULL MY FINGER 🗨️ You can emit a puff of blue smoke with a nasty smell. When you are scared, you cannot control this effect.

SCOREBOARD 🗨️ When you are idle, you announce the score of an unknown game, which randomly rises and lowers.

SQUEAKER 🗨️ When you squeeze this Part, it squeaks unpleasantly.

STICKY SITUATION 🗨️ You have a spot on your body that stuff sticks to. If it’s a magnet, only metal sticks to it.

WHEE! 🗨️ When you are excited, the buttons on your body spin freely, but you cannot control them.

WHERE'D THAT COME FROM? 🗨️ You can produce seemingly endless amounts of rusty safety pins.

ZOOM ZOOM 🗨️ When you spin your wheels, you make a high-pitch “vmmm” sound.

CREATING NEW MOVES

As a GM, you'll often be called on to make new Moves on the spot. Sometimes, you'll need to make a new Move for a Device or Upgrade, or you might have a strange new environment that the players are exploring, and you want to give it something unique.

This section has some advice for making up new Moves and Upgrades for your players. Most of these pertain to when a player Upgrades themselves, but there are two sections specific to making new Device Moves and making environment Moves.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FOR GMS: Moves gained from Parts, Devices, and repairs are tied to those Parts or Devices. Make sure to note on the Move that it's from that Part or Device. When that Part or Device breaks, the Move also breaks and can no longer be used.

GET PLAYER BUY-IN

One of the best pieces of advice you can follow is to talk to your players about what they want out of the Move. Moves change the game—they change what players can do, what they can't do, and how they interact with the world.

So, the first thing you want to do is figure out what the players are trying to do with an Upgrade. As with everything in Threadbare, that means asking a few questions:

- What does this look like? Describe it to me.
- Is that functional, or cosmetic? Which parts move?
- What do you think would limit that function?
- When do you think you'll use this Move?
- What is an example of something this Move could not be used for?

New Moves are like Chekov's gun—try to give players an opportunity to use them in the same session they were gained.

If the answers sound reasonable to your game, have the player write down the Move using the format in Formatting Moves.

Remember that Upgrade Moves are tied to Parts. They are almost always lost when the Part is damaged or destroyed (exceptions exist, but are rare).

ABILITY SCORE UPGRADES: BASIC AND BORING

Probably one of the most basic type of Upgrade is something that gives a bonus to an existing ability score. Here are some examples from the Upgrade list:

- **INFLUENTIAL SPIRIT**: +1 to Strongarm.
- **RESOURCEFUL ATTITUDE**: +1 to Scrounge.
- **CHARMING FACE**: +1 to Smile.

These are really basic Upgrades that a character might pursue. They're easy to give out, and they don't require much thought. The problem with these Upgrades is that while they reflect a "power creep" advancement mechanic that many role players cherish (and therefore, they're not bad for some groups of players), they are immensely powerful in a game where a +2 shifts the chances of success significantly.

They're also a little boring to play. A lot of players find that, while there's a thrill at first in "nearly always succeeding" at a task, it's a little boring if you really can't fail at something. When players have a +3 in an ability score, two things happen: first, they no longer rely on other players to use the Help Someone Move. Second, they only use Moves that rely on that ability score.

That said, sometimes players want to increase a weak ability score, and if a player is really aiming to improve, that's not a bad idea. Boosting a -1 to a 0 is a good way to encourage a player to use Moves relying on that "weaker" ability more often.

You can also give a bonus that is limited to an existing Move, usually a Basic Move. In this case, you can expect the player to do that Move more often. But consider how much more interesting (and less game-breaking) a Move like "New Paint: +1 to Smile when you Lead a Cheer" is. Now the player is more invested in doing that specific Move, but will still be likely to use Moves from other ability scores.

A good guideline is to limit "ability score increase" Upgrades to once every three sessions of play, and always to a maximum of +2. Instead, consider "conditional bonuses" that only apply on specific Moves.

MOVES THAT CASCADE

Some Moves can trigger other Moves, or are triggered by them. The Minor Fix-Up Move in the Basic Moves is an example of a Move that triggers off of another Move—you have to be performing a Jury Rig Move to do the Minor Fix-Up.

A cascading Move is helpful when you want to encourage players to do something in particular. A Move that triggers off of "when you Make a Bargain" will encourage the game to become more about trade and barter. If that's something you and your players enjoy exploring, then that's a good trigger.

SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Some Moves completely change the rules of the game—and that is OK, as long as everyone is having fun and interested in the new rules!

Calculator Brain is an example of an Upgrade that adds new rules to the game. When you introduce this to a player, you open up a new ability score, Trade, and the ability for players to engage in more than the simple "barter economy" that is Threadbare. Perhaps now the players could set up an economy, a currency system, even a stock market! At this point, it's up to you and the players to explore what kind of commerce rules make sense for your world. You might need a Move called "Teach Currency" where someone in the party successfully convinces another character or community to start using the Trade score. This would be another Upgrade Move, and that economic system would need to evolve over several sessions and Upgrades from your players.

Threadbare is a setting with a lot of "gaps" and areas where the toys have something of a blind spot. In any Threadbare campaign, you'll find players fill in a lot of those gaps themselves, but if you find that something is important enough, you can give it a unique ability score and let the players explore it.

Here are some examples of new ability scores and the ways you could use them:

- **TRADE**: Set up and manage a commerce system.
- **MAGIC**: What if the weird, semi-magical world of Threadbare had more precise magic rules?
- **FAITH**: Set up a religious belief system and convert followers.
- **READING/LORE**: Toys who learn to read the languages of the past may gain lots of useful knowledge.
- **COMBAT**: Get into physical fights with other characters. This Move would mean the Fight Song would no longer exclusively be used to resolve physical fights.
- **LIFE**: Do you want to be a "real boy"? Perhaps this ability score tracks a toy's transformation into a biological creature, with all the associated benefits and pitfalls.

CREATING DEVICES

Devices are separate from character Parts, and are usually built for a specific purpose. For example, the characters might need to cross a deep gorge. Going around might not be possible, but they decide they can float across in some kind of hot air balloon. That's going to require some materials, a few characters working together to make the hot air balloon, and of course, they might need to learn how to make it.

Devices should require multiple steps, perhaps even a quest, to create.

The Make a Device Move calls on the GM to know what Stuff, Things, and Helpers the characters need to make the device. If you don't know, ask the players to give you a sketch, and decide from there.

A complicated Device should really require the players to go on a mini-quest for materials. For example, to build a hot air balloon, they might need at least two Things (a balloon or bladder of some kind and a basket to ride in), some Stuff (for the rigging), and some way to cause the balloon to rise up—perhaps a Thing such as a helium canister, or a heater, or maybe the laughter of children, depending on how your Threadbare world works.

Devices should also always require more than one character to make, and players will need to Help Another to help make a Device. If you have four players, two or three Helpers is ideal—leave enough room for someone to fail to help or to opt out of the Help Another roll. Note that a player who rolls a 7 or more on Help Another can allow someone else to help. The player who rolled a 7 doesn't give an extra bonus to the Make a Device roll, but they do count towards the number of Helpers working on the Device!

Finally, a successful Device starts with at least one or two Moves. The starting Move should be the core of the Device—in the hot air balloon example, this Move would allow the balloon to carry some toys through the air for a short distance. If the players want to work on Upgrading their hot air balloon, they can do so with the Jury Rig Move, working to add more Parts to the hot air balloon: perhaps a larger basket, or a fuel tank, or some kind of braking system. If enough time is spent working on a Device, and it has a sufficient number of Parts, it may become a new character in your Threadbare game!

New Devices have their own ability scores, used by their starting Moves. Fuel is an excellent ability score for vehicles. Each starting Move for the Device should use a separate ability score. In our hot air balloon example, the ability scores might be Fuel and Capacity, and our starting Moves might have something to do with its ability to go aloft and how crowded the basket is. The GM will decide what the appropriate Moves and ability scores are.

Here are some ability scores that may be interesting for your Device:

- **FUEL** ⚡: The Device moves!
- **SPEED** ⚡: The Device moves quickly!
- **AGILITY** ⚡: The Device can dodge, maneuver, and climb.
- **POMF AND CIRCUMSTANCE** ⚡: The Device is visually impressive to others.
- **STEALTH** ⚡: The Device is hard to detect.
- **SHARP** ⚡: The Device does damage.
- **COMFORT** ⚡: The Device makes characters in or around it feel good.

When creating the Device, the players decide which modifier goes to which ability score:

- If the Device has one ability score, it gets a +1.
- If it has two ability scores, it gets a -1 and a +2
- If it has three ability scores, it gets a -1, a 0, and a +2.
- If it has four ability scores, it gets a -1, a 0, a +1, and +1

ENVIRONMENT MOVES

An environment Move is a Move attached to a specific location, or to a feature of that location, which GMs can use when players roll a 6 or less on the dice. For example, the Tar Sea in Amusefunland is a thick, treacherous ocean of black tar. If a player character is knocked into the Tar Sea, they automatically damage a Part and are considered “stuck” in the tar—if they are not rescued, they are unlikely to ever get free.

It’s a good idea to telegraph an environment move. You can do this when you introduce the location: “there’s a thick black sea of tar around you—looks really sticky! If you fall in it, you’ll probably get stuck.” But you can also show the environment move with more “set dressing,” like encountering long-ago stuck characters who are now hopelessly embedded into the sea.

Environment Moves can also be triggered by the player characters. They aren’t on anyone’s side—they just exist. For example, if the toys are outrunning a rampaging die-cast truck, they might take a boat or other vehicle into or over the Tar Sea, using the sea to halt the truck’s rampage and buy the toys time to reason with it or escape. An environment Move doesn’t need to be written in the standard format calling for a roll. It can simply have a property that is hazardous or helpful or otherwise interesting to the players. For example, the lava floor in Studio 45 (see page 73) might be considered lethal if touched.


Structures also have environment Moves, and you’ll see that some of these are more like properties of the location than anything else.

WRITING UP A NEW MOVE

At its core, a Move in Threadbare should state what Part it’s associated with, its trigger (if any), and what it does.

A typical “triggered Move” in Threadbare is phrased as “When you _____, roll+_____. On a 10+_____. On a 7-9 _____.” Some Moves will also indicate what happens when you roll a 6 or less. The blanks are filled in with the trigger, the ability score or other modifier to the roll, what happens on a success, and what happens on a partial success. For this kind of Move, you need to come up with all four of those options:

- **TRIGGER** ⚙️ This is what happens in the story that means the player needs to roll. The trigger can include requirements that the character has to meet for the Move to work. For example: “when you use up your Stuff...” or “when you give someone something they really want...” In some cases, you might have to ask the player, “Hey, are you trying to do this Move?” You might find sometimes that a player is trying to do the Move, but they don’t want to roll for it. Give them the opportunity to decide whether they really want to take that action, but make it clear that they have to roll if they want to succeed.
- **MODIFIER** ⚙️ This is the ability score, such as Scrounge, Smile, or Strongarm, that the player adds to their 2d6 dice roll. You can use modifiers other than a basic ability scores, too! Some Moves use the number of ties you have with a character, for example. ability scores are not limited to the basic three that characters begin with. For example, a Device could have a non-character ability score, like “Speed,” which you might roll to escape someone. A character could gain a new ability score through an Upgrade as well.
- **SUCCESS** ⚙️ What happens when a player rolls a 10 or better. Sometimes, they will get to pick multiple choices from a list of options. Sometimes, they simply succeed at what they were doing, and that’s it. The important thing in a success is that the player got what they wanted without having to give up a lot.
- **PARTIAL SUCCESS** ⚙️ When a player rolls a 7-9 (including modifiers), they are successful in what they wanted to do, but there’s an additional cost. This cost is in addition to whatever the Move required in the first place.



In some cases, you might want to provide a list of success options, and the player can pick only a few from that list. There are two ways to phrase the success options. One way is to provide a list of 3-4 items that are all positive things the player would want. The player may get to pick one or two options on a 7-9, and more options if they rolled a 10 or better. However, the implication is always that, if the player doesn't pick this option, that good thing doesn't happen. For example, the Find Something Move has three options, and a success always results in finding something, usually Stuff. On a 10+, the player picks two, and on a 7-9, they pick one.

- It's exactly what you were looking for.
- It isn't dangerous.
- Nobody else wants it.

If the player rolled a 7 and they pick "It isn't dangerous," by implication, it means what they found isn't exactly what they were looking for, and maybe someone else wants it. As a GM, you now have a hook if you need it—there's someone out there that wants what they just picked up. That could be a good thing or a bad thing. When someone in the group rolls a 6 or less, maybe that character shows up to demand or steal it. When someone is trying to Make a Bargain, perhaps the character they're dealing with is the one who really wants what they got earlier!


In this way, Moves can be structured to push the story forward and give you, as the GM, plenty of material to work with to make an interesting game!

Sometimes, success options are phrased negatively. Push or Pull works this way: On a 10+, you move it where you want to. On a 7-9, you fall down. Pick one:

- Take damage to a Part.
- Drop whatever you're carrying.
- Get lost and separated from the rest of your team.

It's important to note that the player gets to pick in this case. Taking damage to a Part is pretty serious, but the characters might be in the kind of situation where dropping their Stuff or getting separated would be disastrous! And the negative effect only happens when they roll a partial success. When they roll a 10 or better, the character has a great success!

There are other ways to format a Move, though! Moves don't have to trigger a dice roll. Sometimes, they are always active (such as a bonus to an ability score), or they can be an additional functionality that the characters don't normally have to start out, or they can give the character a new ability score. Sometimes a Move has a limit, and you want to address what happens when a player tries to exceed the limit. Here are some examples:

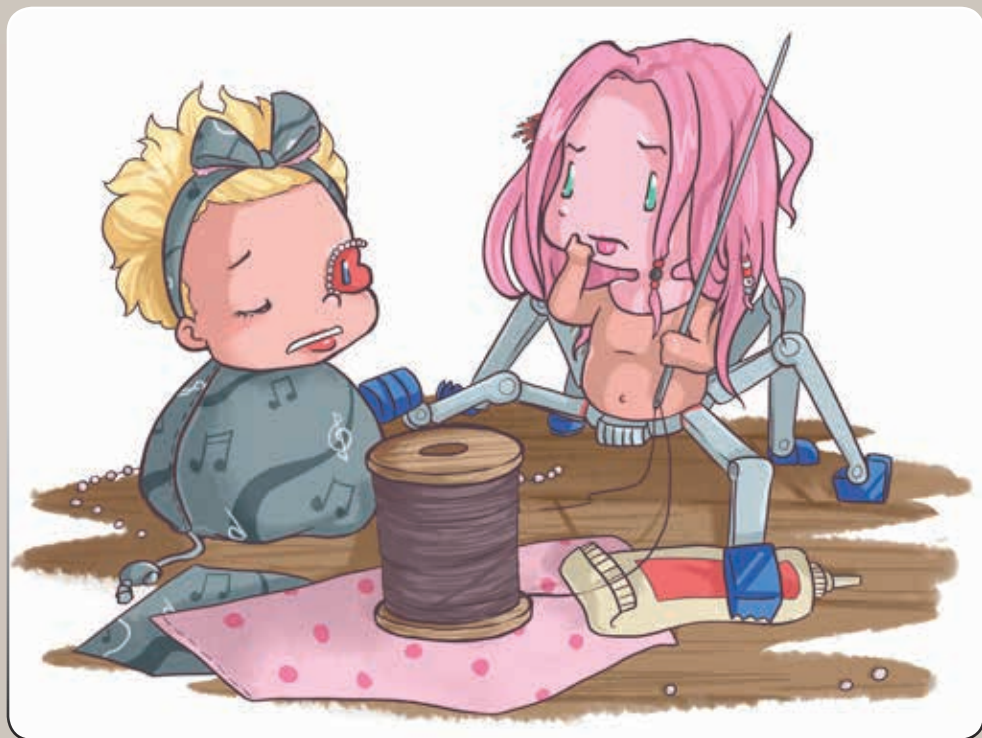
- **NEW PAINT** 🎨 +1 to Smile when you Lead a Cheer.
 - **RESOURCEFUL** 📦 +1 to Scrounge.
 - **SILLY PUTTY** 🍡 You can make a faithful copy of a two-dimensional image, such as a picture, newsprint, advertisement, or even a sign.
 - **GLIDER WINGS** 🦋 You can glide by yourself for short distances, and not very high. If you want to glide for a long time, very high, or carry something weighing more than a little bit of Stuff, use the Push or Pull Move.
 - **CALCULATOR BRAIN** 🧮 You have learned the ways of commerce and trade. Gain the Trade ability score. You start with +1 Trade, and can add it to your Scrounge ability when Making a Bargain, or use it in commerce Moves. (Now, you as the GM can make a whole world of Commerce Moves specific to your campaign, if your players are interested in this aspect of the world!)
- 

the WORLD OF thREAdBARE

The world of Threadbare is so broken. How do you live in a place where things have been falling apart for as long as anyone can remember?

Long ago, the skies burned. Today, streaks of pink and chartreuse still scale the sky. The once-blue skies are often green, yellow, or a deep, rich purple leaning towards crimson. Toys often find old photographs and advertisements from magazines with faded colors and they nod. Some wonder if the human-dolls had some special device to make the sky blue like that.

The world is inhospitable to human and animal life, but the toys thrive within it. In the more distant natural places, the world is less toxic, and in those places, one might encounter stray animals: birds, fish, and even mammals.





the CAVERNS

“Heyooo!” Billo’s voice echoes along the dim, concrete tunnel. An answering splash tells them—they are not alone.

“Heyo!” a short, sharp call sounds back. “Got any scratch to swap?”

Cherry grins, their toe stitching stretching wider than usual. “A 3-pack of duckie tape, if you’ve got some dry stuffing?”

A short chuckle. “Nothin’ dry down here, mate. But we maybe have something of interest.” There’s a soft splashing and a tiny, dim light dangling from the front of a small boat appears from deep in the tunnel.

A nudge from Mary causes Billo to turn to the bossy leader of their crew. “Be wary. I think I recognize that voice.”

Billo nods and motions to Squadron 7-B to do a little recon. Seven soldiers dive soundlessly into the dark water, disappearing before reappearing along the sides of the tunnel, scouting ahead, and reporting back to Fred who is still watching carefully from the boat.



What is it?

The Caverns are an extensive series of tunnels beneath what was once a great city. Today, the “Topside” is toxic waste and garbage: maybe even too dangerous for the Toys to explore!

The tunnels of the Caverns are half-filled with water, giving rise to a thriving society that lives on the “rivers” in small boats, flotillas, gondolas, and anything they can use to float along in the slow-moving waters. The current is rarely very strong, with only a gentle pull that is easily pushed against or resisted.

An adventurous toy following the tunnel to the very end will find that it opens onto a wide, equally slow-moving river. Upstream is similar, though there is more turbulence as one gets closer to the opening, as rubble and debris hide beneath the shallower waters here. Some time long ago, a tributary of the river cut through a long-sealed opening into the tunnels, flooding it, and now it continues its path underground until it returns to its originating waterway.

What's here?


Those wishing to stay dry, or at least rest in dryer circumstances, have built small platforms and homes on stilts. Some of the first to arrive in the tunnels attached their homes to structures and features that already existed there, such as defunct alarm boxes, ladders leading up to the surface, and old utility doors.

Ancient underground warehouses store artifacts from the old days, before the toys awoke. Several of these warehouses have already been opened and raided for their Stuff. Unfortunately, most of the stored materials were important papers, now illegible and rotting as discovering the warehouses resulted in their subsequent flooding.

However, at least one warehouse, known as the Picture Place, stored ancient images on plastic and cellophane films.

Many of the toys living near the Picture Place have repurposed these films, weaving the long strips into clothing and basket-like boats, and hammering the sturdy metal tins they were stored in until they will hold passengers and float along the tunnels without capsizing.

Who do we meet?

- **ANGULA**: She started as a measuring device and eventually grafted enough to her for legs and something like a face. An unusual “toy” to begin with, Angula takes her job of measuring everything very seriously.
 - **PERCY THE TRAIN**: Percy came to the Caverns to avoid a dark past on the Topside. Now, they're a valued member of the Caverns community, building and repairing broken toys or simply helping those who are lost. They don't like to talk about their past.
 - **KEEHAN, THE ELDEST**: He looks like an ancient, filthy sock. He talks like a Mekka. He is ancient: possibly the first toy to awaken, in the beginning. No one knows what he's seen or really where he is. He's reclusive and hides out in the deepest of the caverns. Some say he's secretly a Mekka hiding inside a Sock, and when he wants to check up on the other toys, he moves among them, but no one knows what, exactly, he looks like if he does.
- 

the ZEPHYR EXPRESS

Called “Zeph Ex” by those who live there, the Zephyr Express is a series of long passenger and cargo vehicles precariously perched on a railway. The vehicles are long defunct, their rusted wheels digging into the ancient steel, and the rails themselves are surely in disrepair. Nonetheless, Zeph Ex is host to a thriving community of toys.

WHERE IS IT?

Zeph Ex is a place between regions, neither “here” nor “there.” It’s in between populated areas, situated somewhere in the countryside outside the City center, but long before coming to the strange lands that lie beyond the Countryside: where Candyland and the Clockmaker’s realms promise adventure and reward to those who seek it.

The Zephyr Express was abandoned outside the main city limits, now serving as a haven in the “wilderness.” Long steel rails, somewhat degraded, lead from Zeph Ex back to the city, with occasional offshoots to smaller towns, suburbs, and junctions on the way.

WHAT’S HERE?

There are six main cars that serve as neighborhoods in Zeph Ex:

- **ENGINE**: At one end of Zeph Ex, this cramped car holds the main, non-functional engine of the former train. It’s also the palatial home of the Conductor, the “mayor” of Zeph Ex, who has ruled over it for as long as most of Zeph Ex’s residents can remember.
- **SLEEPER CAR**: The largest population of Socks lives here, most of whom awoke inside luggage. They are nonetheless only about half the population of even this car, with small zooming Mekka filling in the rest. Each “family” of toys and socks has taken over one of the sleeper berths, making comfy homes out of fold-out bunks, closets, and window-facing seats. A few Mekka and Socks have even formed blended families.
- **DINING CAR**: After this car’s roof corroded and collapsed, a group of enterprising Mekka covered the dinettes with bedding, turning them into elaborate blanket forts. Because the blankets are prone to leaking, the car is used as a marketplace and meeting area, rather than a full time residence. Trade with a passing group brought strands of low-power lights, which have been strung between the booths, forming a festive street market.
- **PASSENGER CAR**: Decades ago, trees and vines grew through the open windows, so this car is now a jungle of plants twining through the steel frames that once held cushioned seats, and anchoring themselves to the interior. Long ago, one particularly crafty toy, known now only as The Gardener, wove living vines and tree branches together into permanent hammocks, seats, even walkways, which are still maintained to this day. Which is good, because the floor of this car has long since rotted away, revealing only the immobile rails below.
- **CARGO CARS**: Early in the days of the Awakenings, the cargo cars of Zeph Ex were a hotbed of newly-awakened toys, Parts, and Stuff. Today, they’ve been picked over fairly thoroughly, and serve more as a “refuse pile of broken Parts.” Toys often come here to scrounge Parts that they’ll need to repair before using, but there’s still some good, if broken, Stuff around.
- **CABOOSE**: Home to most of the Softies of Zeph Ex, the Caboose is crowded with Softie nests and piles.

Who do We Meet?

The majority of inhabitants of Zeph Ex are vehicular Mekka, although there's a handful of Softies that live in the caboose car. Breaking out of a shipping container, the Mekka settled in droves from one of the cargo cars early in the days after the first Awakenings. Despite dominating the locale, they are not particularly hostile to Softies or Socks. They simply outnumber them.

Nonetheless, there are factions of Softies and Socks that feel as though their voices are not well heard by the Conductor, the titular head of Zeph Ex. This alienation is exacerbated by the fact the Conductor has recently secluded himself in the Engine, surrounding himself with a legion of loyal green tractors. He has not emerged in several months, and no one has been able to speak with him besides his guards and Kilroy, his trusted advisor.

- **THE CONDUCTOR**: The Conductor is a silver locomotive wearing a sharp, billed cap. He knows everybody in Zeph Ex, which he ostensibly leads. A short time ago, something happened and he locked himself away in the Engine.
- **KILROY**: A light green Softie, Kilroy is the Conductor's right-hand toy. She's tough-minded, but fair, and personally loyal to the Conductor. She is also the only Softie the Conductor seems to completely trust.
- **THE GARDENER'S WORKS**: A trio of Softies: a cat, bird, and dog; who all live in the Passenger Car and who consider themselves the caretakers of the plants and vines there. They understand the plight of the Softies and Socks in Zeph Ex but don't want to get involved in "politicking."



AMUSEFUNLAND

Amusefunland confounds many of the toys who live there. It's chock-full of Carnival Toys, and appears to originally have contained multiple large train-like devices that went in large circles. Some of these were impossibly configured, such as the Upside Down Twister and the Big Spinning Silo.

Today, the region is home to hundreds of toys, primarily Carnival Toys, Softies from the gift shops, several bands of Buncha Little Guys who awoke in the Skee Cade, and a dozen Socks who awoke in the Lost and Found.

Visiting Amusefunland is a good opportunity to make a 2-song playlist and set it on repeat. Feel free to turn it down or mute it entirely after 10 or 20 minutes. Or never.

Bonus points if one of the songs is by Rick Astley. You know which one.

Perhaps one of the most amazing aspects of Amusefunland is that, due to several on-site generators and an especially crafty army of Softie cats, most of the region has electricity, including working lights and a functional PA system.

Unfortunately, no matter what the cats do, the PA continuously plays two songs on repeat, alternating between them. Nonetheless, the PA can still broadcast from a sound booth, though the songs do continue to play in the background. To date, those in charge at Amusefunland have chosen not to clip the PA wires entirely, choosing maddening music over the loss of rapid communication with the entire region.

WHERE IS IT?


Amusefunland is on the outskirts of the City, and beyond the Tar Sea. Due to the fumes from the Tar Sea and the constantly running generators, there's a permanent haze over the entire region. At night, the lights give a diffuse glow to all the features of the land, from the sign above Skee Cade to the twinkling circle of the Great Wheel.

To those still approaching by sea, the lights are a welcome beacon in the inky darkness. Although the frequent posts throughout the sea have obvious bulbs in them, none has worked since Before.

WHAT'S HERE?

When describing Amusefunland, you are at full liberty to add entire "lands" and "worlds," as well as sites, rides, and communities, to represent the regions of your favorite Amusefunland inspirations. Here are a few suggested locales within the park.

- **SPINNING SILO**: It no longer spins reliably, but this cylindrical machine sometimes powers up, spins for several minutes, and then powers down again. The toys use it as a refuse pile, and years of debris have accumulated along the walls in dense layers, pushed there through centrifugal force and then left to sit forever.
- **UPSIDE DOWN TWISTER**: One of the many track-and-car machines in Amusefunland, the Engineering Cats once repaired this device enough to send a car through it. With wide-eyed horror, they watched the car as it was pulled up a steep hill, jostled back and forth, sent careening down a hill, flipped upside down, and eventually came to a stop where it started. The Cats immediately removed several components that made the system functional, took them to their workshop, and locked them in a strong metal box, which they buried.
- **GREAT WHEEL**: The Great Wheel dominates the Amusefunland skyline, especially when lit up at night. Although the wheel can spin to bring carriages down to the surface or back up again, the residents of the Wheel have largely nested in the bottom five carriages. The wheel does spin twice a day, however, to change shifts for the guards posted as lookouts on the very topmost carriage.



■ **MIRROR HOUSE** : This confounding maze of mirrors is dark, befuddling, and spattered with various glow-in-the-dark paints and signs. Wandering through it is likely to find you lost and separated, but necessary for those who seek an appointment with the enigmatic and reclusive Mekka known as Nightmare.

■ **PAPER HOUSE** : The main office and headquarters, this is where most of the “lost and found” toys awoke and where the PA system resides. Most of the council in charge of Amusefunland spend much of their time here, overseeing their domain and making important decisions about their communities.

■ **SKEE CADE** : In one single day, nearly two hundred Little Guys awoke all at once inside the plastic bins and boxes behind the long glass structure known as “the ticket taker.” They swarmed over the Skee Cade, exploring their world and forming into small groups. Eventually, they breached the front door and began to explore outside. The Skee Cade remains, to this day, a storehouse of unawakened toys, electronics, paper strips of tickets, and one lone functional video game, its title long since forgotten and unreadable, but with a high score still blinking in the upper center of the screen.

■ **THE TAR SEA** : A great sea of black, molten tar with regularly-spaced signposts segmenting the Tar Sea into the “pink kangaroo,” or the “purple monkey,” and weary travelers have set up small moorings in these sections to rest and repair. In some cases, these moorings have grown into small, floating communities of enterprising traders and exiles from Amusefunland, trying to make their way in the world. Crossing the open Tar Sea is treacherous due to hidden obstacles of rock and concrete below the surface of the murky fluid.

WHO DO WE MEET?

■ **THE ENGINEERING CATS** : This crew of mechanical cat mekka spend their days fixing up parts of Amusefunland whenever they break down or need to be upgraded. They are very clever, but they often seem to have an agenda that is all their own.

■ **KING POLAR BEAR** : King Polar Bear wandered into the Skee Cade one afternoon before the Little Guys made it outside. As the largest and greatest creature in the room, he was soon made King and given a shiny cardboard crown. King Polar Bear likes to play the video game in the Skee Cade and knows how to juggle.

■ **LOSTEN AND FOND** : This pair of long-ago beloved toys awoke at the same time. One is a ragdoll with milky white eyes, and the other is a transforming toy that makes an annoying sound like a siren.

■ **NIGHTMARE** : Nightmare lurks deep in the Mirror House and is never directly seen. They speak to visitors from the other side of a one-way mirror, if at all. If a toy catches a glimpse of them, they appear as something hulking and massive with several pairs of glowing eyes. Nightmare knows a great deal of information and will readily share it, but always at a price. Nightmare’s goals are unknown, and the price demanded often seems capricious.



THE DEEP BLUE

Cherry gazed out over the blue-green expanse. The water seemed to go on forever, though of course that was ridiculous. They all knew the Sponge-Witch lived in the center of the lagoon. It was merely a matter of... getting there.

Gingerly, they dipped their toe into the water, backing out quickly. "It's cold. And slimy."

"Nothing for it!" cried Eere cheerfully. "Vroom vroom" he called out; his engine had long since deteriorated, but old habits die hard. His lights flicked once and he charged forward into the murky waters. "Not like anything down here can really hurt us!"

Mary rolled her eyes, then put them back into her head. She turned to Cherry. "Wait for it."

A silent spark shuddered through the waters of the Deep Blue, and Eere shrieked. "My lights! It broke my freaking lights!"

Jay limped into the water last, carrying what was left of Billo—his long, beautiful neck, a few scorched scraps of denim, and three feet of carefully-salvaged thread. "I just hope the Witch can bring him back," she muttered as the cold water seeped all the way up to her cotton-reinforced cuff.

The Deep Blue is a vast expanse of water. Perhaps it's a lake, a wide river, or an ocean. Or the tide pool at a water slide park. It's called the Deep Blue even though the water is sometimes green and sometimes purple—on very hot summer days, it seems to glow orange.



WHERE IS IT?

The Deep Blue is itself a wild land, somewhere beyond the City. It may be adjacent to the Wetlands, or at the end of the rusted rails where the Zephyr Express rests. If it's man-made, it may be quite close to the City indeed, though perhaps a bit away from the hustle and bustle.

Getting to The Deep Blue is rarely a surprise—large bodies of water don't sneak up on you, after all. Rather, a group might scout ahead, seeing the thin reflective surface far in the distance. Eventually, they will crest a hill or come around a bend and there it is, a wide expanse with the promise of something beyond its horizon, waiting for them!

It is perhaps important to note that Threadbare characters do not breathe. Liquid holds no fear of drowning for them, and many toys were once swim toys, bath toys, or were simply washed regularly. Nonetheless, some toys find entering the Deep Blue directly very dangerous. Those with functional electronics, paper labels, and dry-clean-only materials must be especially cautious.

WHAT'S HERE?

- **THE OPEN**: The open waters beckon, and ships answer the call! Whether a well-crafted boat or a barely-seaworthy inflatable kiddie pool, the Open is dotted with numerous vessels and watercraft traveling the Deep Blue, doing business, trading, and exploring.
- **THE ISLAND**: The Island, far off in the middle of the Deep Blue, is shrouded in legend and mystery. Rumors abound about the creatures that live on the Island: squabbling factions of toys long cut off from the mainland and left to their own devices.
- **SPONGE LAGOON**: The Sponge Lagoon is a mossy, squishy, dank, and dark overgrown area on the edge of the Deep Blue. It is home to the Sponge Witch, but also home to the witch's many strange and twisted creations and re-creations. The Lagoon is traversable by shallow-bottomed boats or on slow, soggy footsteps, though wheels tend to get mired down in the soft moss.
- **THE DERELICT**: Out in the Deep Blue, floating without a crew or master, is a broken boat. Its rudder is snapped. Its sails are shredded. Its location is unfixd and uncertain. And yet marooned travelers seem to find it when they need it the most. Rumors say it cannot sink. Legends suggest it is haunted, though whether by unkind spirits or kind ones remains subject to debate.
- **THE DOCKS**: That point between land and sea, between the edge of terra firma and launching into the unknown, is known as the Docks. The Docks are also the meeting place for traders and travelers, and many small business dot the shoreline to cater to those who work at the Docks or depart from there. A pile of discarded junk: broken, but perhaps reclaimable: lies at the far end of one of the piers, scavenging toys pick over it for anything of interest or use.

WHO DO WE MEET?

- **THE SPONGE WITCH**: Made of cork and twine, the Sponge Witch lives inside an ancient crate filled with various sponges, both natural and synthetic. She sits upon a loofa cushion and tells the fortunes of anyone who comes to see her . . . whether they wanted to hear her or not.
- **CAPTAIN WREN**: A bird Softie with an eyepatch and a beak made of steel, Captain Wren is a fun-loving rascal. He's especially friendly and has a tremendous ego about what a great pirate he is. He has never actually stolen anything.
- **THE LOADERS**: A crew of nine "little guys" who work on the Docks helping characters load and unload cargo from their vessels. They sing, badly but enthusiastically, when they work



Wetlands

A dank humidity hangs over pools of thick, green murky water. A creature slides through the waters effortlessly, more at home than any air-dwelling thing could be. Thick reeds and trees crowd over the wooden walkways, built long ago as paths over the waterways.

Amidst this far-away land, one by one, the Naturals awoke. Stiffly they moved their once-alive limbs. Birds spread wings that had once soared against blue skies. Otters twisted spines that had been bolted in place for centuries. Alligators—the ferocious apex predators of the swamp—clawed at jaws that were held permanently open with stiff steel wire.

From the Gift Shop, the Softies watched with large eyes and growing trepidation. The number of Awakened Naturals increased, and those with wits and tools began to snip away at the wires and bolts holding them all in their stiff, eternal poses.

It took no time for the Naturals to decide to break the big window in the front of the building, and they slipped out into the dark swampland beyond. For the first time since the Before, birds flew, fish swam, and alligators lounged along a muddy bank.

Where is it?

The Wetlands was always far beyond the sprawling urban City, past the Zephyr Express, out in the wilderness. However, the world changed after the Awakening, and even distances between places have changed. Today, the trek out to the wilderness might be a matter of several days, or perhaps just one.

WHAT'S HERE?

The Wetlands was once a rich ecosystem, bounded by fences and concrete parking lots for human visitors.

- **NATURE CENTER AND GIFT SHOP**: The bulk of the toys awoke in the Gift Shop, with a small handful hailing from the Nature Center's Lost and Found box. Mostly Softies, they bear an uncomfortable resemblance to their Natural namesakes. Some are more comfortable with the association than others.
- **WALKWAYS**: The wooden walkways are in a state of severe disrepair, but they have held up quite well, considering. Mudpack and a lack of use have helped in this regard, but many of the wooden boards are rotten and in dire need of repair. Periodic signs include images of the local fauna, which some of the Naturals have interpreted as being sacred, if not magical.
- **SWAMPS**: Populated by the Naturals, the Swamps are a mysterious and dangerous place. Few Softies or Mekka from the Nature Center dare to venture out to them, and those who do rarely speak of what they encountered.
- **THE BOATHOUSE**: On the far edge of the swamps, past a walkway crossing the swamp, the Boathouse holds many secrets. What's inside? Are there still boats in there? Will they float? Have the Naturals taken it over, or is it a refuge in this wilderness?

WHO DO WE MEET?

The Wetlands is home to many smaller educational toys from the nearby Nature Center and Gift Shop. It is also one of the few places where one will find an abundance of animals. Not plushie stuffed animals, but rather a collection of unnerving creatures of taxidermy. Brought to life during the Awakening, they have stiffly freed themselves from their museum prisons and returned to their former homes in the nearby waters, trees, and scrublands.

These "Naturals" are a non-playable Type of character. Although largely adversarial towards the Softies in particular, it is possible for individual Naturals to ally themselves with the toys, particularly to face up against larger threats and their own political groups.

The Naturals do not have names, per se. They will refer to one another with their species names, and so several Naturals may share the name of "Duck," though once in that group, one might discover that these are further referred to as Mallard, Shetland, Crested, and Cayuga. In rare cases, Naturals who spend a large amount of time interacting with toys will take on a unique identifier, usually something from the tag that had been attached to their taxidermy mount.

- **24 ELBEE**: a wild turkey of rather large proportions, 24 Elbee has a certain "gravitas" that makes him one of the factional leaders.
- **ROADRUNNER**: a stiff, elderly specimen whose favorite pastime is complaining about "the youngsters." Roadrunner was among the very first of the Naturals to awaken.
- **LIZARD (GECKO)**: Quick-footed for a Natural, Lizard has a mischievous streak a mile wide. They're best known for hanging upside down and dropping unexpectedly on a passerby. Lizard Gecko is well known to the local toys, though not always in a positive light.
- **ALLIGATOR**: In the Before times, this predator ruled the swamps for millions of years. This particular specimen, however, is quite broody, having originally been hunted shortly after she laid eggs. As a result, she is fiercely protective of anyone she considers her "family," which includes most of the Naturals, all of the remaining wetlands, and a solitary Green Army Man who was captured a long time ago and considers himself a permanent prisoner of war.



the tin BARN

Long, long ago, someone liked to collect things. Lots of things. Some of them were toys—he especially loved the old metal toy robots and cars. He would go to sales every weekend and come home with new “treasures” to put away.

He lived on an old farm that wasn’t used for crops anymore. First he filled up his house with treasures. Then he filled up a garage. Then an old barn, rusty and pock-marked. The treasures overflowed into rusted-out trucks and sheds.

One day, he was gone and nobody touched the treasures for a long time.

And then. One day. A beep and whirr announced to the overgrown farm around them that some of them, at least, had awoken.

WHERE IS IT?

The Tin Barn is the only building still standing from those long-ago days. It’s in the middle of an overgrown field. Somewhere beneath the tall grasses are the ruins of the house, the decayed trucks, and even the long-lost fence posts and what used to be a road. But mostly, it’s a sea of grass and sickly corn cobs and vigorously exploding dandelions.

It is far away, beyond the Zephyr Express and the Wetlands, well away from the City. Few would seek it out unless they knew what a trove of Stuff the Barn holds. But lost travelers often come to this place, finding it as a beacon against the ceaseless fields.



WHAT'S HERE?

So much stuff—much of it junk—it's explored in layers. The strata of the Collector's treasures are a convoluted mix of machinery, collectable toys, ancient board games, sporting goods, electronics, television sets, and appliances to feed and comfort a species that is long since gone.


When exploring the Tin Barn, it is not uncommon to encounter a toy that Awoke but was trapped a long time beneath several pounds of stuff, unable to signal its presence. When it is quiet out, toys that serve as sentries over the Barn often hear their voices in the murky jumble below. In kindness, some of the newer sentries call out to the toys to let them know they are not alone. Veterans, though, are kinder in their silence. It may be years before an awakened toy will finally surface. Why offer false hope?

WHO DO WE MEET?

The Sentries are the toys who live above the junk of the Tin Barn. They have made their homes in the rafters and the loft of this ancient structure. Periodically, they send expeditions into the junk to find supplies or look for lost or newly awakened toys.

There is a reason the Sentries are watchmen, though, and it is not because they like to look over the junk below. There are things within the junk piles that are dangerous. Weapons, perhaps. Chemicals that, as they have degraded, have become unstable. Sometimes, these things are passive threats, only dangerous when found. Sometimes, they are not.

Things have awakened in the junk that are not toys, and the Sentries know how to handle them.

- **AGNES BULLPENNY**: A Sentry specializing in cataloguing and registering the toys that have Awakened in the Barn. She records each new arrival with a sketch portrait and a series of hashmarks estimating the number of days they were awake before they were unburied.
 - **CORPORAL POOPY**: (Pronounced Poo-pay, but his subordinates call him "poopy" behind his back). An ancient doll and leader of the Sentries. He appears to be a Mekka doll in the form of what might have once been a Canadian Mountie. Indeed, his signature red shirt and wide-brimmed hat are a familiar sight among the Sentries. He is respected, but not loved, by the other Sentries.
 - **PINKIE**: A bright pink car with all-terrain tires, Pinkie is one of the scouts who regularly ventures into the wilds of the Tin Barn. She's often one of the first to find something new, interesting, or dangerous, and she's a good source of information about the layout of the junk. She won't give this up for free, though; there's value in her knowledge, and she knows it!
- 



the CANDY LAND

The Candy Land is a domain made entirely of candy! The streets are paved with gold-covered chocolate coins. A river of corn syrup flows lazily nearby, and spires of delicate spun sugar tower into the sky.

And yet... because the toys do not eat, the Candy Land is mainly a place where everything is sticky and a little dirty and grimey. It holds no particular sweet caloric attraction to toys with no taste buds. Nonetheless, many of the toys have an almost racial memory of candy as a special treat, something delightful, an everyday holiday.

WHERE IS IT?

The Candy Land is far away, beyond even the Deep Blue, perhaps even in a domain all of its own. It lies between the regular world of Threadbare and that of the Clockmaker, and one might need to cross it to come to the Clockmaker's domains.


There is magic in the world of the Candy Land—so much magic, it's possible that the Before never truly ended, that the humans who once lived in the world had never been in the Candy Land and so never left it. Or even, perhaps, they still touch the Candy Land today, the ripples of their influence stirring the batter-like chocolate swamps and upending Candy Cane Lane.



WHAT'S HERE?

- **GINGERBREAD CASTLE**: Spires of spun sugar tower over this sturdy confection of solid gingerbread and fossilized icing. Gumdrops form minarets high above the battlements, and the waffle cone drawbridge still sometimes lowers over a moat made entirely of corn syrup.
- **THE CRYSTAL CAVERN**: Beneath the castle is a sprawling oubliette of ribbon candies and natural rock candy formations. A dim glow suffuses the entire labyrinth, its source unknown.
- **CHOCOLATE SWAMP**: A dense swamp of chocolate syrup, broken up by stands of wafer cookies and licorice twists, the Chocolate Swamp can be a fun place, as long as you avoid the treacherously uneven gaps and drop-offs at the bottom of the swamp.
- **CANDY CANE LANE**: Paved with gold foil covered chocolate coins, the main thoroughfare of Candyland is bordered with striped peppermint canes from which hang tiny lanterns to illuminate the street.
- **THE BALL PIT**: On the outskirts of town, the Ball Pit is a strange neighborhood. Inhabited by a number of stray softies, the Ball Pit is a large open trough, filled with little round hard-shelled candies of every color, many of them marked with a letter. The softies who live here are a little down on their luck, since their diving board broke not too long ago.

WHO DO WE MEET?

- **LOLLY POPS**: Once a marionette, Lolly is a fully articulated mekka with a sizeable belly and overalls. He doesn't have much of a sense of humor, and considers any intruder into Candy Land a priority to be addressed, and quickly.
 - **GUMM EARNEST BEAR**: A large, solid-bodied translucent version of the many tiny, but candied, bears that seem to be ubiquitous in Candy Land. Gumm loves to play games, and never turns someone down to engage in a little friendly competition.
 - **THE NUT CRACKERS**: The Nut Crackers are a squadron of like-minded soldiers tasked with keeping order within Candy Land. They appear to be grimacing, bearded soldiers with powerful jaws.
 - **JOLLY RANCHO**: A striped sock in many bold colors, Jolly slithers through Candy Land, always looking for something he's lost. Unfortunately, he can never remember exactly what it was, and so he keeps looking and asking for help.
 - **HER HEY**: A softie in the shape of a large candy bar, Her Hey is big and a little weird. Unfailingly friendly, she loves nothing more than to share music with her friends, both new and old!
- 



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THREADBARE

Threadbare's history is relatively brief and filled with gaps. With an almost entirely oral tradition of history, the toys recount their past and that of their world in stories, song, and through interpretive dance and theater. Sequential art drawn by especially talented creators also serves to give the toys a sense of history and instruct them in the world as it changes around them.

THE BEFORE AND THE BREAKING OF THE WORLD

Once, there were people. Human beings who wore socks and Socks, children who played with Mekka and told stories to their Softies. Their images persist, in the faces of dolls, in the tattered billboards that dot the landscape, and in the places and spaces that were built for creatures much, much bigger than the toys.

Their fingerprints are everywhere. It is abundantly clear to any toy that the scale of the world was not built for creatures that vary from one inch to several feet in height. It was not made for or by toys who may get around on legs, arms, wheels, treads, or pontoons. Indeed, the rotting vehicles that line the roads tell a story of a world dominated by wheeled transport, yet the abundance of Socks shows the importance of feet to those who inhabited the world Before.

And yet. Today, they are gone. There are no humans left. Few toys even wonder what happened to them. Some think they remember—but are those memories real, or do they simply wish they remembered?

At some point, the world broke. All the humans and most of the animals disappeared. Things decayed. There are still plants, but the world is inhospitable to life as the humans would recognize it.

What happened when the world broke? Did the humans leave Earth for someplace new? Were they ever really here, or do they exist in a parallel universe? Did they die?

As players and GMs, you don't have to answer these questions, although you might. Your campaign might take a turn towards discovering the Big Answers. Who are we? Where did we come from? Why did the toys wake up, and when? Are there any humans left, anywhere?

Or, your campaign might stay in the smaller picture, sticking to personal questions about individual needs and drives, interpersonal relationships, individual problems that need to be solved.

After whatever disaster took the humans away, a philosophical toy might wonder what happened. Or they might suggest that what happened matters less than what we do about it now, and how to prevent such an apocalypse from happening again.

A toy could take **Philosophical curiosity about humans** as a Part to reflect their drive for knowledge about these esoteric questions. Upgrading this Part might involve acquiring certain artifacts of the Before, reading books, or speaking with the very oldest of the elders, ancient toys who were there when we all first awoke.

There are rumors that the eldest of all is a Sock named Keenan. Some say he is actually a sock-like Softie who lost his stuffing. Others claim he's a small Mekka living inside a sock. Whatever the truth, his whereabouts are unknown and what he has to say about the past remains a perpetual mystery.

the WAKING UP

At some point, the toys began to wake up.

For most communities, the process has been gradual. One day, a long-abandoned toy will simply begin to think and feel, and even move. They will pick themselves up, encounter other toys, and eventually begin to understand something of their world.

Most toys will go easy on other newly awakened toys, often giving them a gift of Stuff to welcome them to the world, or making a minor repair to help them get a leg up. Every toy remembers how rough their first day was, after all.

Some toys develop parental feelings towards other toys, and toys might build a kind of family structure around taking care of each other. Toys often adopt family language for each other, calling one another siblings, or mother, or father, depending on how they relate to each other. Softies are known to co-habitate in large, soft piles, and will frequently call everyone in the pile their “cousin.” Socks never call someone other than their matched pair their “mate.”

the BUILDING AND BREAKING

This is the time we live in now, a time where there are many adventures to be had, many communities to interact with—and every place you go, someone is trying to break something, or trying to fix something—or sometimes both!

This era has particular dangers, as some areas are better organized than others. In some places, there is no formal structure, while others became populated so quickly, the toys had to self organize and establish rules to keep order in what is normally a chaotic world. Nonetheless, Threadbare is a very old world with very young characters living in it. No community is terribly old or well developed, and some actively undermine efforts to become more civilized or sophisticated.





AdVENTURES

Adventures in Threadbare set out with a problem to be solved or a place to be explored. The players know at the beginning of the adventure what the adventure will be about, and can participate in setting up the story.

The basic structure of a Threadbare adventure is as follows:

- Build the Adventure.
- Know the Ending.
- Begin with Action.
- Develop the Story.
- Conclude the Adventure.

Build Your Own Adventure

Before you start the adventure, the GM and the players will spend a few minutes creating some part of the adventure. In many cases, this will be a shared resource that the players will create at the table, such as a vehicle or a community.

Most Threadbare adventures have a “Mad Libs” style format—the GM asks the players to answer to some questions, and their answers become the adventure.

The players might tell the GM the name of an adversary that isn’t detailed in this book, or a detail about them that contradicts what’s in the book. That’s okay! The GM and the players are empowered to change the adversary to fit their own story, for example, substituting the information from a different adversary for one they have named. No one knows your Threadbare World better than you.

Know the Ending

All adventures in Threadbare have an “end condition” which the GM decides before the adventure starts. This is a short description of how you know when this particular story is over. The GM may or may not share the “end condition” with the players, and the end condition might change if the story veers away from its original path.

Sometimes, the ending is a goal that needs to be achieved, or a place that the player characters need to reach. The end condition should include an option for failure—the toys might give up on trying to find a safe place, or they might simply fail to convince someone to join their community. As long as they have done everything they can, and something about them and what they know about the world has changed, the story can end.

Begin With Action

Threadbare stories, like most good stories, start with some kind of action happening. Something has already broken, the characters have an immediate problem to deal with, and time is running out! The adventure setup questions should help the GM figure out what those things are. Once the GM has described them to the players, they should ask the most important and common question asked when running Threadbare:



WHAT DO YOU DO? (DEVELOPING THE STORY)

The story evolves as players describe what their characters do, exploring and learning about who they are based on their actions and consequences. If a player says that their character does something, and there is no Move that fits that action, then they automatically succeed. If that action fits an existing Move, then the player needs to roll for the outcome. Most actions that develop and change the story should be Moves, while actions that are incidental to the story may not be Moves, but merely a character expressing themselves. These actions are still important, because they let a player establish who their character is.

Whenever a player rolls a 6 or less, in addition to the consequences for the character, the GM complicate the current story, using the suggestions in the GM Principles section.

This is the “meat” of the adventure, where all the crazy stuff happens, and where the players will be the most creative in trying to solve problems and get themselves out of a jam (sometimes literally). Although some adventures have a “scene structure” to focus the story’s development, many adventures will just organically progress as the players take actions which succeed and fail. When an adventure is written with scenes, each scene is developed like a micro-adventure. In a more structured adventure, the outcome of one scene might make the next scene impossible. If this happens, it is fine! Skip or change the next scene and ask the players what happens next. The players should drive the action of the story, not the prewritten adventure.

ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO AN END (ENDING THE GAME)

When the end condition is met, there may still be a lot of unfinished business with the characters, including side stories, individual goals they didn’t achieve, etc. That’s okay. You can leave the story with some unfinished endings—”That’s a story for another day.” This is excellent for episodic games, or ongoing campaigns, where you have players who will come back to play the same characters again.

Alternately, you can let the players describe an epilogue for their characters—a freeform description of what they do, where they go, what goal they achieve, after this story is over. This method is great for shorter adventures and one-shots, where you won’t have the same players coming back to play the same characters in the future.

During the epilogue, the players have full narrative control. If they decide they want an adversary or ally to do something, even if you think “that character wouldn’t do that,” it happens. Perhaps it happens because the character was convinced by someone else, or maybe after a long time, the toys wore them down. At some point, that adversary changed their mind, and you are free to invent a reason why they did so.

You can mix them up, too—some characters might have so much more to add to the story, the player doesn’t want to finish their tale yet. Some might have an epilogue that introduces a future story or location they want to explore in a later campaign.

Try to leave about 10-15 minutes at the end of the game session for players to give their epilogues, or decide what story they want to pursue next time.

FURRY ROAD

The toys are on a high-speed journey through dangerous terrain, with a cargo that they must deliver safely to their destination! But something has gone terribly wrong, and now their Machine is half-broken and in imminent danger—What do you do?

Build the Machine

Your group is on a vehicle, called affectionately “the Machine.” As a group, fill in the Machine’s reference sheet, below.

You had four days to get from your settlement to your destination. It should have been just enough time, but something went terribly wrong, and you are now stranded in unfamiliar territory.

- Where are you going?
- What’s dangerous about your mission?
- Who will die if you fail?
- Which Part of the Machine is broken?
- What is the current imminent threat?

This adventure ends when the group has delivered its cargo or abandoned its mission.

The questions on the Machine’s reference sheet answer who is the Adversary (the Machine is coveted by...) and Motivation (the precious cargo: groups who choose batteries and stuffing want to play mercenary/merchant types interested in material wealth. Groups choosing “high-status Softies and Mekka” want a political game—be ready with some GM characters! And groups who choose refugees are looking to play big ol’ heroes, out to save people.)

Start the Adventure

The Machine’s Parts are: the cars, the wheels/treads/rails, the engine, any additional Parts that the players define during its creation or add during play, and the precious cargo.

When the Machine’s Fuel is at -1 or less, it stops.

At the start, the player characters have just discovered that the Machine is broken or possibly out of fuel. There is an imminent threat to the group. Perhaps whatever broke the Machine is still around, or it might mean there is an additional, new threat to the party: a storm, a chasm underneath the Machine, someone chasing them, or something unstable about the cargo.

the MACHINE

Assign the following ability scores: +1, +1, 0, -1

SPEED	MANEUVER- ABILITY	FUEL	DURABILITY
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

the MACHINE HAS (PICK ONE):

- One "car"
- Multiple connected "cars"
- Several unconnected cars (a convoy)

the MACHINE'S ENGINE RUNS ON (PICK ONE):

- Flammable gasoline
- Wood
- Batteries (bigger than the cargo)
- Laughter

the MACHINE IS COVERED BY (PICK ONE):

- Bettie the Bloody
- Mayor Murderbaby
- Bob the Dump Truck
- Raggedy Lynn, the Secret-Keeper

MACHINE MOVES (WRITE NEW MOVES ON THE BACK OF THE SHEET)

- When you try to outrun someone and everyone is in the Machine, roll+Speed. On a 7-9, you succeed, but take a -1 to Fuel after you outrun them.
- When the Machine must navigate a tricky path, roll+Maneuverability. On a 7-9, you succeed without damage, but do not end up where you thought you were going.
- When your Fuel is at -1 or less, you stop moving.
- When the Machine takes an impact, roll+Durability. On a 7-9, everyone in the Machine falls down or out of the Machine.

the MACHINE IS (PICK TWO):

- Dirty
- Ugly
- Smelly
- Rusted
- Noisy

the MACHINE USES (PICK ONE):

- Wheels on a road
- Treads
- A railway
- Water

the MACHINE CARRIES PRECIOUS CARGO OF (PICK ONE):

- Batteries for mekka
- High-status softies and mekka
- Refugees
- Clean stuffing for softies

FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEE

Flying far above the ground, you and your friends are on a mission to scout the land ahead, so the Hive, trundling along behind you, can traverse it!

In this adventure, the toys are a scouting team for a community on the move, known as The Hive. This adventure has a set sequence of scenes that the GM will set up for the players, who can then role play them out. Each scene has a defined end, but if the players are having a lot of fun, feel free to keep going until a more natural conclusion of the scene.

BUILD THE BUMBLEBEE AND HIVE: You work in a flying device known as the Bumblebee. As a group, fill in its sheet. Read the next paragraph aloud to your players:

*You are scouts for **the Hive**, which is a community that is currently moving, en masse, from one place to another. So many toys are involved, the Hive cannot make quick movements, like changing course or stopping. At nightfall, the Hive groups together to rest for the evening, make those course corrections, and allow stragglers to catch up. As a result, you must return by midnight to make your report, or the Hive will consider you lost and will change course to avoid your last known position.*

Go around and ask each player to select a checkbox from the Bumblebee reference sheet. Have them decide as a group the Bumblebee's ability scores.

QUESTIONS FOR THE PLAYERS:

- How many days has the Hive been traveling?
- Why are you associated with the Hive?
- Is your job considered dangerous?
- What will you get in exchange for scouting?
- Which part of the Bumblebee is currently broken?
- Who is chasing you? Do you know what they want?

The adventure ends when the players no longer feel that the Hive is in danger.

Some events and challenges that the toys might come across in their scouting:

- **A SMALLISH SETTLEMENT:** They have heard of the Hive and do not want them to come through the area. Can the toys convince the settlement to allow safe passage?
- **A WINDSTORM ENDANGERS THE BUMBLEBEE:** Can they ride out the storm safely?
- **THEY REACH A THICK RIVER OF OIL:** It's not safe to settle here. How will the Hive get across? Can the scouts help?
- **THE CHASE IS BACK ON:** With reinforcements!

Some adversaries and NPCs you can use in this scenario (also take player suggestions):

CORPORAL HOOK: A Halloween pirate with a bent-up marshmallow stick for a hand, they are not from the Hive. They have a personal problem with one of the characters. Ask the character why Corporal Hook dislikes them.

MAYOR MURDERBABY: A leader among the Hive (either mayor, a senator, or a gang leader, depending on the players' choices). Mayor Murderbaby is a sleek politician with a dishonest streak. He's a baby doll with a top hat glued to a Wall-e chassis with tentacles.

GORDON THE ICHTHYOSAURUS: Once a pseudo-dinosaur softie, Gordon has been through a lot and is now a ball of stuffing inside a glass Christmas ornament, then wrapped in red and gold felt. His body is fragile, but his mind is still sharp. He serves the leadership of the Hive without being in command. Gordon may resent the Hive leaders for not taking his advice-- to go towards the sea, where they might find a port and perhaps other communities.

the BUMBLEBEE

A single flying vehicle used to scout

LIFT	MANEUVERABLE	SPEED	FUEL (STARTING: 2)	SCORES DEFAULT to 0. SEE QUESTIONS BELOW.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
STAY in the AIR	MOVE AROUND	OUTRUN	KEEP FLYING	

the BUMBLEBEE CAN (PICK THREE):

- Fly really high (+1 to Lift)
- Ride the wind when Fuel is at 0 (+1 to Lift)
- Move sideways (+1 to Maneuverable)
- Hover (+1 to Maneuverable)
- Outrun a fast bird (+1 to Speed)
- Outrun a storm (+1 to Speed)

the BUMBLEBEE USES FOR FUEL:

- Butterfly wings
- Vegetable oil
- Candles
- Sugar

the hive NEEDS:

- Room to grow
- Fuel
- Answers to a Question
- A New Leader
- Supplies for Making Things
- More Population

the BUMBLEBEE'S PARTS: (up to 5. Suggested: wings, legs, striped body, stinger-rudder, antennae, telescoping eyes)

- **When you try to stay aloft in the face of a challenge,** roll+Lift. On a 7-9, you succeed, but take -1 to Speed while gliding.
- **When you try to dodge an obstacle or remain in place,** roll+Maneuverable. On a 7-9, you succeed, but take -1 to Fuel.
- **When you try to outrun someone or something,** roll+Speed. On a 7-9, you outrun it, but take -1 to Fuel.
- **When your Fuel reaches -1,** roll Lift to glide to a landing. On a 7-9, you land without immediate damage to the passengers, but the craft becomes a danger (on fire, smoking, shrapnel, etc.)
- **When you are not in a chase, in danger, or crashing and you wish to land,** roll+Lift or Maneuverable. On a 7-9, you land safely but take -1 to Fuel.

the BUMBLEBEE BELONGS to (PICK ONE):


- The Hive
- One of us
- All of us
- Happy Joker, a tough guy in the Hive
- Penelope Punch, an independent business person, not from the Hive.

the hive IS BEST KNOWN FOR (PICK ONE):

- Generosity
- Greed
- Beautiful Art
- Crime (robberies, vandalism, etc.)
- Literacy
- Fantacism

the hive IS Led BY (PICK ONE)

- A single, competent, leader
- A council or senate
- A few big gangs
- Neighborhood watch groups



SCENE ONE ◻ The adventure starts with a chase sequence with a menacing (but not lethal) bully! The bully wants something from the players. At the start of the adventure, you have asked an important question: Who is chasing you? Do you know what they want? That question sets up this scene. Role-play the scene out.

this SCENE ENDS WHEN ◻ the players either escape the bully, defeat them, make a deal, or come to some agreement.

SCENE TWO ◻ After the chase ends, players might be on the ground or in the air, depending on if they landed. On the ground, they have an opportunity to find some Stuff and do some repairs. This will cost some time, however, and that time is a perfect opportunity for the toys to talk to each other, tell stories, and play games. Toys can also repair the Bumblebee in the air, though they might not have Stuff (unless salvaged during the chase sequence).

this SCENE ENDS WHEN ◻ two or more of the players have demonstrated a friendship or bond, or have created a new one.

SCENE THREE ◻ It is now early evening. The toys are at the Hive, discussing with the leaders which course they will be scouting tomorrow. The goal of this scene is to define what the Hive wants, and explains the risks to the Toys. Various personalities in the Hive may lobby for one direction or another. There is urgency-- whatever has them on the move is becoming an imminent danger. At most, the players can scout two, maybe three locations (depending on how much time you have to play).

- **hILLS** ◻ There's a low range of hills to the north. There could be protection in the hills, more defensible, and natural resources we could use.
- **RIVER** ◻ There's a river known to meander through the plains. directly ahead. It may be a source of flotsam and trade.
- **SEA** ◻ If we turn back, we can head towards the ocean. Will we find a port and other settlers?
- **BADLANDS** ◻ A tangled "badlands" of rubble, buildings, asphalt, and garbage. Do you want to explore there?

this SCENE ENDS WHEN ◻ The players have decided which location or locations are their priority, and have convinced the Hive leaders.

SCENE FOUR ◻ In the morning, the toys go back out. Here are specific challenges for each location they can scout:

- **hILLS** ◻ The hills are treacherous to climb, but there's an abandoned mine halfway up. Is this a safe place to stop? How will the less resilient toys get up there? Can you build something to help them?
- **RIVER** ◻ The river has, unbeknown to the players, carved a canyon into the earth (how long has it been?!?) How will the Hive cross it?
- **SEA** ◻ There is a marooned ship about 100 yards from shore with many resources that could make a fitting home for now. Far enough to be safe, but how can the Hive get there?
- **BADLANDS** ◻ The badlands are occupied by dangerous bullies, but there's a lot of "Stuff" to be had. Is it worth the risk to the Hive? Can the bullies be dealt with?

If and when the players decide on a location, they need to invent a way to overcome the obstacle facing them and report back to their grateful leaders.

THIS SCENE ENDS WHEN: the toys have scouted the obstacles in their scouted locations and returned to the Hive to report. Optionally: the toys may decide to solve the problem before they return to the Hive. If so, switch scenes five and six.

SCENE FIVE: The toys report to the leaders and decide on their best chances. Ask each player to describe what their “home camp” looks like in the Hive:

- Do you live alone?
- Do you sleep outside, under the stars? In a shelter? How long does it take you to set this up?
- Do you socialize with others after hours? Who’s your best friend?
- Are you an early riser?

Role play out a little spotlight on each player’s toy interacting with the rest of the Hive. Even “loner” toys will have other toys bugging them to socialize, or trying to befriend them.

THIS SCENE ENDS WHEN: Each player has had a mini-scene showing their home and life.

SCENE SIX: The toys need to overcome the obstacle and secure safe passage to the Hive’s new home. What will they do to achieve this?

THIS SCENE ENDS WHEN: The toys build a device, solve the problem, or resolve a conflict to secure passage for the Hive. They return victorious to the Hive and are hailed as heroes. If they are unsuccessful, they can return to the Hive that night and reroute towards another of the locations. This will cost time and result in the Looming Threat bearing down on them.

SCENE SEVEN (OPTIONAL): The threat that has the Hive on the move comes to bear. What will the toys do to face it down? What will they do if they succeed or fail?

THIS SCENE ENDS WHEN: the threat has resolved, for good or bad.

EPILOGUE: Whether the toys succeed or fail in finding a new home for the Hive, if the story is over, allow each player a minute or two to describe what their character does now. Do they stay with the Hive? Become traders or ambassadors? Strike out for new lands? Scout ahead for the next place the Hive may need to settle? Take up leadership roles in the Hive?





OFF TO SEE THE CLOCKMAKER

A THREADBARE ADVENTURE STARTER

BY **BRYANNA HITCHCOCK**

A group of toys embarks upon a great journey to make a request of the Clockmaker, an elusive engineer who rules the fabulous Wind-up City.

HOW TO USE THIS ADVENTURE


Off to See the Clockmaker supports a variety of play constraints, from short demos to full-length campaigns.

For a very short game (2 hours), pick a single region. After character generation, start with the PCs already together and play through crossing the region your group chooses in the Startup Questions below. If you have time, play through the Conclusion. Otherwise, go to the Epilogue.

For a typical convention slot (4 hours), choose two regions in the Startup Questions. After character creation, begin play with the PCs in a group already. When you finish the first region, decide if you have time for another region, or if it would be better to jump to the Conclusion: arrival at Wind-up City and meeting the Clockmaker.

For play over multiple game sessions, consider the following:

- Start the journey with one PC, and let the group come together over successive scenes.
- Let each player pick a region the group must traverse, setting up a much longer journey to Wind-up City.

- 
- Create a map of your journey, letting the players choose or create the region in which the PCs begin. Note that the world of the Clockmaker is not necessarily linear or straightforward in any way. The journey might be a spiral or a board game.
 - Perhaps the Clockmaker isn't so eager to see the PCs. She may have gatekeepers or require tribute, forcing the PCs to scrounge around in Wind-up City or even another region.
 - Once the players reach the Conclusion, the Clockmaker may require the PCs to travel to their Nemesis's region to either defeat or win them over. If so, let the players choose a region they haven't been to yet.

STARTUP QUESTIONS

Every PC will need to answer the first question. You and the players should take turns choosing answers to the remaining questions that will help you invent your adventure.

You need to find or regain something. Only the Clockmaker can give it to you. What is it: a Part, a Thing, or even a personality trait? Be specific.

- Something you've lost.
- Something you've never had.

How are you finding your way?

- A map with amazing landmarks
- A river of blue paint
- A strangely colored road
- Signs in the clouds

How are you getting there? No matter which you choose, you need to provide your conveyance with Stuff for food/fuel/maintenance whenever you arrive in a new region.


- A rainbow-winged hot air balloon
- A sailboat requiring neither wind nor water
- An expanding bicycle of many seats
- A very large toy dinosaur named Edie

How many regions must you cross on your journey? Pick one or more depending on game length. The mode of travel you have chosen will work in any. The Frog Fairy Sea, for example, might have a chain of islands with a strangely colored highway, or it might be a sea of something other than water!

- The Card Nation
- The Empire of Dreams
- The Forest of Mechanical Bees
- The Frog Fairy Sea
- The Great Kingdom of Chess

What do the toys you encounter in each region need? Pick one for each region chosen above.

- Competitors for the toy Olympics
- Contestants in a line dancing event
- Friends to help them get home
- Repairs to an important doorway
- Someone to help them make decisions



Who is your Nemesis, the toy that will do anything to stop you? Which PC do they have a particular dislike of and why?

- Fang the Die-cast
- Magistrate Monkey Head
- Pythos the Serpent
- Seesaw the Sorcerer
- Zordo the Alien

the JOURNEY

This adventure starter is purposefully vague and evocative to allow greater creativity and freedom. The responsibility to fill in the blanks does not rest on you alone! Collaborate with your players. Defer decision-making. Turn their questions back to them. In short, build the details of the world together.

When the PCs begin their adventure, they are crossing a border between their home region and the region they chose above. Describe the border crossing and the new region, keeping in mind the mode of travel they chose.

Soon they find some toys in need, as described in the Startup Questions.


Once the PCs have decided whether to help the toys or move on, their Nemesis will attempt to interfere with them. In a shorter game, their Nemesis may interfere personally. In a longer game, their Nemesis will send minions at first, only making a personal appearance when the PCs are close to the Wind-up City.

In addition, when the PCs attempt to leave a region, they find the way blocked in some way. If the PCs have explored the region and talked with its inhabitants, they may have an idea of what the obstacle is before they reach it, giving them a chance to prepare. Let the players choose one PC to make the appropriate move below. Be sure to provide the text of the move, so the players know what is at stake. If the PCs helped the people in the region in some way, they gain +1 on this roll.

Note: These situations and the moves they trigger may be bypassed by clever PCs who ask the right questions and plan ahead.

When leaving the **Card Nation**, the guards require traveling papers. Roll+Scrounge.


- On a 10+, you easily produce the papers.
- On a 7-9, one PC must bribe the guards with a Part or Stuff.
- On a miss, each PC must give the guards a Part or Stuff.




When leaving the **Empire of Dreams**, the toys there require a story before they will let the PCs pass. Roll+Smile.

- On a 10+, the local toys are inspired by your tale and give you some Stuff to help you.
- On a 7-9, you must reveal a secret to satisfy the story-hungry toys.
- On a miss, each PC must reveal a secret to satisfy the story-hungry toys.

When leaving the **Forest of Mechanical Bees**, the Queen Bee demands a flowery Thing as tribute. Roll+Scrounge.

- On a 10+, you saw just the right Thing earlier and remember right where it is. This information satisfies the Queen.
 - On a 7-9, you saw just the right Thing earlier, but it belongs to someone else, with whom you must barter or bargain.
 - On a miss, your group is going to have to Scrounge something up. Back into the forest with you!
- 



When leaving the **Frog Fairy Sea**, the frog-fairies ask for something to help make them beautiful again. Roll+Smiles.

- On a 10+, you make them feel beautiful just the way they are and they happily reveal the way forward.
- On a 7-9, someone in your group must give them Stuff to help them test your advice.
- On a miss, everyone is going to need to provide a Part or Stuff. The frog-fairies are very needy!

When you attempt to leave the **Great Kingdom of Chess**, a team of boisterous toys demand you beat them in a game of full-contact chess. Roll+Strongarm.

- On a 10+, your group easily defeats the challenging toys. You win some Stuff!
- On a 7-9, you lose a Part, but narrowly defeat the opposing team.
- On a miss, your team is defeated and everyone loses a Part. However, the boisterous toys are happy to guide you to the next stage of your journey.

CONCLUSION

When it's time to conclude your adventure, the PCs arrive at Wind-up City, a wonderful place full of bustling toys and fantastic machinery serving every imaginable purpose. The city is colorful and exciting, but also in constant need of repair. An army of toy soldiers patrols the city making repairs or bringing broken toys to the tower of the Clockmaker.

The Clockmaker loves visitors from afar (unless you're playing a campaign, in which case it may be harder to meet with her), so she will welcome the PCs. She is likely to be very grumpy from the constant work it takes to keep the city going. Give the characters a chance to interact with her, making moves as usual, before she asks them exactly why they have come to her. Then, each PC should make their request, triggering the following move:

When you ask the Clockmaker for something magical, impossible, or lost, roll + the number of regions you passed through to see her.

ON A 10+, CHOOSE ONE:

- She gives you an appropriate Thing with one move.
- She gifts you with an exact replica of your missing Part.

ON A 7-9, THE GM CHOOSES ONE (BE KIND):

- She explains how you've always had it and provides documents to prove it (certificates, diplomas, etc.)
- She gives you a Part that works fine, but looks a little off.
- She admits she can't help you, but offers a map to your goal.

On a miss, she explains how you don't really need it, underestimating you and your journey. Allow kind players to find a loophole, befriend someone who can help, or stumble right into a second chance.

FOR A CAMPAIGN: On a miss, she demands proof you have defeated your Nemesis. Also, lose a Part in one of the strange machines lining the chamber. Once you deliver proof of victory over your Nemesis, use the 10+ result.

EPILOGUE

Once the adventure comes to an end, give players a turn to briefly describe an epilogue for their characters. This is an opportunity for closure and to let the other players know where they see their character going from here.

Be sure to thank your players.

the end!



ELECTRIC AVENUE

BY TOBY STRAUSS

Electric Avenue is a mysterious place—it is never daytime in there, but always night; all conflicts are resolved with dancing; and there is electricity that does not come from a battery. Leaders in the world of Threadbare once sent a group of toys out to investigate this mysterious source of power. Sadly, these brave toys never returned. It is likely they were more interested in playing and started a local dance troupe!

WHERE IS IT?

Electric Avenue is a small stretch of road in the City. The central attraction of Electric Avenue is Studio 45, a massive discotheque that plays host to all the showdowns between local gangs of toys and socks and has the best dance floor in the City. Other locations of interest include:

- Murray Arthur's Dance Studio, a dance school.
- The Streethome, a rough and tumble honky-tonk with lots of line dancing.
- The Theater, a more refined locale of tutus and toe shoes,
- The Marrakesh, an exotic place where exotic dances are done.
- The Streets, an alley between Studio 45 and Murray Arthur's that is inhabited by street toughs who snap their fingers (or whatever part of them snaps).

Electric Avenue is governed by delegates from each of these locations. While their tourism brochures advertise “No rules, just dance!” this is not exactly true. Electric Avenue has two types of ordinances: **rules** and **decrees**.



RULES

There are only four rules in Electric Avenue, and violating any of them is punishable by banishment. They are the framework upon which all activity in Electric Avenue takes place and are the basis of the decrees. The rules are:

1. **No physically harming another toy.** If you knock a toy's leg off, you have taken away its ability to do fancy footwork. This must never happen in Electric Avenue. But what if a toy doesn't have legs? It will still have arms, or hair, or a bouncy ball, or something that it uses to boogie down. This cannot be impeded. The boogie must go on.
2. **Drama . . . is mandated!** Dance requires inspiration, passion, and transformation (see Dance Moves below). Drama is a necessary ingredient to good dance and is highly encouraged.
3. **The music can never stop.** Every location of Electric Avenue has a means of playing records. They must never stop playing. If the music stops anywhere for any reason, a state of emergency is declared. Electric Avenue law states that the Engineering Corp of Army Guys must be immediately dispatched to fix the problem. The Electric Avenue Emergency Squad are equipped with blankies and juice boxes to comfort all victims until the music is restored.
4. **A dance-off can never be refused and it is the final arbiter of any and all disputes.** It does not matter how big or small the conflict is. If a dance-off is called, it must take place and the results are recorded as an Electric Avenue decree. This has resulted in some . . . unusual alterations in reality.

DECREES

In Electric Avenue, all conflicts are decided on the dance floor. The result of a dance-off is codified in a numbered decree. For example, Electric Avenue Decree 32 (EA32 for short) guarantees safe passage for all toys through the Streets.

Often, however, toys get into disputes over questions of fact, such as “Is Otis wearing pants?” or “does gravity reverse itself in the bathrooms of Studio 45?” Just like questions of morality or opinion, questions of fact are arbitrated by the dance-off. The Decrees of the dance-off cannot be denied, even by “facts” or “logic.”

The decrees have made Electric Avenue an increasingly dangerous place to traverse. It helps to ask local residents for survival-critical decrees before traveling so a wandering toy can locate all of the “invisible fire” (EA57) or which crack breaks your mother's back (EA17).


And for the curious, yes, Otis is wearing pants, and yes, gravity always reverses itself in the bathrooms of Studio 45 (EA62 and EA12, respectively).

WHAT'S HERE?

STUDIO 45: This large European-style dance hall is a multi-headed beast of dance and music, a temple to the beat, a . . . big place to dance.


THE DANCE FLOOR: There is only one dance floor at Studio 45 and it is the best dance floor in all of Electric Avenue. Electric lights shine from the sides, the ceiling, and even the floor (when it isn't lava—see EA33 for a periodic table of dance floor lava). This is where all conflicts in Electric Avenue are settled—in a dance-off. There is a massive stage near the dance floor covered in DJ equipment. No rule or decree requires that toys play on the spinning turntables and swing off of the disco balls. Local custom, however, calls for horseplay around all swinging and spinning things.

THE BARS: It is unclear what the former inhabitants of this temple to dance did with all of the bottles by the big chairs. What is clear is that the chairs are cozy and fun to jump on. Also,



the bottles contain a marvelous chemical compound. Toys in lab coats have determined that this compound is either a super awesome rocket fuel or reckless fire starter.


The Bars are populated by a group of polyester toys called the Lounge Lizards. They are more interested in John Travolta impersonations than in pushing other toys around, but they are not to be taken lightly.



the Ah-Fi-Shes : There are dank, dingy rooms behind the bars and the dance floor. These are called “ah-fi-shes”, which in gibberish means “boring places.” Only the most corrupt of toys venture back through these dangerous halls (filled with many perils made up by the other toys, and then made real by dance offs!) to seek out the Meowfia. The Meowfia are kitty dolls with hair bows and rubber cigars. They are the true power of Studio 45, and possibly even all of Electric Avenue!


the CATWALKS : There is a set of hanging walkways over the dance floor and the bars called the catwalks. These walkways are strange in that they shift forms, never staying the same after being successfully traversed. They provide the setting of many a tale of derring-do, but did Travis the Flame Dancer really do the Viennese Waltz across the pass without a stumble? None but Travis can say.

It is also rumored that Summer Donna, the hidden disco grandmaster of dance is hidden in the Catwalks, waiting for a successor to prove their mettle. Watching the dance floor for generations, she has been disappointed with the talent (or lack of talent) she has seen... so far. Maybe you are the chosen disco master?




the STREETHOME : This ramshackle honky-tonk is the best place in town to wear a big belt buckle and line dance. The floors are wood and are covered in saw dust (also, regular dust). The Cattle Prodders run the Streethome. Some say their bouncer, Malton, is a secret dance master. But he's never confirmed nor denied it. He's called a bouncer because he rides around on a bouncy ball with a handle.

the MARRAKESH : This is part restaurant, part dance location, all fun. Tassles and elaborate fabrics abound in this shimmery temple to the dance. The Marrakesh is home to the Guts, a group of power players in the politics of Electric Avenue. While the Guts lack the rubber cigars and whiskers of the Meowfia, they possess the incredible power of belly dancing. It is said that the reason The Marrakesh is the capital of Electric Avenue is a brutal belly dance attack during a dance off with the Lounge Lizards and the Meowfia, at the same time, rendering all viewers bedazzled by the shimmery spectacle. Sadly, the Marrakesh is closed to outsiders. Those who seek Sadda, the grand dance master of belly dancing, must find a hidden entrance.



the STREETS : This is less a location and more of an alleyway. It is dark but colorful, filled with metal trash drums, cardboard for breakdancing, and anything else the local denizens have seen in their massive collection of “street dance” films. The Streets are ruled by the Spinz. They can be found in one of two uniforms: either a completely mismatched collection of t-shirts, baggy pants, and bandanas, or identical hoodies, jeans, and chucks—the latter especially for dance-offs. The Spinz may not have a lot of Stuff, but they have a lot of heart. They know they do because in all of the movies, if you dance in the street and wear dance-off clothes, you have heart—tons of it. And heart how they plan on winning the next dance-off. It is rumored that Homarion is the local hip-hop dance master. Legend has it that they'll teach you their fly moves... but first you need to prove you got game. Expect to be served, and served HARD. Homarion has to know... are you tough enough?

the THEATER : This is a classy joint. All toys in the Theater wear some combination of top hats, monocles, evening gowns, high-heeled shoes, pearl necklaces, tuxedos, and stoles. This is, of course, when not dancing. When dancing, a combination of tutus, toe shoes, tights, and swan feathered costuming is the soupe du jour. The Theater is run by a strange dance gang named ‘A



Grant by the Bryant Trust.’ While there has been much speculation on the source of this name, a recent clue was discovered by the great dance scholar Alfred the Wise. By listening to classical music on the stereos, he once heard that the music was brought to him by A Grant by the Bryant Trust. They published their findings and concluded that the “Trust” (as they are colloquially known) must have named themselves after a very classy gang from days of yore. The Theater is both a safe haven and a death trap (if, indeed, death were a thing). In the seats, there is little risk—save being bored by a Trust member talking about high society. Elsewhere, however, danger abounds. In the lobby, the floor is lava (due to decree EA72 from the great dance-off between the Spinz and the Trust), making entry virtually impossible. Toys who find a way in often swing across chandeliers and slide down banisters to avoid the searing heat of the ~~pretty~~ ~~marble~~ sinister lava below. On the stage, the lanterns burn with a fire that never goes out and trap doors and props abound. Above the stage, a catwalk exists second only to that of Studio 45’s. And of course, there is the dreaded “backstage.” No toy has cared enough to wander through the old costumes in storage to plumb its depths. But maybe they should have. For it is all but certain that Agrippa Vaganovavich, the prima ballerina of the Trust and ballet grandmaster spends her time back here in her dressing room. Waiting for one that is worthy of her training. One that is worthy of her time. Yeshche raz!

MURRAY ARTHUR’S DANCE STUDIO ⚡ This former dance school has been reclaimed by the Instructors, a gang of toys dedicated to “teaching toys without rhythm how to waltz at a wedding.” At least, this is what they put in their brochures. This small, unimpressive building might go unnoticed—the Instructors rarely win dance offs—but rumor has it they own the largest collection of dance music in all of Electric Avenue. This alone gives Murray Arthur’s considerable wealth. But more so, the Instructors keep with the old ways and have day jobs keeping the electricity on. This makes crossing them dangerous, since they can turn the electricity—and thus, the music—off.

Les Goodtoy spends his time here. The other gangs watch him closely, believing him to be the ballroom grandmaster. If he is, he is hiding in plain sight, offering waltz and foxtrot lessons to flat footed toys. Perhaps he could be cajoled into revealing his true gift?

WHO DO WE MEET?

- **THE LOUNGE LIZARDS** ⚡ A gang of misfits hanging out in the bars of Studio 45. They enjoy polyester, slick hair, and wild disco nights.
- **THE MEOWFIA** ⚡ The power brokers of Studio 45 and the scariest Hello Kitties in the land. The wise kiss up to them. The foolish get the kiss . . . of death.
- **THE CATTLE PRODDERS** ⚡ These rooten-tooten cowhands may never have actually seen a cow, but they can line dance and scoot their boots with the best of them. Easily underestimated, they’ve been known cause a ruckus if the wrong steel guitar band shows up for dance night.
- **THE GUTS** ⚡ The Marrakhesh was lifeless when colonized, so the Guts: named after the part they wiggle when they dance: absorbed the local color. More enamored of the magic of dance than of politics, it is rumored that they learned the bellydance from the tassled outfits they found.
- **THE INSTRUCTORS** ⚡ This group of toys loves teaching dance . . . but they have responsibilities. The players might find them more than willing to teach, but only if it isn’t working hours. After all, the power must stay on.
- **SADDA** ⚡ “Dance? You want to learn to dance? All of you silly visitors are the same. Just a little belly wiggle and some pretty tassels, yes? No, my friend. You must immerse yourself in the dance. Let’s begin . . .”

- **HOMARION**: “You think you can roll with us? Sorry dawg, but you be tripping. Unless you prove yourself . . . you ready to get served?” Homarion turns to the teddy bear at the turntable. “DJ, drop it like it’s hot!”
- **MALTON**: “Mhmm. Y’all wanna dance, huh? Yep. I’ll show ya how ta dance. But if’n you think it’s easy, hah!” A bouncer leans over and whispers in Malton’s ear. He nods slowly, then whispers back. “Sorry, Streethouse business. Like I’s sayin’, it ain’t easy. First you need to prove you gots what it takes. Well? Do ya?”
- **AGRIPPA VAGAROVAVICH**: “Hello, yes? You are the, how you say, student? Da. I have heard of you. Dey say you vant to learn de vay of ze, how you say, fancy toeshoedancing!” Agrippa paces slowly, her cane clicking on the floor. “Ja. I will teach you. But be varned, I am ze, how you say,” she leans in, “harsh instructor.”
- **LES GOODTOY**: “You found me! Well, I’ll be a monkey’s uncle, it’s been an age, it ‘as. I’d love to teach you to dance. Cripes, has it been so long? Lucky thing my dancin’ shoes and swingin’ hips don’t go out of style, eh? But first, there’s just a small task I need ya’ to do. So... do you think you can boogie?”

LEARNING A DANCE MOVE

Since the dawn of time, dancing has been an integral part of toy society. It can communicate when injection molded plastic renders you expressionless. It can bolster the will of toy comrades. It can weaken the resolve of foes.

WHAT IS A DANCE MOVE?

Dance Moves are unique. They are not Basic Moves, Upgrades, or Devices—it is best to think of them as being in their own category. The following traits define Dance Moves:

- **Like Basic Moves**, Dance Moves are not tied to a physical thing. If a Part is lost (like a limb), that does not eliminate the functionality of a Dance Move. Dance lives in the heart, not the feet!
- **Like Upgrades**, Dance Moves belong to a single toy. A group of toys may learn to do a choreographed dance, but this is mechanically a collection of individual Dance Moves that complement one another. There is no external Device for Dance Moves.
- **Like Devices**, Dance Moves are constructed of smaller bits. These are not Parts, but rather the wiggles and gyrations that comprise the Dance Move (see Learning a Dance Move).
- **Dance Moves are powerful and limited.** A Dance Move can only be used once per session, but the results are usually impressive.
- **Dance Moves cannot be permanently lost**—only temporarily. Your toy might have to work to get its groove back!
- **Dance Moves can only be learned from a quest.**

HOW TO GAIN A DANCE MOVE

Gaining a Dance Move always requires a quest. Some toys follow the path of a grandmaster. This quest involves finding the grandmaster, paying for their services, training in a grueling montage, and finally performing a recital. For those unable to find a grandmaster, Dance Moves may also be crafted. The ingredients for a Dance Move are as follows (the GM is final arbiter on the appropriateness of an ingredient):

INSPIRATION: You must find a muse. This could be a scenic vista. A shocking victory. A deeply personal cause (like toys without batteries).

PASSION: It is said that until you experience pathos, you cannot create true art. Maybe your passion comes from falling in love. Maybe it is a new friendship. Perhaps it is painful loss. You must experience passion to share passion.

TRANSFORMATION: Dance represents change. It thus follows that you cannot dance effectively without knowing change yourself. Did you resolve a major bond? Have you learned a life lesson from your travels? Will you ever be the same toy again?

There are thousands of cultures in our world and each has its own dance styles. The dance styles and elements below are distinctly Western. If you would like to make a Native American Grass Dance, use the elements below that fit best, or make up your own. That said, please be respectful of the cultures that own the dances you use!

DANCE MOVE TABLE

FOOTWORK	
Two Step	You are respected. When using Think it Through, you do not have to roll. What you say is completely accurate. You are steady. When you Help Someone, you may roll +Smile instead of +Ties.
Swing	You are trendy. You may roll +Smile instead of +Strongarm for Look Fierce!-but you must call it "Look Trendy!" You are cool. On a Make Friends move following this dance, a 7-9 is treated as a hit.
Waltz	You are graceful. Once per session, you may dance to avoid taking 1 part damage in a Fight Song contest. You are fast. You treat a 7-9 as a 10+ on your next Run Away! move.
hips	
Prim and proper	You are competitive. If you celebrate a successful Play a Game move, you may pick two from the list on a 7-9, and all 4 on a 10+. You have inner pride. You may roll +Smiles instead of +Strongarm for your next Look Fierce! move.
Sway	You are sultry (?) . Create the following bond with your partner/ opponent: "Character likes me but doesn't know why." You are into it! When you Lead a Cheer!, you get +1 to your roll.
SHAKE DAT BOOTY	You are wild. Your next Cannibalize move always breaks something else on the donor, but you do not need to roll for success. You are fun loving and use physical prowess to charm! You may roll +Strongarm instead of +Smile for a Make Friends move.
TORSO // ARMS	
The cabbage patch	You don't take yourself too seriously. You may reroll your dice once per session. It's all in the footwork. When using Push or Pull, roll +Smiles.
Put your hands in the air (like you just don't care)	You are the life of the party. You may uplift another toy, enabling them to Take a Breather (Repair) twice in a session. You are creative. Once after this dance, you may change the required move for something else--but you have to creatively explain why it makes sense (logic not required).
Tightly controlled	You have fine motor skills. You get +1 forward on a Jury-Rig. You are solid and unshakeable. When you Barter, you may treat a 7-9 as a 10+.

WRITING A DANCE MOVE

Once you have completed the quest to learn a Dance Move, you and your GM must decide what that Dance Move does. There are three paths to writing a Dance Move:

- **CONVENTIONAL** ⚡ Conventional Dance Moves involve picking motions from charts. These Dance Moves are not the most powerful, but are predictable.
- **FREESTYLE** ⚡ Freestyle Dance Moves are invented when a toy cuts loose and feels the music. If the toy is lucky, a freestyle Dance Move is the most powerful thing in Electric Avenue. If the toy is unlucky, the Dance Move might stink.
- **CONVERSATIONAL** ⚡ Toys have parts they can wiggle that human beings can't even fathom. If a player and their GM decide that the conventional and freestyle methods of crafting a Dance Move don't fit, they may use the conversational method to craft a Dance Move.

CONVENTIONAL DANCE MOVES

Conventional Dance Moves should be collaborative between the player and the GM. They involve several decisions:

- What is the name of your new sweet dance move?
- What footwork are you doing? This is the frame, the basis, of your dance. Choose one from the list below.
- What are you doing with your hips? This is the heart and soul of your dance. Choose one from the list below.
- What are your arms doing? This is the emotion and expression of your dance. Choose one from the list below.
- Which attribute does this dance call on? Is it forceful (+Strongarm)? Is it charming (+Smile)? Is it crafty (+Scrounge)?

To use your dance move, roll 2D6 + the attribute you chose. On a 10+, select two from the list you've created. On a 7-9, select one. You may use the attached dance move sheet to make this process easy.

NOTE ⚡ Depending on your selections, you might be called upon to either dance immediately preceding an action, or immediately following an action. This might seem odd, but remember, toys are capricious and can't resist a solid beat. These things happen all the time in *Threadbare*.

DANCE MOVE WORKSHEET

DANCE NAME ⚡

LEG MOVE ⚡

HIP MOVE ⚡

UPPER BODY MOVE ⚡

WHEN YOU DO THE _____, **ROLL** + _____
ON A 10+, SELECT TWO OF THE FOLLOWING, ON A 7-9, SELECT ONE:

“BUT I DON’T HAVE ARMS!”

This is a common human concern. How can my toy do the cabbage patch if it doesn’t have arms? Toys have an amazing gift for imagination, however. It has been scientifically confirmed that the following armless toys can, in fact, cabbage patch: Lego, Lincoln logs, bouncy balls, remote controlled boats, and trucks.

In other words, don’t sweat the small stuff! If your toy really wants to do the two-step without any feet, it will.

EXAMPLE DANCE MOVES

A sample conventional dance move might look something like this:

THE PRISMATIC OCTOPUS

NAME OF THE DANCE: Prismatic Octopus

LEGS: Swing

HIPS: Sway

ARMS: Put your hands in the air (like you just don’t care)

When you do the Prismatic Octopus, roll +Smile. On a 10+, select two of the following. On a 7-9, select one:

- **You are trendy.** You may roll +Smile instead of +Strongarm for Look Fierce!--but you must call it “Look Trendy!”
- **You are cool.** On a Make Friends move following this dance, a 7-9 is treated as a hit.
- **You are sultry (?).** Create the following bond with your partner/ opponent, “Character likes me but doesn’t know why.”
- **You are into it!** If you Lead a Cheer!, you get +1 to your roll.
- **You are the life of the party.** You may uplift another toy, enabling them to Take a Breather (Repair) twice in a session.
- **You are creative.** Once after this dance, you may change the required move for something else--but you have to creatively explain why it makes sense (logic not required).

FREESTYLE

Planning out a dance is for chumps. You have the *music* in you! After your quest, you cockily saunter onto the dancefloor and just do what feels right. Roll 2D6 against the table below. Whichever move you roll is your dance move. Note that this is *permanent*. You must engage in a new quest to learn a new dance move. You still get to name it and decide which attribute is your modifier.

CONVERSATIONAL

Don’t like any of the above options? That’s ok. Your dance should represent you. Using the tables as suggestions, discuss with the other players and the GM. What does your dance move look like? What are you doing with your various bits and bops? What does the dance do?

The GM may not suggest any move ideas. The GM may only veto a dance move that would violate the feel or balance of the campaign. The other players may only offer suggestions to the player. They do not get a vote in the dance the player chooses. No worksheet is provided for this move. Instead, this dance move should be documented on your playbook at the bottom.

ROLL	NEW FREESTYLE MOVE
2	Your moves are so funky fresh, all of your friends are encouraged! The party takes +1 hold for their next Fight Song.
3	Your moves are so touching that they heal the soul. You may uplift another toy, enabling them to Take a Breather (Repair) twice in a session.
4	Your moves are so dazzling that you get +1 to Lead a Cheer!
5	Your moves are so so shocking that if you use them to celebrate a successful Play a Game move, you may pick two from the list on a 7-9, and all 4 on a 10+.
6	Your moves are so smooth that, once per game, you may dance to avoid taking 1 part damage in a Fight Song contest.
7	Your moves are so hypnotic that on a Make Friends move following this dance, a 7-9 is treated like a 10+.
8	Your moves are so graceful that you get +1 forward on a Jury-Rig move.
9	Your moves are so wild, your next Cannibalize move always breaks something else on the donor, but you do not need to roll for success.
10	Your moves are so regal that you may roll +Smile instead of +Strongarm for your next Look Fierce! move.
11	Your moves are so dashing that you get +1 hold for your next Run Away! move.
12	Your moves are so saucy that you create the following bond with your partner/opponent: "Character likes me but doesn't know why."

FREESTYLE MOVE WORKSHEET

DANCE NAME:

YOUR MOVES ARE SO _____ THAT _____

ROLL + _____ ON A 10+, _____ ON A 7-9, _____

BOOGIE SHOES

A THREADBARE ADVENTURE

BY ALEX ROBERTS

Welcome to Boogie Shoes! This document is a series of connected prompts that will help inspire and focus your next game of Threadbare. Remember that this is only a guide; there will be a number of suggestions for characters, motivations, and scenes, but how everything plays out will be up to you, your players, and the dice. Because we all know that the stories we tell together are better than what we could come up with alone, right?

Boogie Shoes is a musical adventure for fans of movies like *Dirty Dancing*, *Shall We Dance*, *Footloose*, *How She Move*, and more. It centers around a climactic dance competition, and the steps the player characters take to get there. Get to know the Threadbare system before you play this adventure, and reference the Electric Avenue setting (see page 72) for more information on where this contest is held, and some of the toys that might frequent it. A dance-themed film night before playing is optional, but highly recommended. Start with *Dirty Dancing*.

When you and your players are deciding on a tone for your game, think about what dance movies you'd like to use as inspiration. For example, the *Step Up* series or some old Fred & Ginger classics might inspire a *Fluffy* game. Scuffy games could draw from *Save the Last Dance* or *The Red Shoes*. *Saturday Night Fever* is the ultimate (and possibly the only) Dented dance competition movie.

THE SET UP

Read this to your players:

In the world of Threadbare, there are toys who dedicate their lives to movement and spectacle. Once a year, the smoothest moves and the most incredible choreography go on display at the Avenue of Champions, the world's premiere dance competition. Toys from all over the world come to the musical paradise known as Electric Avenue to strut their stuff, let the music flow through them, and compete to see who has the talent and dedication to wow the judges and take home the Electric Cup—a symbol of artistic mastery like no other.


This is a story about dancing. You will play characters who are dedicated to the point of obsession, who find true bliss on the dance floor. Dancing is how they come alive. Competing is how they share that vitality with the world. You will strive, you will compete, and you might even win. But the prize will mean nothing compared to the voyage of self-discovery, friendship, and perhaps even love, that will happen along the way.

CHARACTER CREATION

Your players will create their characters using the Threadbare rules. Encourage them to think about music and movement when forming and describing their characters. How do they move? What music do they love? Don't be afraid to use tropes! The classically trained ballerina and the self-taught break-dancer from the wrong side of the tracks are both totally up for grabs as character concepts.

When deciding on Ability Scores, let players know that Scrounge will be used for assembling costumes, sets, and music for their routine. Smile will help them charm the crowd, and sync up with their team or partner. Their Strongarm ability score will be useful for executing complicated or athletic moves.

This is an adventure that can be played with a single player, a duo, or a whole troupe, although you might want to limit it to 4 or 5 players at most, to make sure everyone gets a good



share of the spotlight. During character creation, ask your players about how their characters came together, what experience they have with dancing, and how they work as a team. Are they a dedicated duo that only works together? A reluctant couple brought together by fate? Are they a travelling troupe that's been together for years? Are there tensions, history, old wounds, regrets? Or are they one big happy family? Encourage flashy, eye-catching, and over-the-top characters. Players may want to start thinking about why their character is competing in the contest. Encourage them to think of ideas, even write them down, but not to reveal them just yet! This revelation will be a dramatic moment for each of them, later in the story.

MOTIVATIONS

Once you have your player characters set up, and the premise of the adventure established, you'll need to ask two questions of your players: First, what do your characters need to dance their best? Second, what's standing between them and those things? The answers to these questions will determine what makes up the bulk of this adventure.

All of the player characters must have something they need before they can enter and win the dance contest. It might be an object, like a snazzy outfit or a particular body part. It might be something more intangible, like inspiration. There should be one thing for each character in a 3–5 player game, and at least three things in a one or two player game.

Here are some suggestions for things your player characters might be seeking:

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT:

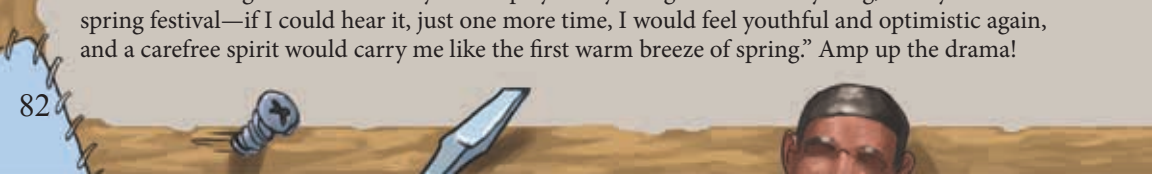
- A beautiful instrument
- A skilled crafter to make or repair an instrument
- A renowned musician
- A recording of a particular song (on cassette tape, of course)
- A sweet boom box to play it on

CONCEPTS:

- Self-confidence
- Artistic inspiration
- Chemistry with their partner/troupe
- Trust in their partner/troupe

PARTS:

- Dazzling eyes that will entrance the judges
- Jelly stuffing for a Softie that will help them bounce and jiggle
- Spring-loaded legs for those acrobatic leaps!
- A mane of long, silky hair to fly behind them like a banner
- Literal, actual, boogie shoes



Remember, in Threadbare, new Parts sometimes have Moves associated with them. Ask your players: how might they change? Will they be ok with who they are? Is winning worth the sacrifice? Or will they become more truly themselves than ever?

For players that have chosen concepts, figure out how they can be made tangible in the world. Perhaps there is a famous teacher that can help the team sync up, or an ascetic quest that will build confidence and trust. Having their goals be ephemeral is fine, but attaching them to people or places will help give the characters some direction.

Remember that whatever the players come up with, it should be unique, powerful, and absolutely vital. “Some music to dance to, I guess” isn't going to generate drama. You want “the only known recording of the ballad they would play in my village when I was young, each year at the spring festival—if I could hear it, just one more time, I would feel youthful and optimistic again, and a carefree spirit would carry me like the first warm breeze of spring.” Amp up the drama!



OBSTACLES

Now that our player characters have some solid goals to attain, we need to figure out what's going to come between them and reaching those goals. For this, we will use an old, reliable trope for dance, sports, and martial arts movies alike: the Adversary Team!

The Adversary Team should be the antithesis of everything the player characters stand for and want. Cheating, rules-lawyering, and outright bullying of other teams are all in their toolkit. They should mistrust each other, and show no team spirit. Rather than supporting and encouraging each other, they should judge each other harshly and show no tolerance for failure. Having them be from a snooty exclusive dance school is a great angle; be sure to contrast their polished, uniform look with the player characters' scruffy, rag-tag ensemble. If playing with a solo player, the Adversary Team becomes a Rival. For two players, you can have the Adversary Team be a couple.

The player characters should be really attached to showing up the Adversary Team, or at least proving that they are not like them. To really get your players going, compose the team of dark counterparts to each of their characters. Emphasize the similarities between them, and contrast the differences. Beyond that, you just have to make the Adversary Team be total jerks. Show them harassing the wise teacher the player characters spent a week in the wastelands seeking. Show them scratching up the vinyl record the player characters were hoping to play for their performance. Show them tossing aside a sacred musical instrument like trash. Whatever gets your players' blood boiling.

Also, remember that it's totally ok for the Adversary Team to triumph from time to time! If a PC is prevented from reaching their goal, they can still compete in the contest. They just need to learn that the music was inside them all along. You can have an GM character tell them this, but their fellow player characters will probably rush in to assure them first.

THE REVEAL

Throughout their adventure, one question will be sitting in the back of all players' minds: just why are they competing in this contest? Why is it so important to them? What do they expect to happen if they compete, and win? Encourage your players to consider these questions right from character creation, and guess at some possible answers as the story develops. They can drop hints of what they're thinking, but the reveal should wait for a dramatically appropriate moment.

You as the GM will prompt them with this question. It might come from the mouth of an NPC, or you might ask them directly, player to player. Wait for a moment when their character is making an important decision or facing a difficult challenge, and where the outcome is uncertain. When they reveal their motivation for entering the contest, they treat the results of their next roll as an automatic 10+. Knowing this, they may want to be strategic about when they reveal. That's ok! But all players have to reveal their motivation before they can begin the competition.

Here are some possible motivations a character might reveal:

- They want to connect with their partner; they respect and admire them.
- They want to connect with their partner; they are in love with them.
- They want to connect with their troupe; it's the one place they feel they belong.
- They're a former champion who wants One Last Dance.
- They want revenge on a dancing rival.
- Their teacher/school has fallen into disgrace, and want to restore their reputation.
- They have fallen into disgrace, and want to restore their reputation.



the CLIMAX

When the players have reached their goals and revealed their motivations, it's time for the climactic dance number. Always start by describing the Adversary Team's performance. It should be technically impressive, but lack passion. One of the judges should be much more generous with scoring their routine than the other judges; imply that they may be cheating. But, emphasize that it is the best performance of the evening—before yours.

When it is the player characters' time to perform, don't let their moment in the spotlight be decided by a few dice rolls. Have them describe their routine in lavish, dramatic detail. Ask them about every aspect of their performance. What are they wearing? What does that symbolize? What music is playing? What emotions do they draw from the crowd? What are their moves like? How do the goals they reached on their adventure influence their performance? Get input from as many of the players as possible; don't let one or two dominate the description. Ask them what the finale of their number is, and tell them to make it extra dramatic.

So, do the player characters win or not? It depends. Since you're a fan of the characters, you want them to have an ending that feels satisfying. If they've been focused on obtaining physical objects and beating the Adversary Team, then yes. Let some tension build while the judges are tabulating their scores, and reveal the verdict as slowly as possible. Then cheer and celebrate! If the player characters have shown more interest in intangible goals like personal growth and relationships, and if they've shown any inclination to help the Adversary Team, or even just make sure they do not make the same mistakes as them, then consider giving the win to someone else. It should still be someone deserving—a first-time competitor who shows talent, promise, and gratitude. Your player characters will appreciate knowing that the competition was not the all-important symbol they made it out to be—in other words, the music was inside them all along.



the EPILOGUE

When the climactic scene is done, ask your players some questions about what happens to their characters after the contest. Keep asking questions until everyone seems satisfied. You don't need to go around in turns, and not every player needs to answer every question, but try to make sure everyone gets to be heard and acknowledged. That might mean asking some players directly.

Some questions you might ask:

- How does your character celebrate about their victory/loss?
- Does the pair or troupe keep dancing together?
- How is the pair or troupe's dynamic different, now?
- Will your character participate in the contest next year?
- Have your character's new Parts affected their personality?
- If so, how do they feel about that? Do they like who they are now?



SENATE OF TOYS

BY ELSA SJUNHESON-HENRY

The Senate of Toys is the governing body for a Threadbare community. You can use the Senate for any community in your Threadbare campaign, or you can make it a model for a community that the players are trying to build. The Senate of Toys might remain part of the background of your game until the player characters need to interact with it, something that influences the story of your campaign, or something that the players encounter as part of their journey. You could even run an entire game with the player characters as Senators! Here are some guidelines for doing just that, as well as some ideas for how the Senate might be a part of your Threadbare game.

WHO ARE THE SENATORS?

The Senate of Toys is a handed-down oral tradition in the community. The Senate is populated by toys who can vote (in different ways described below) for the benefit of the community as a whole. Some Senators were chosen by their families and friends as being best suited for the job, but other toys want to make sure that their personal preferences have representation. For example, some toys will find other toys that haven't awoken yet, and then take them away and sit by them, waiting for them to wake up. Typically, in those cases, they are looking for a toy that looks exactly like them, or is likely to represent their interests in the same way. (A Malibu Barbie and an Astronaut Barbie, for example, may not share the same values.) Warehousing toys until they wake up is technically considered cheating the system, as a Senator would be expected to pick their future replacement when they are given their position. Some Senators choose to pick their replacements just as they awaken, and train them to hold their values, voting in the same way that the previous Senator did. Other Senators may have less of a choice in who they elect to take their seat.


Who gets represented in the Senate of Toys? Much like the United States Senate, it is done by subgroups. In the case of a toy community, these may be different kinds of toys. Porcelain Dolls, mekka, stuffies, everyone who can be differentiated, if they can vocalize their opinion, has representation within the Senate.

HOW DOES VOTING WORK?

For most Senators, voting is a simple aye or nay process, individual votes for individual senators. However, in the case of a Buncha Little Guys, there are too many of them to vote this way. In these cases, often a vote by acclamation (a unanimous vote by a group) is taken, with a detachment unit representing the whole.


In order to make a good story, the GM might choose to have pre-decided how all the GM character Senators will vote, leaving the choice up to the player characters at the table, in a vote with high stakes. When it comes down to the players themselves to determine the legislative fate of their community, it becomes more important to everyone at the table. On the other hand, the GM characters might have to be swayed to vote the way that the players want. In that case, players could argue for their sides, debate on the Senate Floor, and if things get intense, the grand tradition of the Senatorial Floor Fistfight or Cane Battle (using the Fight Song Move) might ensue. While not recognized by the leader of the Senate, other Senators may see fighting as a valid adjudication of the issue.

Which brings us to the leader of the Senate. Of course, every community is different, but the general consensus with regard to the leader of the community is the first toy ever to have awoken there. In some instances, that means a ratty old teddy bear with a sheer green ribbon tied around his neck, in others, a Raggedy Ann doll who can't quite sit up on her own without



help. If for some reason that toy is unable to perform their duties, then it will be up to a vote by the entire community to determine who can stand in as the leader of the Senate. Imagine the power struggles!

HOW DO YOU PLAY SENATE OF TOYS?




You might be wondering, how exactly do you play the Senate of Toys? Well, first, the Senate of Toys is essentially based upon Roberts Rules of Order, so a passing familiarity with it might be useful. But you can always make it up along the way. If you are running the game with the player characters as Senators, you might want a few referendums and issues on the table to guide your way. Here are a few sample issues that your Senate of Toys might debate and vote upon.

THE HAUNTED DOLL QUESTION

A new doll has been brought into the community. She's made of beautiful porcelain, and dressed in a white and blue gown. Her hair is braided and she has bright rosy cheeks. She's perfect. Except behind her sparkling green eyes, there's something almost too alive in there. Because dolly Em isn't just a doll. She's haunted. The ghost inside of her speaks too, and the ghost—and the doll herself—want representation within the Senate. Precedent says that dolls like Em are already represented by the Honorable Representative for Porcelain Dollies, but Em (and her, ah, guest) insist that a Haunted Doll is different from a Porcelain Doll, and they won't be represented properly.

Does the Senate agree?


THE MOUTHS QUESTION



In some Senates there is a tradition of modification is under review. Any prospective Senator whose original form does not include a mouth is put under the knife for a modification procedure. This procedure is meant to give the chosen successor the mouth they require to serve. (In the wider Threadbare universe, even toys without mouths can communicate, but in some Senates this may not be considered sufficient!) Some kinds of toys have determined that this is a form of prejudice, designed to force them either to submit to a severe modification surgery, or to not be represented by the Senate. Does the Senate vote to remove the blockade of non-mouthed toys from serving their communities?

Will the Senate reach a majority vote?

THE STRIKE ON PLAYTIME



Some toys believe that a Child will someday return. It has been years since the interference of a human was felt in the playroom, and the toys now live in the attic, where they are free to pursue their own agendas without any fear of interference from someone larger. This belief has resulted in a referendum on the floor, the question of if a Child were to rejoin them, would they suspend their control and the governance of the attic to the Child.

Will the believers in the Return prevail?

A NEW LEADER

The leader of the Senate has been removed from power. With the power vacuum in the community, the characters must figure out who is best suited to the position of Senate Leader. Who will break ties in the event of one? Who will stand before the whole community and pronounce the judgments? Can the Senate come together to protect itself, or will it fall into chaos as power struggles ensue?



Mini-GAME: GRAB BAG

BY JOSH JORDAN

A GAME FOR 2-5 PLAYERS in 5-20 MINUTES

Grab Bag is a betting game that happens inside of Threadbare. Rather than money, characters bet favors and secrets. Then, they take turns drawing tokens out of a bag. Depending on your bet, you may owe someone a favor or you may need to tell them one of your secrets.

SUPPLIES

- One bag or a willing Sock
- Nine rocks, buttons, or other tokens per character. Each character needs a different kind or color of token.

The materials required to play Grab Bag could be represented by Stuff, or they could be named “Grab Bag of tokens” as a Thing.



HOW TO PLAY

At the beginning of each round of play, characters place all nine of their tokens in the Bag. Make sure everyone knows which tokens belongs to which character. Now, quickly vote which character is the noisiest. That character goes first. Play then proceeds to the right.

Each character, beginning with the noisiest, chooses whether to bet on their Grab or on the Bag. You may not bet on both.

If you bet on your Grab and you lose, you owe the winner of the Grab a favor. (A favor is any small task that the winner asks you to do. It can be inconvenient, but should not be very dangerous. It shouldn't take more than an hour to complete, unless you owe the winner multiple favors.)

If you bet on the Bag and you lose, you owe the winner of the Bag a secret. (A secret is something that you haven't told the winner, but it should be something that is both important to you AND that they might be interested to know.)

Once each character has said aloud whether they will bet on their Grab or on the Bag, the first character begins to draw tokens out of the Bag, keeping all the tokens they draw, until they have drawn three of their own tokens. All the tokens they have drawn, including their own three, are now their Grab for this round.

Play proceeds to the right. The next character draws tokens from the Bag until they have drawn three of their own tokens, or there are no more tokens in the Bag. Continue taking turns until there are no more tokens in the Bag, or until each character has a Grab, i.e., three tokens of their own and however many other tokens they drew on the way.

DETERMINING THE GRAB WINNER

Each character counts the total number of tokens in their Grab, both tokens of their own and any others they drew this round. The character with the highest total number of tokens in their Grab wins the Grab this round. Anyone who chose to bet on their Grab at the beginning of the round now owes this winner a favor.

If two or more characters are tied for the highest Grab, each of them is a winner. Anyone who bet on their Grab now owes each winner a favor. If no one bet on their Grab, no one owes the winner a favor. If only the Grab winner bet on their Grab, they do not get any favors.

DETERMINING THE BAG WINNER

The noisiest character now dumps out the Bag into the middle of the play area. Together, characters look at the pile of tokens that were not part of anyone's Grab this round. Count to see which character had the most tokens left in the Bag after everyone took their Grab. That character wins the Bag this round. Any character that bet on the Bag at the beginning of this round now owes this winner a secret.

If there are no tokens left in the Bag, because characters drew all of them for their Grab, no one wins the Bag, and no one owes a secret this round. If two or more characters are tied for the highest number of tokens remaining in the Bag, each of them is a winner. Anyone who bet on the Bag now owes each winner a secret. If no one bet on the Bag, no one owes the winner a secret. If only the Bag winner bet on the Bag, they do not get any secrets.

CONTINUING THE GAME

Play continues for at least three rounds, although any character can quit at any time. Future rounds are played the same way, except a different character draws first and dumps the Bag out at the end. Usually, this job passes to the right.

DOLL'S HEAD DICE BAG TUTORIAL

BY LIZ CHAIPRADITKUL



Greetings, my name is Liz, I'm a long time crafter and gamer. Today I'll show you how to make a doll's head dice bag! You can use your doll's head bag for your Threadbare dice, or you could also use it to play the game Grab Bag (page 87)! First, I'll explain how to make a functional bag from a doll's head and then we'll talk a bit about personalizing your bag. Every doll is unique, so the most important thing about this tutorial is for you to feel free to be creative.

To build your doll's head dice bag, you'll need:

MATERIALS

- A rubber doll's head, slightly larger than an adult's fist
- Fabric (cotton, about 40x40 cm square)
- Matching thread
- Small sewing needle
- Large sewing needle
- A handful of straight pins and 1 safety pin
- Cord (about 50 cm long, roughly the width of a shoelace)
- Measuring tape
- Scissors
- Stanley knife (X-Acto knife or box cutter)
- Pencil
- Iron and ironing board
- Optional: Cord stopper (a plastic bead with a spring and button, which will hold the bag closed)
- Optional: Sewing machine

I recommend cleaning your doll's head before you start this tutorial with warm soap, a sponge, and laundry detergent. Some doll's paint can be fragile, so it is best to do this carefully.



When you apply pressure and pull, the doll's head should pop right off. If it is firmly attached, use your scissors to carefully cut the head off around the base of the neck. And don't throw the body away! You could use it for one of the other Threadbare Tutorials, like the Mekka Crafting Tutorial (page 94)! Or you could make more dice bags out of the other body parts using the same technique used in this tutorial.

NOTE: If you don't have an old baby doll lying around that you want to cut up, try getting one from a thrift store. They are inexpensive and you get to rescue and reuse a doll. Get a doll with a hollow rubber head; you can check this by squeezing the head. If it squishes and bounces back, it's pliable enough to use.

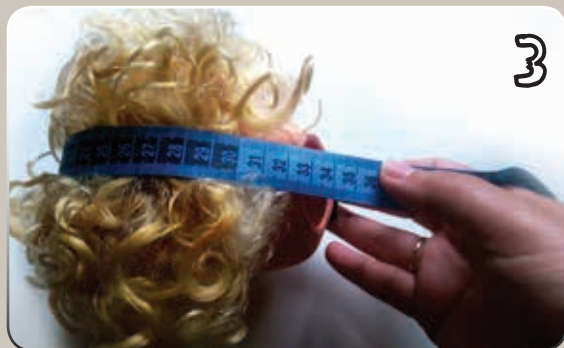


1 PREPPING THE HEAD

1. First, we need to remove the neck from the head to allow for the dice to come out of the bag easily. Draw a line around the neck right underneath the doll's chin.

Using the Stanley knife and cutting away from yourself, make small, shallow cuts over the line you have just drawn. Do this slowly and carefully. Once you have broken through the rubber, slowly cut along the line using a sawing movement.

2. Once the head and neck are separated, mark small dots with your pencil on the neckline roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ " (5 mm) apart and $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3 mm) from the edge of the neck. Then, take your large needle and poke through the rubber on each mark you've made. This is an important step, it will make sewing much easier when it comes to assembling your dice bag. Now, time to make your bag!



3

SEWING THE DICE BAG

3. Measure your doll's head from its chin to the back of its head. Add 8" (20 cm) to your measurement and that should be your fabric length. The width of your fabric should be approximately half the circumference of your doll's head, plus $\frac{3}{4}$ " (2 cm). Honestly, you can guesstimate the width of your fabric; it won't matter too much.



Right side - the outside of your fabric
(what you want on the outside of your dice bag)

4



Wrong side - the inside of your fabric

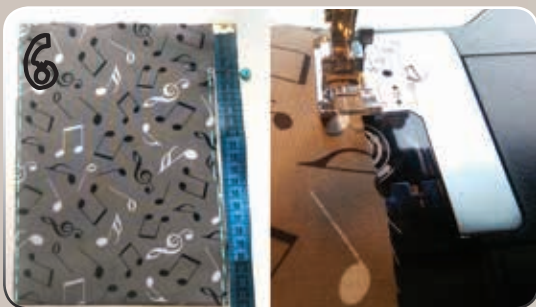
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4. Fold your fabric in half lengthwise the right side up. Measure 1.5" (4 cm) on one side and mark it with a pen. **Do not sew this part when creating the French seam below**—this will be the opening for the cord of your dice bag.

5. Now, we'll create a French seam on the sides of your dice bag. A French seam is great for a dice bag, because it hides the messy edges of the fabric when you don't have a serger sewing machine to finish them off professionally. Leaving the top open, sew the left and right edges closed 1/8" (3 mm) from the edge. You can use a needle and thread, or a sewing machine.

6



6. Then, flip your bag so the wrong side is outside and iron it flat. Now, sew the seams (the parts you've just sewn) again, but this time 1/4" (5 mm) from the edge. Heading to your ironing board, open the gap you left at the top of one side of your dice bag. Fold the fabric back and iron it down. If you'd like you can also sew down these two small flaps for extra security in your cord opening.

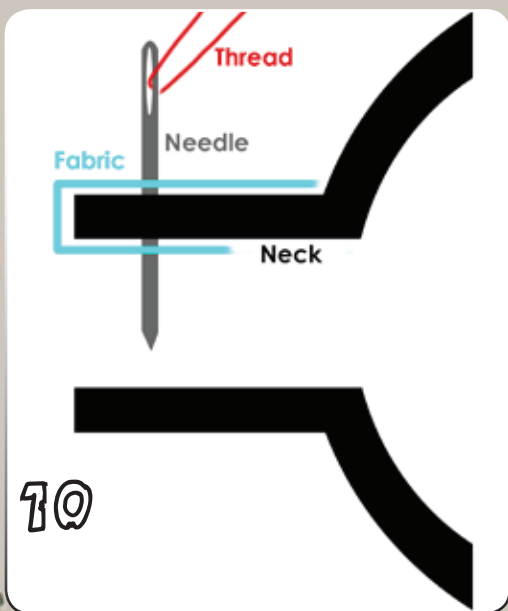
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7. Let's create the cord tunnel! On the open edge of your dice bag, fold down the top 1/4" (5 mm) of your fabric and iron it. Then, fold it over again, this time folding it 1" (2.5 cm) down, and iron flat.



8. Sew around the edge of the fold you've made to close the cord tunnel. Make sure you don't sew your bag completely shut!
9. Turn it rightside out and violá! Your dice bag is done.

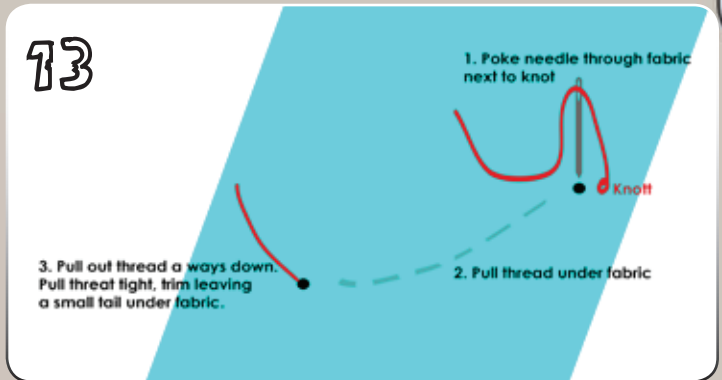
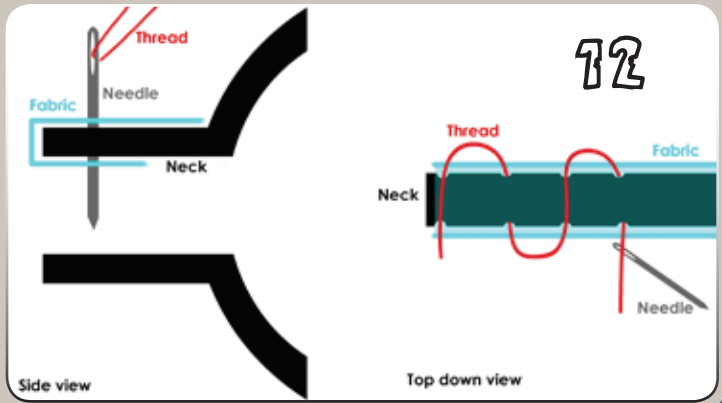


ASSEMBLING THE DICE BAG

10. Place your dice bag inside your doll's head. You'll notice that pleats form on the inside of the dice bag so it can fit. That is no problem; we will sew them down later. Make sure the bottom of your dice bag hits the bottom of the doll's head. Fold the edge of your dice bag over the outer edge of the doll's head. The idea is that the edge of the doll's neck is sandwiched between two layers of fabric.
11. Now, start sewing. Start from the inside of your doll's head to hide the knot of your thread. Poke through the first hole you made in the doll's head, and then through the fabric, your needle coming out on the right side of the fabric.
12. Check where you placed your next hole, puncture through your fabric, through the hole, through the fabric, and pull your thread through. Continue like this with the subsequent holes until you've sewn all the way around. As you sew, catch the pleats with your needle so they are sewn down nice and flat.



13. When you're done, knot your thread and then hide the tail between the fabric and doll's head by placing the needle right next to your knot, puncturing through the fabric, and pulling the tail out a bit down, cutting it shorter to hide it. Tie a knot in the cord and attach a safety pin to it and close the safety pin. Using the safety pin to help pull the cord, thread it through the cord tunnel. You'll be doing this by feel, since the safety pin will also be inside the cord tunnel while you work.



If you are not familiar with this method of threading a cord through the cord tunnel, check out this YouTube video (<https://youtu.be/NvF1T0ML0bI>), or search for “how to thread a drawstring” on the Internet. When both ends of the cord are sticking out of the cord tunnel, apply the cord stopper if you are using one.

done?

You could stop here—you have a functional dice bag! However, half the fun of creating is giving your work personality. I suggest decorating your doll's head to suit its personality. I thought mine looked like Marilyn Monroe, so I gave her cute red lipstick (using nail polish as paint). I had some scrap fabric left over from the dice bag and I made her bandana and I cut up the cute pink socks she came with for a bow! Finally, I gave her a button eye, because this is a Threadbare tutorial after all, and I thought it gave her an edge.

I hope you have a great time making your dice bag!

MEKKA CREATION TUTORIAL

BY BRIAN DIRK

The world of Threadbare is a strange place, where the objects of joy and wonder that formed our childhoods take life. However their existence is clouded by the universal constant of entropy. Things fall apart. The characters find themselves broken. The characters also rebuild themselves from the castoff and broken down remnants of their peers.

One of the most fun ways to engage with this world that exists purely in our shared imagination, is to build a real-world avatar of your character. Unlike role-playing games that use “minis,”

small plastic or metal miniatures, to represent characters, in Threadbare you can actually have “lifesized” models of your character that you can keep with you to inspire your stories.

Since your character has probably had to repair themselves at some point; obtaining a pristine toy and leaving it unmodified may not match your character in Threadbare. This tutorial will help you create a physical model that reflects a character that has cannibalized other toys to rebuild itself. You can build your own toy characters using simple, cheap multi-purpose tools and easy-to-access materials.

A NOTE ABOUT SAFETY

All tools and many materials are dangerous. Misuse or failure to wear protective gear while using tools could be very dangerous. Be smart and safe about using any tool, even something as innocuous as a screwdriver. This tutorial is not for children.

STEP 1: CHOOSING YOUR CHARACTER CONCEPT

If you already have a character made for Threadbare, determining what you are building will be fairly straight-forward. You should use your character’s current state as a template for your real-world creation.

If you do not have a predefined character, building one can help inspire your Threadbare character creation. Begin with a base toy. This is the original form your character had when they “awakened”. Unless you have a highly specific vision, your base toy should be a general “type” of toy: a dump truck, a fashion doll, a baby doll, or a transforming robot. These are easier and less expensive to find. Once you have your base toy, think about how it has changed. In Threadbare, each modification should be a story about something that happened to your character. Had it been damaged, and needed to replace a leg? Did it want a Part that it felt it was missing? Think about how your character modified itself and why it felt like it was important to do so.

What if you don’t have a clue what you want to do? You can create your character on the fly, while looking at the Parts that will make them up. Get hands-on with the materials you have to work with, and see how they inspire you! Just keep in the back of your head these questions: what is this character’s story? Why did it change itself? What was broken, and how does this new Part fix it? With these ideas firmly in the back of your mind, head to the store and browse. Inspiration will definitely find you!

STEP 2: OBTAINING YOUR CHARACTER’S PARTS

I prefer to get toys for Parts from a thrift store or similar location. Toys at thrift stores are generally inexpensive, and you can often get new ideas while browsing the shelves. All characters made in this tutorial were sourced from a thrift store. Regardless of where you get them, the Parts need to work well together and fit your concept. The big thing to consider here is proportionality: you want the Parts from your base toy and the Parts from your add-on toys to feel like they could naturally be a part of the same character.

To help understand proportionality, I introduce my good friend Diggerpillar!

Diggerpillar is a friendly looking mekka based off a construction back-hoe and a musical caterpillar toy. The construction truck provides a good sturdy base to connect to, and the caterpillar head adds charm and personality. The head looks almost as if it belongs there from a size perspective. This “looking the right size” is the concept of proportionality. A head such as that from a fashion doll would be too small, and a baby doll head might be too large. An advantage of shopping at a thrift store, where toys are not in their packaging, is that you can hold the Parts up to see how well they will fit onto the base toy.

Once you have your parts, and they look good, proportionally speaking, consider how you will fasten the Parts together. Sometimes you may need to start disassembling the toys before you can really figure out how to connect them up. With Diggerpillar, I knew I wanted to combine a head with the construction toy’s scoop, but, I was unsure exactly how this would happen. It wasn’t until I had partially disassembled the caterpillar toy that I found my solution.



Diggerpillar! Says Hello

STEP 3: PLANNING YOUR BUILD

The first part of making a solid plan for your build is figuring out what your toy is made out of. This will determine what tools you need to disassemble and combine your toys.

HARD PLASTICS

Hard plastic is very common and is what many toys are made from. One of the more common plastics used in toys is “ABS.” This style of plastic is what snap-together building blocks are made out of, and it can be fairly strong. Hard plastic is capable of being cut with saws, drilled, or shaped. Plastic will give way even under thin saws, it can be drilled easily with an electric drill, and it can be sanded. Plastic can be susceptible to bending after gently applying some heat. Hard plastics are easily cleaned and glued. Additionally, most hard plastic toys are held together with small course-threaded screws, making their disassembly a relatively easy task. However, hard plastic doesn’t flex well, and it can’t stand up to too much pressure when its walls are thin. It does not cut easily with a knife or scissors, so it can be tough to trim off a small amount of it. Additionally, coarse thread wood screws can break thin plastic walls. A machine screw can be used through a drilled hole, however a nut and washer or similar hardware will be needed on one side of the hole.



Checking Diggerpillar’s proportions. Looks good!

PLIABLE PLASTICS (INCLUDING VINYL AND RUBBER)

Pliable plastics can be many different chemical compositions, but generally share some similarities. They are easily cut with knives or scissors. Trimming this material is very easy. You can work methodically, cutting only what you need to cut. Pliable plastics are also forgiving: bending or flexing around imperfect fits. Pliable plastics can take a course-threaded wood screw and hold relatively securely. However, pliable plastics can be hard to glue. The chemicals that make them pliable, also inhibit the glue from adhering. Also be wary of burning: attempting to heat pliable plastic, or any form of shaping that may cause friction, should be avoided. As most pliable plastics give off harmful fumes.

METAL

Metal pieces or parts are not common on modern toys, but they do exist. Metal rods usually act as axles for wheels. Metal car bodies can be found on toy cars. Springs, pins, and other mechanical pieces can be found inside mechanically complex toys.

Metal pieces generally resist gluing, but some specific glues can bond metal. Metal can be heated and pressed into hard plastics for a tight fit. Metal pieces can be bent and formed, or sawn through with a metal hacksaw. Metal pieces can also be filed down.

Metal pieces can pick up thin films of oils, dust and debris, making it important to clean them, using a lint-free cloth, before gluing. Also sand or file down thin scratches to help glue adhere. Cutting metal generally requires hand tools outside of the normal craft tools you might have around. Bent metal parts are unforgiving: they can be hard to bend, and then hard to correct once bent.

WOOD, CLOTH, AND PAPER

Materials such as wood, cloth, and paper are rare in thrift shop toys. But they are much easier to work with. Suffice to say that most glues and fastening methods that work on plastics and metal will work on these materials as well.

STEP 4: GATHERING YOUR TOOLS

It's not enough to understand the materials toys are made of, but the tools you can use to disassemble and modify them as well. Let's talk about the different types of tools that may be found useful

TOOLS TO DRIVE SCREWS

Screwdrivers are a fairly common and well-known item. However, you may need some non-standard screwdrivers. Specifically, you will want a precision screwdriver set: the kind without bits, so that your tool can fit into small hole in manufactured toys.

TOOLS FOR CUTTING MATERIALS

When you need to separate an object into two pieces, a knife is the simplest tool. X-Acto knives and utility knives, are common examples of knives that are useful for this purpose. These are mostly useful on softer materials: pliable plastics and some thinner "hard plastics."

When the parts you need to separate are too thick, or too hard to cut with a knife, a saw is your best bet. Saws come in various thicknesses and number of "teeth per inch." The higher the number of teeth per inch, the less efficiently the saw will cut away material, but the more control



This fancy precision screw driver uses bits, and can't fit into the holes.

and a less gruesome finish is achieved. The interchangeability of saw blades may also be a factor in your decision when buying a saw.

For the purposes of modifying toys, I recommend a simple hacksaw with the ability to change out saw blades, and to include a “metal cutting” blade. This will allow you to make thin precise cuts and gives you an option for when you may need to cut a metal rod. It also works for the few metal pieces may be included in modern toys.

A more expensive option that has some advantages and disadvantages compared to a traditional saw is a rotary tool: sometimes incorrectly called a “Dremel,” since Dremel is a very popular company that makes this sort of tool. A rotary tool has the ability to use a “cut-off wheel,” a small abrasive disc, that when spinning at high speeds cuts away material. A rotary tool can be very precise and versatile. But it comes with the trade-off of being somewhat pricey. Rotary tools, along with traditional hand-held electric drills, can also be used to cut circular holes in an item using drill bits, which may be useful when trying to use screws in your materials.

TOOLS FOR COMBINING: ADHESIVES

You can combine Parts of your character together with either hardware, or with glues and other adhesives. Different glues work for different materials. If you can, try to test a glue using scrap pieces of the same toys you are working with. Here are some other tips to help you in choosing the correct adhesive.

SUPER GLUE (ALSO CALLED CA GLUE, OR CYANOACRYLATE GLUE): Super Glue is popular in the hobby market, because it bonds well with a lot of hard plastics. However, it may not bond some metal pieces, and may not bond at all to soft plastics and rubbers.

HOT GLUE: Hot glue can be used to bond most Parts you encounter, but with the downfall of having a flexible and possible flimsy bond. It also means your Part is highly susceptible to heat. I have had hot glue become semi-solid, and then stop holding when the Part was left in a car for ten minutes on an 80-degree temperature day. You should handle your characters carefully once finished with hot glue.



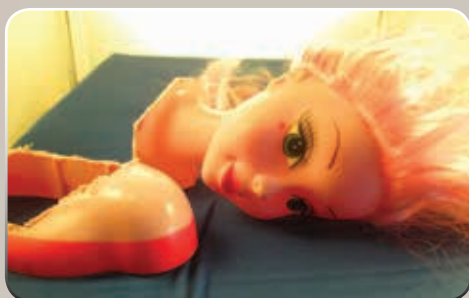
A utility knife was used to cut the wheels away on this Toy ATV



The Author's Personal Hacksaw with changeable blades feature.



A Hacksaw was used to cut these metal rods to take the wheels off.



A rotary tool was used to make these precise cuts on a flimsy part, that would have been hard to do with a saw.

EPOXY : Simple two-part epoxy is both cheap and easy to work with. It bonds well with most materials, with the exception of rubbers and some very oily soft plastics. Two-part epoxy generally comes in two separate tubes. The procedure is simple: mix equal parts of them on a non-porous surface, and then apply to your parts. The mixture will swiftly harden into a hard plastic-like surface. I recommend you use rubber gloves and popsicle sticks for mixing to keep it off of your skin. Also remember to keep the epoxy off anything you cherish, and have a supply of paper towels or rags readily available to swiftly clean up an unintended mess. Two-part epoxy smells bad too. But it makes great bonds!

E6000 : E6000 is a popular craft adhesive. It bonds well and is very durable.

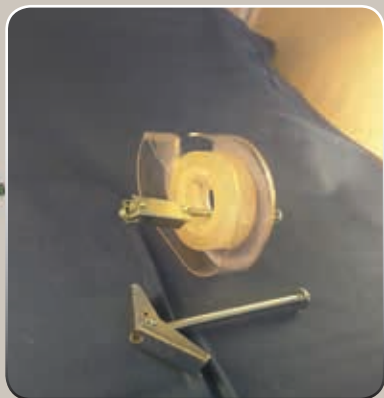
DUCT TAPE : It is a cliché for a reason: duct tape generally adheres to almost all materials, and is a go-to product for quick and dirty “make this stick to that” situations. It can get bulky and unsightly, though, so use it with care.

TOOLS FOR COMBINING: HARDWARE

Hardware, such as screws and bolts can be used in several ways when modifying toys. Wood screws have pointy tips and sharp threads that are coarse, or far-apart from one another. They do not usually need a “nut” or other hardware to help them hold tight. Wood screws work by piercing what they are screwed into, and cutting their threads into that material. This generally works only in thick, hard plastic or in soft plastics and rubbers. It is helpful to drill a small “pilot hole” roughly the size of the “shaft” or center of the screw to help in driving this screw into the material.

Machine screws are blunt tipped, fine-threaded, screws that generally require a nut or a similar fastener to hold tight. Machine screws do not cut into the material they hold together.

Toggle bolts are very useful in modifying toys, as sometimes it is difficult or impossible to get a nut into a toy piece without destroying your Part. Toggle Bolts are a special type of machine screw with spring-loaded “wings” that fold down, as they go through a hole, and open up to allow you to screw your machine screw to fasten.



A toggle Bolt, taped into place to show how it enters a hole, and another in it's open state to show how it opens up inside a hole.



Diggerpillar's head is about to be fastened using a toggle bolt. Due to the angle of the scoop, this would have been a very difficult “glue-up” to attempt. A toggle bolt was chosen as a simpler operation.



STEP 5: Putting it ALL TOGETHER

If you have been following the directions of this guide, you have done a lot of planning. Maybe you have taken apart some pieces, but you have always been thinking about what materials you are working with, and how you are going to open, cut, or connect your parts. Now you just have to follow your plan.

Have fun! Just remember: be flexible. Your initial plan may not work. You may have to go down a different path—use hardware, instead of adhesive, or maybe even rethink your design. Improvise, adapt, and keep at it: pretty soon you will have a physical version of your very own Threadbare character.

Diggerpillar from the back - a fine connection with a Togglebolt!

BUILDING PRINCESS RASTA SPIDER

To help you see how this can be done from start to finish, here's how I made my Threadbare character: Princess Rasta Spider. For this character, I had the following goals:

- Keep as many “working” or articulating parts on the character as possible.
- Have each new Part hint at a story of the character's past.
- Have something resembling a face or a place for eyes.
- Have an easily understood means of locomotion.
- Have at least one non-functional embellishment for the character (clothes, armor, hair style, etc.)
- Create a character that can stand or sit on their own without being propped up or taped down.

Here is Princess Rasta Spider in her completed state:



Princess Rasta Spider defines fashion



The unmodified toys that makeup Princess Rasta Spider. A baby Doll, a Fashion Doll Head, and a “Space walker?” make up Princess Rasta Spider. Notice there is a general sense of proportion between the Baby doll head and the Fashion Doll’s head?



Checking fit and proportion on the baby doll body and the space crawler.



A hack saw cuts off this hard plastic piece holding the cockpit in.



A Utility knife shaved this back piece smooth after sawing.

Marking off the line where the baby doll body will be cut.



Cosmetic surgery?



Checking the fit: not tight enough!



Fitting the pieces together. A lot of shaving off small bits, and minute adjustments gets me to a nice fit. This is not glued, yet.





Marking off where to cut on the fashion doll head.



Post cut. A rotary tool with a cut off wheel was used to achieve this cut.

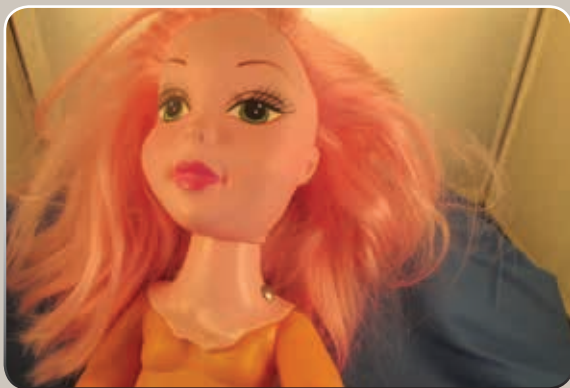


Testing the fit of the fashion doll "body" to the baby doll head. I removed the doll's head to make it easier.



I decided to use wood screws to connect the Hard plastic of the fashion doll bust to the soft plastic of the baby doll body. Holes were drilled in the hard plastic. These holes are bigger than the screw threads I used which allowed them to pass through the hard plastic, and "bite" into the softer baby doll body.

Head re-attached, and fastened to the baby doll body.



Off to the Salon!

I decided to give her dreadlocks, so I grouped clumps of hair together. Of course, this was after I spent an hour detangling and combing her hair straight!



I mixed 3 parts glue to 1-part water, to perform my next trick.



Dreadlocks!

Wearing rubber gloves, I massaged the glue mixture into each group of hair: ensuring it thoroughly soaked into each group. Keeping groups of hair separate, and allowing each to dry individually, creates a reasonable approximation of fairy-tale style dreadlocks.





Securing the base.

Hot glue was used to secure the baby doll body to the base. NO picture exists of this process, as I had to work quickly. Copious amounts of hot glue were used. I used a high-temp hot glue gun so I could make small adjustments



Accessorizing!


With a few pony beads, a random Christmas bell found in my craft area and some old bead ear rings from my wife, Princess Rasta Spider is complete, and deigns not to look on the terribly unfashionable in attendance.

I hope you enjoyed this tutorial. Have fun making your own Threadbare characters and playing them in your games!

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Doll (RPG)
Puppetland
Golden Sky Stories
Whispering Road
Jim Henson—The Christmas Toy
The movie 9
Toy Story movies
Little Big Planet
Handknit Heroes
Mad Max: Fury Road
Robin's Friends (a Nordic larp)
Under the Bed
Amberville (Tim Davys)

THANKS TO THE UNKNOWN PLAYTESTERS

When I started this process, I was just hacking a dice pool game for a setting that I thought was unique. Unfortunately, I didn't take great notes during the early playtests, especially at conventions. For instance, I know a certain panda puppet whose player I missed completely in these credits! So, if I missed you, please accept both my apologies and my deepest thanks. Contact me and I'll make sure you get into the next revision of the game.

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In May of 2016, we raised over \$11,000 on Kickstarter thanks to the generous support of these fine people. You are all the very BEST, and I can't thank you enough for helping make this game a reality!

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 Siobhan Henderson
 Sophie Lagacé
 Star Eagle
 Stefano Borri
 Stentor Danielson
 Stephan Szabo
 Stephen Crawford
 Stephen Dewey
 Steve "Slipperboy" Donohue
 Steve Dulson
 Steve Lord
 Steve Radabaugh
 Steve Sick
 Steve Swanger
 Steven Cleek
 Steven K. Watkins
 Steven Owens
 Steven Robert
 Steven Warzaha
 Strawberry Sandwich the Y2K orphan
 Swordnut Paul
 Szabadi Dávid
 TadK
 TastyMusic
 Taylor "The Snarky Avenger" Kent
 Taylor LaBresh
 Tevel Drinkwater
 The Adventure Game Store & Dragon's Lair
 The Freelancing Roleplayer
 The Gauntlet Podcast
 The Mordak
 The Turk Family
 The Vickers Family
 Theodore Perry
 Thomas Stewart
 Three dogs wearing a trenchcoat and a hat
 Tim Hewitt
 Tim Luttermoser
 Tim Partridge
 Tobias White
 Toby Strauss
 Todd Agthe
 Todd Nicholas
 Todd Zircher
 Tomer Gurantz
 Tor Teigen
 Tracy Barnett
 Tree
 Tresi Arvizo
 Trip Space-Parasite
 Twisted Gnome
 Tyree Parkin
 Vagabond Metalworks
 Victor Wyatt
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 Vincent Baker

Vindexus
Walter Soto
Wansum Beats
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Do you have some great ideas for Threadbare? Did you write a cool adventure starter or have a terrific game? Are you an artist inspired by what you've seen?

The Jury-Riggers is a blog dedicated to exploring new ideas in Threadbare and sharing them with other players and groups! If your work is chosen to be published in an anthology, you get paid!



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<http://www.threadbarerpg.com/jury-riggers-team>

BASIC MOVES REFERENCE SHEET

Don't forget your Mekka, Sock, and Softie Moves, your Friendship Move, and your Holds!

HELP SOMEONE

When you help someone do something, roll+Ties with that character. On a 10+, choose three from the following list. On a 7-9, choose one:

- Grant a +1 on their next Move (+2 for Socks helping Socks).
- Take the consequences of a failure on their next Move for yourself.
- Nothing breaks as a result of your help!
- Someone else can help, too! Point to the next Helper.

NOTE: In one-shot games, all player characters begin with one Tie with each other. You can use this move even if you have no Ties with a character, just add +0 to your dice roll.

MAKE FRIENDS

When you approach a GM character with an open and earnest heart, roll+Smile. On a 10+, they regard you as friendly and you may form a Tie with them. On a 7-9, choose one from the following list:

- You have to give them something (the GM will tell you what it is).
- They don't like your friends.
- They want you to go somewhere (the GM will tell you where).

NOTE: This Move cannot be used on player characters, or on hostile and non-thinking characters. See your Friendship Move for building ties with other player characters.

LOOK FIERCE!

When you stand up to a bully, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you are fierce! The bully backs down and gives you something to make you go away (their player or the GM decides). On a 7-9, they back down, but are still wary of you.

NOTE: Players can only bully each other in Dented campaigns, so you can only use Look Fierce! against another player in those campaigns. You can use Look Fierce! against GM characters in any campaign.

BRIBE

When you try to buy an unfriendly character's cooperation, roll+Smile and give up something of value. On a 10+, they take an action to help you out. On a 7-9, they begrudgingly help you; choose one from the following list:

- They also demand a valuable secret. Reveal it now.
- You owe them a favor in addition to the thing you gave them. The GM will tell you what it is now.
- They don't trust you to keep your side of the deal.

NOTE: Bribe is for when you want a GM character to do something, not when you want them to give you a material thing. Use Make a Bargain for that.

LEAD A CHEER!

When you try to change someone's mood, tell them a good story and roll+Smile. On a hit, you change their mood in the way you hoped. On a 7-9, choose one from the following list:

- They need you to listen to their complaints for a very long time.
- They don't want you to leave.
- They don't believe your story is true.

NOTE: This can be used on player characters and GM characters. Players must consent before having this move used on their characters.

PLAY A GAME

When you play a game with someone, describe or play the game and determine if you won or lost it, then roll+Smile. On a 10+, choose three from the following list. On a 7-9, choose one:

- You won a wager! Describe what was on the line and what you won.
- Your opponent respects your skill and treats you with respect from here on out.
- You discovered something new about this game. What is it?
- You feel really good about yourself. Nothing can tear you down! The next time you roll a 6-, you do not damage a Part.

NOTE: If you played out a nano-game to perform this Move, treat any success as a 10+.

MAKE A BARGAIN

When you engage in trade with a GM character, roll+Scrounge and give up something of value (such as a Thing, a Device, or something intangible that you or the GM character values). On a 10+, you get all of the following. On a 7-9, choose two:

- They give you what you want.
- What you want is not already broken.
- They are willing to trade with you again in the future.

CANNIBALIZE

When you break something to get Stuff out of it, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you get the Stuff easily. On a 7-9, you get the Stuff, but... choose one from the following list:

- It already belonged to someone (the GM will tell you who)!
- You break something else as well (the GM will tell you what).
- It's rude to break things! Take -1 on your next Smile roll.

FIND SOMETHING

When you search for useful Stuff or Things, roll+Scrounge. If you succeed, you gain Stuff. On a 10+, pick two. On a 7-9, pick one.

- It's exactly what you were looking for.
- It isn't dangerous.
- Nobody else wants it.

THINK IT THROUGH

When you reveal to the GM a fact about a problem or mystery, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you are completely accurate. On a 7-9, the GM will tell you one thing that is false in your statement.



JURY-RIG

When you use Stuff or Things to repair or Upgrade a Part, including your own, roll+Scrounge. On a 10+, choose three from the following list. On a 7-9, choose one:

- You successfully repair or modify the Part.
- The target gains a Move (the GM will tell you what it is).
- It doesn't use up your Stuff.
- It doesn't draw unwanted attention.

NOTE You can use this Move on an unbroken Part to Upgrade it (for adding a useful Move on a 7-9). You can also choose to gain a Move on a still-broken Part. Most likely, this will result in an undesirable Move, known as a Glitch (see page 37).

MINOR FIX-UP

Once per session, while you perform a Jury-Rig Move, if you are not also Running Away, you can describe yourself doing an additional minor repair on a different Part than the Jury-Rig's target. The target's Part is restored to its normal functionality.

TAKE A BREATHER

Once per session, when you are not Running Away, you can describe yourself doing a minor repair on yourself. One of your Parts is restored to its normal functionality.

MAKE A DEVICE

When you build a new Device, if you have all the Stuff, Things, and Helpers needed to make it according to the GM, name it and roll + Helpers (the number of characters helping you make it). On a 10+, it uses up any Things you needed to make it and gains one Move, choose three from the following list. On a 7-9, it uses up your Things and choose one:

- It doesn't use up your Stuff.
- It gains a second Move.
- It can be made again in the future.
- Nobody knows you made it.

PUSH OR PULL

When you try to move something that is bigger than you, roll+Strongarm. On a 10+, you move it where you want to. On a 7-9, it moves, but you fall down and choose one from the following list:

- Take damage to a Part.
- Drop whatever you're carrying.
- Get lost and separated from the rest of the player characters.

RUN AWAY

When you act to avoid getting physically damaged, (which could mean running away, dodging, or otherwise acting to avoid a danger) roll+Scrounge. On a 10+, you avoid the danger completely. On a 7-9, you escape, but the GM will give you either a minor consequence or tough choice.

FIGHT SONG

When you engage in a contest of violence (combat), performance, or sport, all characters damage one Part. The players describe what "winning" means and how they successfully won the contest. For Fluffy games, the contest must be performance or sport, such as a kickball game or dance-off.

MEKKA PLAYBOOK

NAME: _____

PROFOUN: _____

i hAVE StUFF:

hOLds:

Assign the following ability scores: +2, +1, -1

SCROUNGE	SMILE	STRONGARM
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crafting, Trade	Making Friends, Influencing People	Influence the World

DESCRIPTION & FORM

List each of your Parts

MOVES

SALVAGE PARTS: When you are the target of a Jury-Rig Move, you can use up Stuff (in addition to any needed for the Move) to gain a new Move, even if you didn't choose that result. You can only gain one new Move from any successful Jury-Rig. Note that, in general, you either have Stuff or you don't, so you will need another character to give you their Stuff to use this Move.

FRIENDSHIP: Once per session, when you play a game or playfight (for example, head-butting without intending any damage) with someone else, they learn something new about their own capabilities (this may result in a Move), and you create a Tie with them.

YOUR FORM (PICK ONE, SEE NEXT PAGE)

- BUNCHA LITTLE GUYS**: On a 6-, Damage 1 Part, Gain 1 Hold that you can spend to ask the GM a question when you're seeking information about the world around you. They must answer you honestly.
- BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED**: On a 6-, Damage 1 Part and gain 1 Hold that you can spend to appear silent and motionless for a short time, even if moving slowly.
- DOLLFACE**: On a 6-, Damage 1 Part and gain 1 Hold which you can spend to trigger a Jury-Rig Move, even if you don't have any Stuff.
- NO STRINGS ATTACHED**: On a 6-, Damage 1 Part and gain 1 Hold that you can spend to escape something that is trapping you.
- VROOOM**: On a 6-, Damage 1 Part and gain 1 Hold that you can use to notice something that was overlooked in others' haste.
- MORE THAN MEETS THE EYES**: On a 6-, Damage 1 Part and gain 1 Hold that you can use to pretend to be someone you're not.
- ROCK SOLID**: On a 6-, damage 1 Part or Device that you didn't start with (if you have one) and gain 1 Hold which you can use to resist someone trying to force you to do something or go somewhere. If you don't have additional parts, you do not damage anything, but still gain the Hold; the GM makes a move as usual.

YOUR FORM (PICK ONE)

- BUNCH A LITTLE GUYS** 🐛: You are a swarm of tiny plastic toys. You're a crack team of green army men, more fun than a barrel of monkeys, or an entire farm's worth of barnyard animals. When you roll a 6-, one of your "guys" becomes separated. Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can spend to ask the GM a question when you're seeking information about the world around you. They must answer you honestly. You can have up to twelve starting Parts. Suggestions: tiny individual (but similar) toys, a central leader, hive mind.
- BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED** 🔋: You are a battery-operated machine that moves, talks, or lights up. When you roll a 6-, your power source starts to run low and you go into power save mode. Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can spend to appear silent and motionless for a short time, even if moving slowly. You can have up to six starting Parts. Suggestions: wheels, treads, cargo, lights, speaker, windshield, window, steering wheel, pulley mechanism, antenna, battery, catch phrase chip.
- DOLLFACE** 🧸: You are a hard-plastic doll with an array of exciting accessories! When you roll a 6-, you sacrifice one of your accessories to the cause. Damage one Part and gain one Hold which you can spend to trigger a Jury-Rig Move, even if you don't have any Stuff. You can have up to seven starting Parts. Suggestions: head, arms, legs, body, outfit, hair, accessories (name them!), a list of "things I collect."
- NO STRINGS ATTACHED** 🧶: Once upon a time, there was a puppetmaker who made you out of wood, ceramics, and clothed you in tiny stitched clothing. You had carefully-articulated joints, strings, and a series of beams for easily making you move and dance! Even before the Awakening, you had personality, although it was enslaved to the wishes of whomever pulled your strings. When you roll a 6-, another string is cut from your past. Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can spend to escape something that is trapping you. You can have up to seven starting Parts. Suggestions: head, arms, legs, body, an outfit, strings, control bar, a dramatic script.
- VROOOM!** 🚗: You go fast! You're a wheeled vehicle that's built for speed! When you roll a 6-, you fall behind! Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can use to notice something that was overlooked in others' haste. You can have up to six starting Parts. Suggestions: wheels, windshield, doors, headlights, bumpers, fenders, a favorite surface to roll on.
- MORE THAN MEETS THE EYES!** 👁️: Are you a truck? Are you a human-looking scientist? Maybe you're both! You have two faces you show the world—what are they? When you roll a 6-, you involuntarily transform too fast! Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can use to pretend to be someone you're not. You can have up to six starting Parts: Suggestions: wheels, headlights, a face, a second face, claws, bumpers, an outfit, a themesong.
- ROCK SOLID** 🪨: You're a solid friend with no moving parts, at all. You might be a solid plastic dinosaur, a pet rock, or even a logo'ed tchotchke from a long-past trade show. When you roll a 6-, damage one Part or Device that you didn't start with (if you have one) and gain one Hold which you can use to resist someone trying to force you to do something or go somewhere. If you don't have additional parts, you do not damage anything, but still gain the Hold; the GM makes a move as usual. You can have only one starting Part, which cannot be damaged. Suggestions: a hard plastic dinosaur, a pet rock, a child's pottery sculpture, a character from pop culture, a chew toy.

SOCK PLAYBOOK

NAME: _____

PROHIBIT: _____

i HAVE STUFF:

holds:

Assign the following ability scores: +2, +1, -1

SCROUNGE	SMILE	STRONGARM
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crafting, Trade	Making Friends, Influencing People	Influence the World

DESCRIPTION & FORM

List each of your Parts

MOVES

PAIRED UP: When you Help Someone, treat a 7-9 partial success as a 10+. If the target is another Sock, they get to roll 3d6 and pick the highest two dice.

FRIENDSHIP: Once per session, when you ask for help from someone else for something you can't do by yourself, if they help you, they feel better about themselves. They may repair a Part, and you also may create a Tie with them.

YOUR FORM (PICK ONE, SEE NEXT PAGE)

- ATHLETIC SOCK:** On a 6-, Damage one Part and gain one Hold, which you can use to get into a spot or space that you normally wouldn't be able to reach or fit inside.
- CHRISTMAS STOCKING:** On a 6-, Damage 1 Part and gain 1 Hold which you can use to inspire, cheer, or encourage another character.
- WOOL SOCK:** On a 6-, Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you may use to deceive a GM character (they don't call it "pulling the wool over his eyes" for nothing!)
- SOCK PUPPET:** On a 6-, Damage one Part and gain one Hold which you can use to blend into a crowd and be overlooked by someone trying to single you out.
- FINGER PUPPETS:** On a 6-, Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can use to establish a minor fact about someone you just met.
- TIGHTS:** On a 6-, Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can spend to catch something and hold onto it.

YOUR FORM (PICK ONE)

- ATHLETIC SOCK** ⚡ Hup hup, soldier! You're a sturdy, pragmatic Sock with a solidity to you that belies your floppy nature. When you roll a 6-, the starch weakens and you fold like a nylon. Damage one Part and gain one Hold, which you can use to get into a spot or space that you normally wouldn't be able to reach or fit inside. You can have up to five starting Parts. Suggestions: toe, cuff, stripes, heel, reinforced athletic sole, patches, cheer slogan.
- CHRISTMAS STOCKING** ⚡ You are the sentinel. The sparkly guardian of cold winter nights. You are the stocking hung by the chimney, ever vigilant, expectant of a bounty you will disgorge at dawn like a mockery of Sockness. You have no mate. When you roll 6-, a bit of the jingle goes out of your bells. Damage one Part and gain one Hold which you can use to inspire, cheer, or encourage another character. You can have up to seven starting Parts. Suggestions: toe, cuff, jingle bells, tinsel, felt applique, beads, embroidery, a child's name, quilting, favorite song.
- WOOL SOCK** ⚡ Sturdy, well-built, you are a Sock to be reckoned with! You're also deceptively unfashionable. When you roll a 6-, you felt a little bit more. Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you may use to deceive a GM character (they don't call it "pulling the wool over his eyes" for nothing!) You can have up to six starting Parts. Suggestions: toe, cuff, heel, instep, gusset, lace, patterning, patches, a "tell."
- SOCK PUPPET** ⚡ All it took were some googly eyes and a felt tongue, and suddenly you're a whole new Sock! When you roll a 6-, you lose a little bit of your personal style. Damage one Part and gain one Hold which you can use to blend into a crowd and be overlooked by someone trying to single you out. You can have up to seven starting Parts. Suggestions: face, cuff, eyes, tongue, an outfit, floppy limbs, hair, a political agenda.
- FINGER PUPPETS** ⚡ Like a Buncha Little Guys, you are a group of tiny "Socks," each with its own personality and look! When you roll a 6-, one of your puppets finds a new home! Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can use to establish a minor fact about someone you just met. You can have up to ten starting Parts. Suggestions: an ensemble of various finger puppets of different appearances (describe them!), a bandana backdrop, a theme song.
- TIGHTS** ⚡ Joined at the hip, literally, you're a two-headed character who is sometimes at odds with itself. But you are also your own best friend! When you roll a 6-, you get all tangled up in yourself! Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can spend to catch something and hold onto it. You can have up to four Starting Parts. Suggestions: right leg, left leg, torso, run, toes, haughty demeanor.

SOFTIE PLAYBOOK

NAME: _____

PROHIBIT: _____

i HAVE STUFF:

holds:

Assign the following ability scores: +2, +1, -1

SCROUNGE	SMILE	STRONGARM
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crafting, Trade	Making Friends, Influencing People	Influence the World

DESCRIPTION & FORM

List each of your Parts

MOVES

BOSSY: When you try to convince someone that your way is best, roll+Smile. If they are a GM character: on a 10+, they are convinced! They do what you want. On a 7-9, they do what you want, but you must give them something (similar to the Bribe move). If they are a player character, on a 10+, if they do what you want, they gain a Hold as if they'd rolled a 6- (but without the damage). On a 7-9, if they do what you want, you owe them a favor.

FRIENDSHIP: Once per session, when you put someone else's needs before your own, they tell you how they are weak, afraid, or vulnerable, and you tell them a secret of your own. You also may create a Tie with them.

YOUR FORM (PICK ONE, SEE NEXT PAGE)

- RAGDOLL**: On a 6-, Damage one Part, but gain one Hold that you can spend to ask a character one question. GM characters must answer truthfully. Player characters may deceive you, but you will know they are not telling the truth.
- BUILT LIKE A BEAR**: On a 6-, Damage one Part, but gain one Hold that you can spend to divine the history or origin of a person or item.
- CARNIVAL PRIZE**: On a 6-, Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can spend to find your way if you are lost.
- UNHAND ME**: On a 6-, Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can spend to entertain a group of Toys by telling a short, amusing story with heroes they identify with.
- I'M "REAL"**: On a 6-, Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can use to apply "real world" logic or science to solve a problem.
- SOFT SCULPTURE**: On a 6-, Damage one Part and gain one Hold which you can use to know the original value of something you can hold.

YOUR FORM (PICK ONE):

- RAGDOLL**: Stitches can be witches... you're the enigmatic, always-smiling secret-keeper. When you roll a 6-, you unravel a secret. Damage one Part, but gain one Hold that you can spend to ask a character one question. GM characters must answer truthfully. Player characters may deceive you, but you will know they are not telling the truth. You can have up to seven starting Parts. Suggestions: head, arms, legs, body, an outfit, stuffing, hair, favorite color.
- BUILT LIKE A BEAR**: You're an artisan-crafted heirloom stuffed animal. Yeah, you might have a few scuffs and surgical scars, but you're custom-made and built to last. You have a lifetime guarantee! When you roll a 6-, you doubt your origins and wonder if you really are "all new materials." Damage one Part, but gain one Hold that you can spend to divine the history or origin of a person or item. You can have up to eight starting Parts. Suggestions: head, arms, legs, tail, body, an outfit, stuffing, ears, the books you like to read.
- CARNIVAL PRIZE**: You're awesome! You're BIG! And WEIRD! Your seams are hot-glued together! You've got pellets for stuffing! You might not even look like a real creature! When you roll a 6-, your stuffing comes loose and leaves a trail. Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can spend to find your way if you are lost. You can have up to nine starting Parts. Suggestions: head, arms, legs, tail, body, eyes, antennae, ears, stuffing, weird thing (describe it!), carnival barking phrase ("Step right up!" etc.)
- UNHAND ME!**: Don't let the soft fur and big eyes fool anyone—you're one smart cookie-eating monster! When you roll a 6-, you become nostalgic for the days when you told stories instead of living them. Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can spend to entertain a group of Toys by telling a short, amusing story with heroes they identify with. You can have up to eight starting Parts. Suggestions: head, body, eyes, arms, ears, mouth, an outfit, weird things (describe them!), a bad habit.
- I'M "REAL"**: Whether you remember or not (and many choose to forget!), you were deeply, unfathomably loved, once upon a time. You were so beloved, you Awoke before the humans were gone. Your fur is worn bare, you have been restitched by a mother's hands, and you've absorbed a child's tears and laughter in great measure. When you roll a 6-, you remember something from the long-ago past that makes you sad. Damage one Part and gain one Hold that you can use to apply "real world" logic or science to solve a problem. You can have up to six starting Parts. Suggestions: head, limbs, tail, body, stuffing, eyes, a child's name.
- SOFT SCULPTURE**: You are a work of art! Felted or stitched together, you might be too "abstract" for others to appreciate, but you know you're a valuable piece of culture. When you roll a 6-, you sense the line between "art" and "kitch" is a little too close for comfort. Damage one Part and gain one Hold which you can use to know the original value of something you can hold. You can have up to six starting Parts. Suggestions: bobbles, spirals, wings, eyes, mouth, lumps, woobly bits, mashed face, a French accent.

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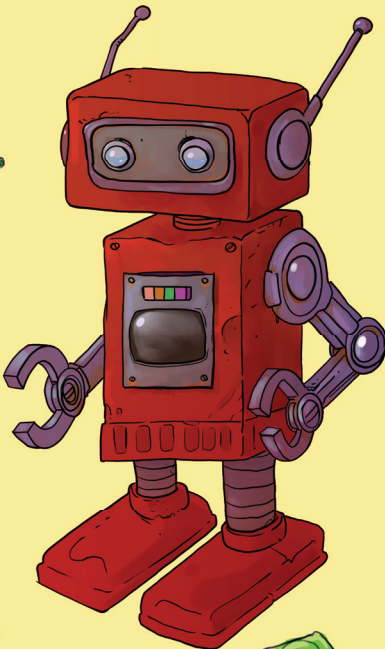
PLUSHIE OR PLASTIC MATE?

With careful stitches and meticulous work, a ragdoll carefully sews back a torn limb on a panda who is crying out his troubles (girl troubles... isn't it always a girl?) while he sips from a daintily painted teacup filled with brandy.

In another room in the shoebox house she calls home, the ragdoll's other patients wait patiently for her craft. A Mekka bulldozer, metal with chipping yellow paint, is missing his front left wheel. He holds a vinyl doll's head, waiting for it to be glued into the empty wheel well. It won't roll quite the same, he knows, but he can live with the handicap until he scavenges a better part.

The ragdoll finishes with her panda patient and wishes him a cheery farewell, tucking his payment (2 buttons and a tiny watch gear) into her skirt pocket. She quickly schools her face to hide her sly, greedy smile when she steps across the threshold to the waiting bulldozer. His repair is going to need glue, and glue is a costly resource, my friend....

Threadbare RPG is a role-playing game in which you play a jury-rigged toy in a broken world. Caught in a world where Entropy is a constant danger, you'll patch yourself up, invent new devices, and maybe make new friends along the way.



Threadbare is a Powered-by-the-Apocalypse role-playing game by Stephanie Bryant. You'll need two 6-sided dice and a group of 2-5 friends to play.

<http://www.threadbarerpg.com>

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