

Game Master Emulator

Create dynamic role-playing adventures without preparation

For use as a supplement for your favorite role-playing games

WM2

Credits

"To help, to continually help
and share, that is the sum
of all knowledge;
that is the meaning of art."

Eleonora Duse

The author extends his heartfelt thanks to those friendly souls who helped make this book come true. Without contributors, playtesters, friends, helpful advice, guidance and criticism, there would be no Mythic.

Art

RyK Productions
To contact RyK, you can send email to info@ryk.nl, or visit their webpage at www.ryk.nl

Playtesters

A host of online and real-time gamers whose names are lost to me now. Sorry. Thanks, even to that guy who hated this game and thought it a waste of time.

Moral Support

My wife, Jennifer, who believes all things are possible. Also, my daughter Ally, just because she's so darn cute.

Technical Support

Apple, for making such an insanely great computer.

Other Forms of Support

Word Mill Publishing, my daytime job.

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Mythic™

Game Master Emulator

Adventure Generator

by Tom Pigeon

Published by Word Mill Publishing

Mythic™ Game Master Emulator

Introduction 5

Chapter 1: Mythic Adventures 6

Chapter 2: The Fate Chart 9

Chapter 3: Randomness 13

Chapter 4: The Adventure 20

Chapter 5: GM Emulation 33

Chapter 6: World Creation 38

Chapter 7: Notes & Suggestions 40

Chapter 8: Extended Example 43

Introduction

Welcome to Mythic: Game Master Emulator, improvisational role-playing using your favorite role-playing games. Mythic: GM Emulator is meant for use by role-players with a little experience under their belts and their favorite game in hand. It is not a stand-alone game. For that, we have Mythic (just Mythic), which is a fully fledged, universal role-playing game. Mythic was published in early 2003 as an attempt to produce an rpg that could be played solo or with a group, minus the game master. Or, with the Game Master, but without preparation.

Judging from the enthusiastic response from those who purchased and played Mythic, the system is a success.

Mythic is really two products in one. It is a universal rpg, and a system for emulating a GM for any role-playing game. Some bought Mythic for both portions, while others use only the emulation system. Recognizing that not everyone wants the universal game sections of Mythic, we are publishing this version that contains only the emulation rules. The system presented here is slightly updated from the original version published in Mythic.

Now, on to the meat of the matter. What is GM emulation? I'm glad you asked ...



What is this thing all about?

Most RPGs operate under the principle that there are players and there is a Game Master, who is responsible for running the show. The GM prepares all the details of an adventure, and then "runs" the players through that adventure. This usually requires a great deal of preparation on the part of the GM and the handling of many details.

Mythic: GME is different in that it requires no preparation from the GM. Mythic adventures are meant to be played off the cuff, with perhaps a few minutes of brainstorming to come up with the opening scene.

Mythic can also be played entirely without a GM. The same mechanics in Mythic that allow a GM to run an adventure without preparation also allow a group of players to do without the GM.

You can think of Mythic as an artificial intelligence. It is designed to use simple rules of logic to answer any yes/no question. So, whether you are playing alone, or acting as an unprepared GM, or are a group of players without a GM, just ask your questions ... only, instead of asking a live GM, you ask Mythic.

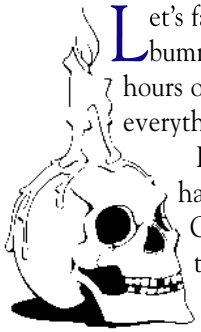
We'll get into this more in a bit. Just you wait and see.

About this book

In each chapter you will find shaded boxes and "torn paper" boxes. The shaded boxes provide examples and clarifications, while the paper boxes offer useful rules. At the back of this book you will find a summary of most of these rules, and other bits of useful information collected for you to find easily.

Chapter 1

Mythic Adventures



Let's face it: The life of a Game Master can be a bummer. There's the weight of responsibility, hours of preparation, and keeping track of everything. And I mean everything!

It's no mystery why most gaming groups have one poor schmuck who acts as the GM every single time. No one else wants to do it. And who would? Actually playing is so much more fun.

With Mythic, you can do away with the GM entirely, if you wish. Or, if your GM enjoys playing God, Mythic can make adventures more fun for the GM by eliminating all of that nasty preparation. In a Mythic adventure, the GM (or players sans GM) can start an evening's entertainment with about five minutes of prep time. As the adventure unfolds, the GM is just as surprised by the twists and turns as the players are.

Fun for everyone.

No GM? What you talkin' 'bout Willis!

Mythic is a gaming system that automates the functions of a living, breathing GM. It works through interpretation and logical principles. (We'll get more into that later. For now, trust me.) The upshot is, with Mythic acting as your GM, that poor schmuck can finally roll up a character and get his hands dirty. It also means you can play solo if you wish (and who hasn't wanted to do that, just once?)

How can such a system be used? Let's see ...

No GM, multiple players

Everyone whip out your character! To get an adventure going, players either roll up or decide on an opening scenario, and perhaps a few details or two, and Mythic: GME takes it from there. All action is decided through the asking of yes/no questions and the application of logical principles. By asking and answering questions, the adventure moves along, with the occasional random event throwing players a curve ball. The action is broken into scenes, just like in a movie, to keep everything straight.

No GM, one player

Mythic: GME can be used to go solo. There have been various solo systems in the past. But let's be honest, none of them are truly satisfying. How many variations of "Choose-Your-Own" can you go through before you start longing for something more? Solo play in Mythic works the same as in group play. You're just alone.

One GM, any number of players

For those who like to be a GM, we have something for you, too. The same tools that allow Mythic to automatically generate adventures on the fly without a GM also work with a GM. This means very little to zero preparation, if you don't want to prepare. Simply create an opening scenario (you can come up with that on the drive over), or roll one up, and follow Mythic as it guides you along. Mythic will throw in its own twists and turns, so the GM will be just as shocked as the players as the adventure proceeds.

This is not to say, though, that total control is taken out of the hands of the GM. The GM is free to break away from the structure that Mythic puts together. If nothing else, Mythic will generate an adventure skeleton that the GM can work with. At the most, Mythic will spin the entire adventure for the GM, whose job will be to administer the process.

Mythic with other RPGs

Mythic: GME generates dynamic, unfolding adventures on the fly. As a GM emulator, Mythic is meant to be played with other role-playing games. Mythic takes the place of the GM, but the main RPG's rules still handle character creation, combat, task resolution and everything it would normally handle. Questions that players would ask the GM are now asked to Mythic, instead.

The write stuff

Finally, Mythic: GME can be used as a writing tool. The architecture that creates dynamic adventures is really an automated story-telling system. It will work just as well without any games or formalized characters attached. Just set the scene, ask some questions, and start writing.

The Importance of Logic and Interpretation

There are two concepts that are central to successfully running a Mythic adventure: logic and interpretation. The entire mechanic for generating adventures on the fly, running without a GM, and making it all work hinge on the proper application of logic and interpretation.

Where logic comes in

Logic is used in Mythic to get an idea of what happens next. This is done by considering what has already occurred, applying whatever new twists have popped up, and deciding what the most logical outcome will be. This expected outcome is usually tested on the Fate Chart to find out which direction it actually goes.

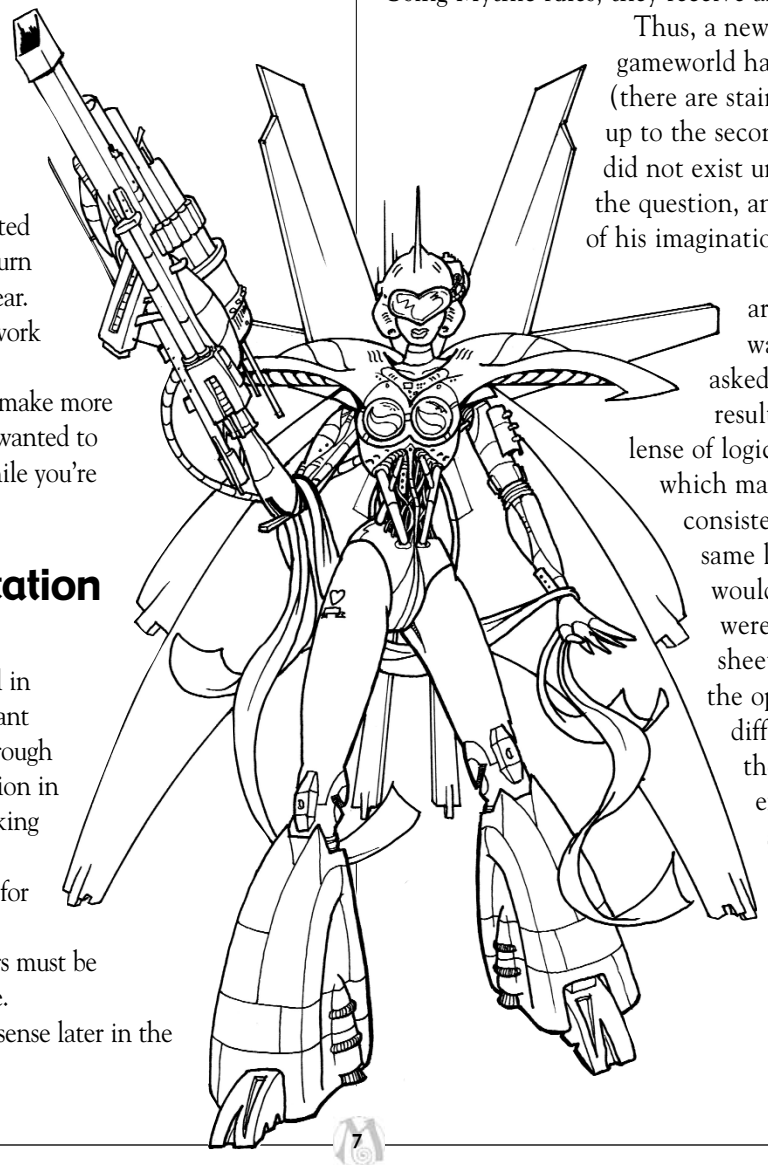
The general rule is, whatever is most logical, that is what is expected to happen. Notice, I say "expected." The story will rarely proceed exactly where you think it will and unexpected events will crop up that will turn your logical adventure on its ear. However, we need a basis to work from and logic provides it.

This harping on logic will make more sense later in the book, but I wanted to hook your mind on it now while you're fresh.

Where interpretation comes in

Just as all things are logical in Mythic, all answers to important questions are arrived upon through interpretation. Most information in Mythic comes through the asking of simple yes/no questions. Mythic provides a framework for providing general answers to these questions. These answers must be interpreted, logically of course.

This, too, will make more sense later in the book.



Improvisation

I'm going to throw a bonus concept for you. In addition to logic and interpretation, improvisation is Mythic's third linchpin that makes it all work. Think about our claims for a moment: you can play without any preparation and without a GM. Huh?!

Logic dictates what happens next, interpretation decides what exactly logic is talking about, and improvisation is the glue that fills in the holes and keeps it all together.

Improvisation comes from the players usually in the form of questions. A player can ask any question, and the answer will change the course of the adventure, perhaps in ways the player hadn't even guessed. But it's the asking of questions that moves events along, and those questions are derived improvisationally.

For instance, the players' characters are standing in the foyer of an ancient, abandoned mansion. They know only that the place is musty and decayed, but must have once been a very spacious and beautiful house. A player asks, "Are there stairs going up to the second floor?" Using Mythic rules, they receive an answer of "yes."

Thus, a new detail about the gameworld has been established (there are stairs in the foyer leading up to the second floor). This detail did not exist until the player asked the question, and the question was out of his imagination, improvised.

All details in Mythic are generated in just this way. Questions are asked, dice are rolled, the results are viewed through a lense of logic and interpretation, which maintains the world's consistency and gives it the same logical solidity as it would possess as if there were a living GM with sheets full of data running the operation. The only difference is that details of the game world do not exist until a player specifically asks for them. The end result, however, is the same.

Chapter 2

The Fate Chart



The Fate Chart is the heart of Mythic. Everything that happens in a Mythic adventure is resolved by forming a yes/no question. The logic of that question is then applied to the Fate Chart, which gives a percentage probability of a "yes" answer. The results are either yes, no, exceptionally yes or exceptionally no. The players then interpret the results to fit logically into the adventure. All questions are resolved in this manner, from determining the contents of a room to finding out who the villain really is.

Questions, Questions

All action is moved along in Mythic by asking yes/no questions. Are there monsters in the room? Is the door locked? Is it raining today?

Normally, such questions would be asked to a Game Master who is keeping track of such details. In a Mythic adventure, the GM can be replaced; the rules of Mythic are designed to answer all questions put to it and in a logical manner, as long as they are phrased as a yes/no question.

A glance at the next page will show you the Fate Chart. Along the left side are probability descriptors (impossible, likely, a sure thing, etc.) and along the bottom are "Chaos Ranks." Chaos is tracked throughout the adventure to represent how out of control the situation is becoming. The higher the chaos, the greater your chances of a yes response to a question, which usually means more action. By referencing odds on the left with chaos along the bottom, the Fate Chart gives you the percentage chance of your question being a "yes."

When a player asks a question, the next step is to determine what you think the odds are of that question being a yes. This is a totally subjective value, as you can see from the odds listed on the left. Your choices start in the middle at 50/50. These are good odds to pick if you really think there is a 50% chance of getting a yes, or when you have no idea of the probability. Additional choices range upward with Somewhat likely, Likely, Very likely, Near sure thing, A sure thing, and Has to be. Odds range downwards from 50/50 with Unlikely, Very unlikely, No way, and Impossible.

The descriptive nature of the odds makes it simple to determine because you can use everyday language. Are the odds of the roulette table turning up black 50/50? Is it very likely to rain? Is there just no way that a key will be under the doormat?

You may wonder at the Impossible and Has to be odds. After all, if it's impossible, it can't happen, right? Not necessarily. In fictional worlds, even the seemingly impossible can occur, and the Fate Chart keeps the door open for that possibility. For instance, a character has died. Thus, the odds of the man standing at the door being that dead character are impossible. This doesn't mean that it can't actually happen, as the impossible happens all the time in movies and books. As far as the characters are concerned, however, it is impossible.

So, who makes the determination of the odds? If you are playing with a GM, he makes this decision. If you are not, then the group of players must come to a consensus. If you cannot decide, then the group must average their opinions and take the closest description.

A word of caution here, however: don't take forever. Decide quickly, and move on. Go with the odds that seem right, but don't wrack your brain too much.

For example: The players are leading their characters, a trio of old-west cowboys, through a canyon as they search for a band of escaping bank robbers. One of the players is nervous of an ambush, so he asks the question, "Are there cliffs above us where they could ambush us from?" The player who asks the question thinks the odds are very likely, while the other players think the odds are only likely. They decide, democratically, since 2 out of 3 think it's likely, then likely will be the odds.

You have your question and you have your odds. Now it's time to consult the Fate Chart. Cross reference the odds with the current chaos score (we'll get into the chaos rank a little later) for your probability of a "yes" answer to the question. Roll 1D100 and compare it to this value. If you roll within the value, then the answer is "yes." If you roll above, then the answer is "no."

By rolling very low, or very high, you can achieve exceptional results. These are the little numbers to the left and right of the larger, percentage numbers. Rolling equal to or less than the left number is an exceptional yes, rolling equal to or higher than the right number is an exceptional no.

You'll notice that some numbers are negative, while others go above 100. These results are virtually a guaranteed "no" or "yes." However, you still must roll to see if an exceptional result occurs.

Fate Chart

To use this chart, cross reference the odds of a question resulting in a "yes" answer with the current chaos rank. The result is the percentage chance of the question resulting in a "yes" answer. A roll within the range of the number on the left is an "exceptional yes" and equal or more than the number on the right is an "exceptional no."

Odds	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Impossible	10 50 91	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82	0 0 81	0 0 81	0 -20 77
No way	15 75 96	10 50 91	7 35 88	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82	0 0 81
Very unlikely	16 85 97	13 65 94	10 50 91	9 45 90	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82
Unlikely	18 90 99	15 75 96	11 55 92	10 50 91	7 35 88	4 20 85	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82
50/50	19 95 100	16 85 97	15 75 96	13 65 94	10 50 91	7 35 88	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83
Somewhat likely	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	16 80 97	13 65 94	10 50 91	9 45 90	5 25 86	4 20 85
Likely	20 100 0	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	15 75 96	11 55 92	10 50 91	7 35 88	5 25 86
Very likely	21 105 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	15 75 96	13 65 94	10 50 91	9 45 90
Near sure thing	23 115 0	20 100 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 80 97	15 75 96	11 55 92	10 50 91
A sure thing	25 125 0	22 110 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	16 80 97	13 65 94	11 55 92
Has to be	26 145 0	26 130 0	20 100 0	20 100 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	16 80 97
Exceptional Yes The lower 1/5 of the success range.	**9**	**8**	**7**	**6**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Exceptional No The upper 1/5 of the failure range.	**Chaos Rank**								

More information, please

Since you are using Mythic with another game system, that other system will likely have a mechanic for handling such situations as combat and task resolution. Mythic, on the other hand, will flesh out the game-world itself. Since Mythic adventures can be played without a GM, the only source of information about the world around you is through yes/no questioning.

The most common questions, then, will be questions seeking more detail about adventure surroundings. Are there exits in this room? Are there more than three goons? Do the thieves have a getaway car ready? Does the newspaper run a story on my character's successful rescue operation?

Often, general information about the world around your characters is enough. You know that the hall continues straight on, but you don't bother to ask what kind of stone you feel underfoot. The players can ask the question, of course, if they think it is important. However, the point is, the level of detail is up to you.

Sometimes, of course, details are very important. For instance, the character may be a fantasy warrior who has rounded a corner in a cavern and encountered an ogre. Before the warrior commits himself to combat, he asks a few questions. Such as: Is the ogre armed? Is he surprised to see me? Do I see friends of his behind him down the hall?

These are questions that are easily and quickly answered using the Fate Chart. The answer is either yes or no, and a few quick questions will tell this player all he needs to know before he decides to attack or run.

The influence of Chaos on Questions

You will find out about Chaos, and how it effects a Mythic adventure, in the adventure chapter. For now, you need to know that you will keep track of a chaos factor ranging from 1 to 9. The higher the number, the more likely a "yes" answer is and more unexpected events occur.

Can't find the page!

Another way to use the Fate Chart is to come up with quick resolutions to a situation when you are not sure what the actual rules are. You may know that the rpg you are using has a mechanic to deal with character's drowning in quicksand, but you can't find it in the rule book no matter how many pages you flip.

To keep things moving, you could simply use the yes/no mechanic of the Fate Chart as a fill-in to adjudicate rules on the spot.

Of course, you could take this all the way and play an entire role-playing game using nothing but the Fate Chart. It would make for a very rules-light way to play, but it would work.

When to roll, when to make it up

Should you use the Fate Chart to answer every question? "Is the sun shining today? Does the taxi driver say 'Hi'? Do I have exact change in my wallet?"

No. Please.

Don't use the Fate Chart for every question; your characters will never get out the front door. If the question is not important to the adventure, then just use good old-fashioned logic and don't bother rolling. If there is confusion as to the most logical answer, then go ahead and use the chart.

Much of the color of your adventure will come from the logical answers that were fleshed out by prior Fate Chart questions. Maybe you did roll to see if the taxi driver says "Hi." He doesn't. Later, when characters talk to him to get news of local happenings, he is less likely to be chatty, as we have already established that he is not very friendly. Knowing this about him will change the odds of future questions concerning his actions.

In this way, the logical chain of events builds upon itself, shaping the entire structure of the adventure. Keeping past events and logic in mind also cuts down on the number of rolls required on the Fate Chart. The more information you already possess, the less you have to ask of the chart.

On the other hand, sometimes one question on the Fate Chart is not enough to clarify a situation. It may take yet another question to figure out what the original answer meant.

For instance: "I open the door and enter the room. Is it empty?" The answer: No. Well, if it's not empty, what's in it? At this point, you can either use logic, or ask another question to clarify. If your character has been chasing a monster through a catacomb, it makes logical sense that the monster is in the room, cornered. However, if you're not sure of this, then you could ask a question like, "Is the monster I've been chasing in here?"

To keep the frequency of questions down, and encourage logical thinking, try and ask a question in such a way that you will only need one question on the Fate Chart to answer it. Or, at most, two questions. That should be enough information for logic to take over from there.

For instance, a pair of occult investigators creep through a graveyard at midnight, searching for the walking dead. They

Sample Questions and Answers

"My character parachutes out of the plane. He tries to land in an open field. Does he make it safely?"
Yes: Yep.
No: He lands in the field, but hurts himself.
Exceptional Yes: He lands without a problem, and very quickly.
Exceptional No: He misses the field entirely and crashes into the forest. He hurts himself, badly.

"Do I succeed in running into the house and slamming the door shut before the vampire pounces on me?"
Yes: 'nuff said.
No: You make it to the door, then he pounces on you.
Exceptional Yes: You make it to the door in double time, shut it, lock it, and have a few seconds to spare.
Exceptional No: You trip and fall, never making it close to the door. Not only does the vampire pounce on you, but let's see if you're hurt by the fall, too.

"As I walk through the dark hall, I listen carefully. Do I hear any sounds?"
Yes: You hear something, but you don't know what yet.
No: All is silent.
Exceptional Yes: You hear something very loud, perhaps very sudden. It may take another question to figure out what it is.
Exceptional No: All is silent. There is no appropriate exceptional result, so this remains the same as a simple no.

"I want to get into the house. Is there a set of keys under the door mat, by chance?"
Yes: Your lucky day.
No: No.
Exceptional Yes: No, but when you try the door, it's unlocked.
Exceptional No: Heck, there's not even a door mat.

inspect a mausoleum, checking to see if the entrance has been opened lately. One of the players asks, "Do we hear anything?" Yes. "Does it sound like something scrambling inside?" No. "Does it sound like someone walking through the graveyard?" No. "Is it something flying through the air?" No.

This player is hitting a run of no answers and apparently plans on continuing to ask until he gets a positive answer. He could have stopped after the second question, "Does it sound like something scrambling inside?" We already know that they hear something, and it's not coming from inside the mausoleum. They could simply use logic at this point to say they hear something outside, in the graveyard. A shuffling sound, perhaps. Or something too faint to identify. Going the logic route after two questions yields an answer that the players should be able to work with.

Of course, if you really want to, you can keep asking more questions. I find, however, that setting the one to two question maximum automatically stops players from asking a series of detailed questions; they get to the Big Picture much faster.

Summary of How to Use the Fate Chart

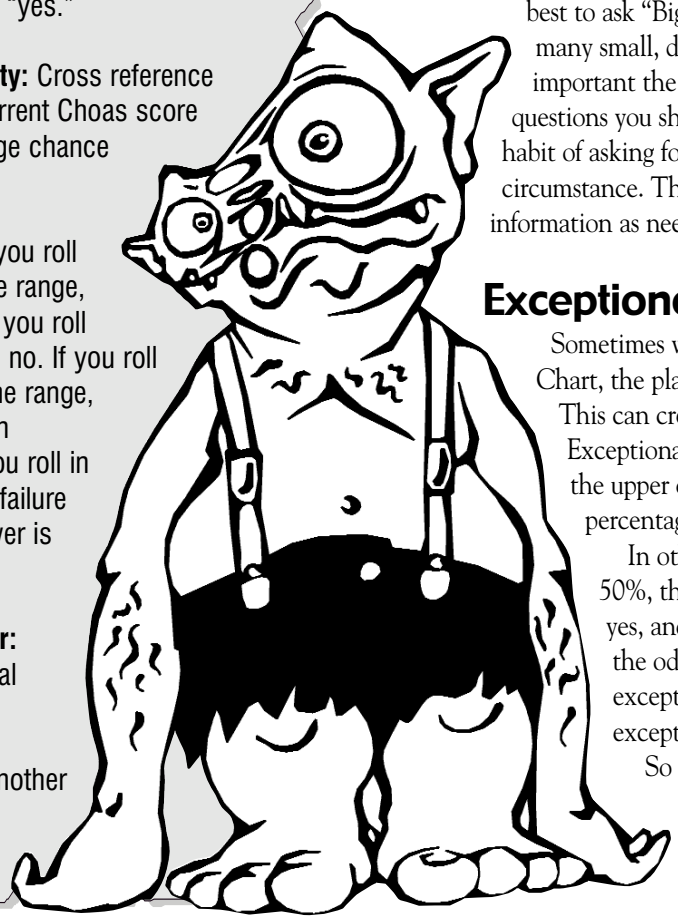
1: State a question: Form a yes/no question.

2: Determine odds: Estimate the odds of the question coming out "yes."

3: Determine probability: Cross reference the odds with the current Choas score to get your percentage chance of a "yes" answer.

4: Roll: Roll 1D100. If you roll within the percentage range, the answer is yes. If you roll above, the answer is no. If you roll in the lower 1/5 of the range, then the answer is an exceptional yes. If you roll in the upper 1/5 of the failure range, then the answer is an exceptional no.

5: Interpret the answer: Draw the most logical conclusion from the results. If this is not possible, then ask another question to clarify, returning to step 1.



The art of interpretation

Using the Fate Chart to find your percentage chance of success is only the beginning. Next, someone must roll some dice and see if the answer is "yes" or "no." It is up to the GM, or the players if there is no GM, to figure out what the answer really means.

Interpretation is an important part of Mythic. Again, logic must prevail. Whatever seems the most logical answer, given the circumstances, is the result.

Sometimes interpretations will come easily. If the question was, "I open the desk drawer. Is there a gun inside?" A no answer is simple enough, and a yes means there is indeed a gun in the desk. It doesn't say what kind of gun, but a logical assumption would be a common handgun.

After interpreting the Fate Chart result, if the players wish, they can try to clarify the answer further with more questions. "Is the gun a glock? Is it loaded? Is there extra ammunition in the desk?"

Eventually, players learn to ask the right questions. It is best to ask "Big Picture" questions, rather than many small, detail questions. The more important the situation, the more detailed questions you should ask, but don't get in the habit of asking for excruciating detail in every circumstance. The point is to gather only as much information as needed to make a logical decision.

Exceptional results

Sometimes when a roll is made on the Fate Chart, the player will roll very high or very low. This can create an exceptional result. Exceptionals occur when a roll is made in the upper or lower 20% (one-fifth) of the percentage range given.

In other words, if the odds of a yes are 50%, then a roll of 1-10 is an exceptional yes, and a 91-100 is an exceptional no. If the odds are 80%, then a 1-16 is an exceptional yes, and a 97-100 is an exceptional no.

So you don't have to work out the exceptional values for yourself every time, the Fate Chart lists the lower and upper ranges

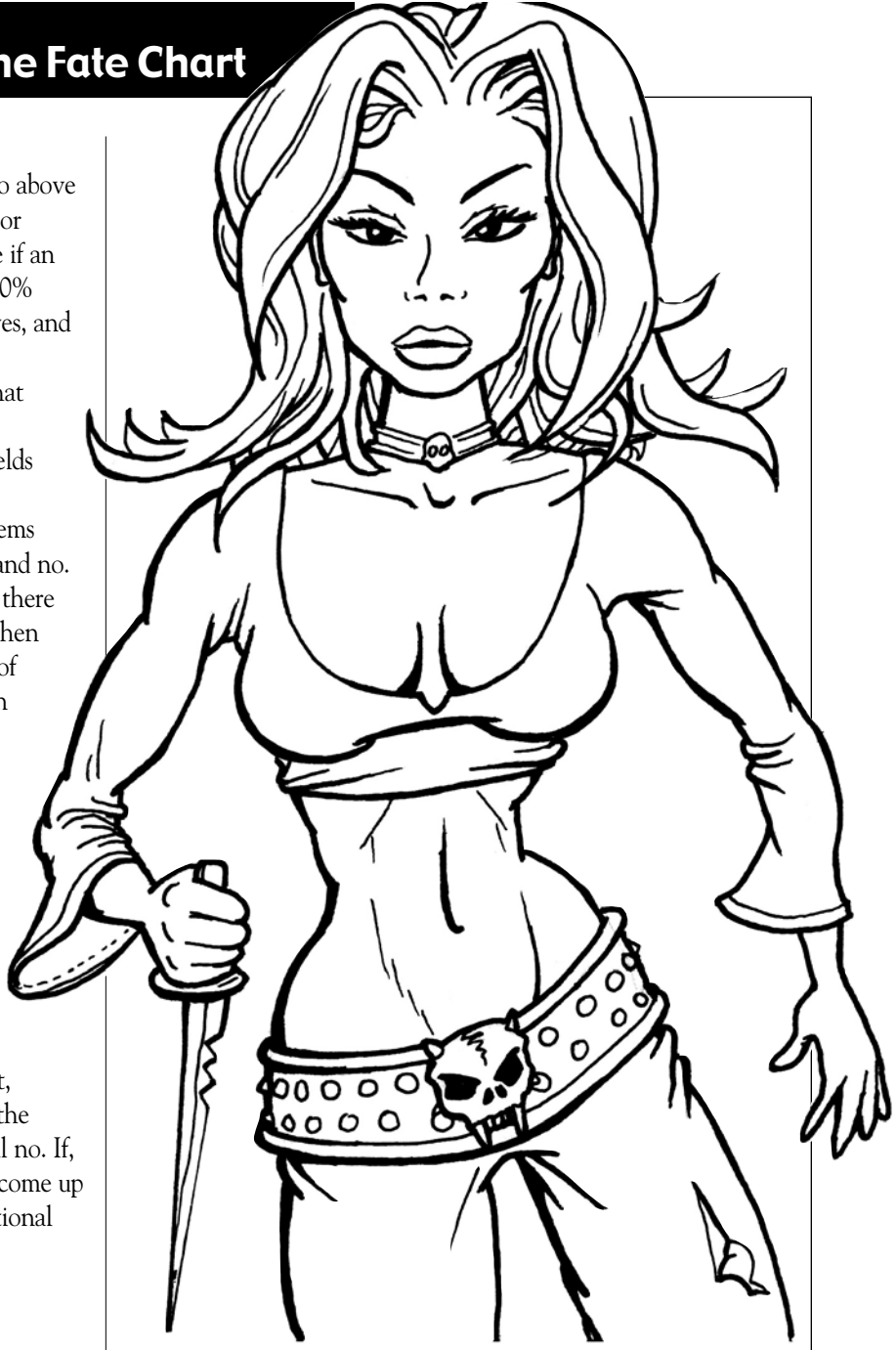
beside each percentage chance for success.

You'll notice on the Fate Chart that some values go above 100 and some below 0. These are cases where success or failure is assured. However, you still need to roll to see if an exceptional result occurs. For instance, if there is a 120% chance of a yes, then a roll of 1-24 is an exceptional yes, and the rest is a normal yes.

What exactly is an exceptional result? Well, just that ... exceptional. Usually, you can double or halve the normal result, or determine that an exceptional no yields the opposite of what you wanted. As with all else in Mythic, you must use judgement and go with what seems most logical, but exceptional results are the ideal yes and no. For instance, if the question was, "I open the chest, is there treasure inside?" and the result is an exceptional yes, then you may decide that the chest contains a huge horde of gold, or perhaps a special item your character has been searching for. Had the result been an exceptional no, then you may decide that not only is the chest empty, but it is trapped as well to catch unwary treasure hunters.

Some questions may be so cut and dried that exceptional results seem silly. In those cases, ignore the exceptional result and just treat it as a plain yes or no.

For instance, a player may ask, "Is the car locked?" A yes or a no answer is pretty clear. What would an exceptional yes or no mean? If it's important, perhaps it means the car is unlocked and the key's in the ignition. Or, maybe it just means the same as a normal no. If, after rolling an exceptional result, the players cannot come up with a result right away that makes sense in an exceptional way, then just treat it as a normal yes or no.



How (not) to cheat

Whether players are asking questions to a GM, or they are playing without a GM and are handling the questions themselves, Mythic relies on the asking and answering of questions to move the adventure along. Since any yes/no question is allowed, the setting is ripe for abuse.

Of course, you are free to play any way you wish. But if a power-gamer is playing with a group of role-players, they may not appreciate the carefully worded questions designed to elicit the most desired response from the Fate Chart.

As a general rule, a question should only be asked if it makes logical sense. A party of adventurers prowling down a dungeon hall may very well ask, "Do we hear anything?" However, it would make little sense to ask, "Do I look down and see a Vorpal Blade of Instant Murder at my feet?"

Also, players should discourage each other from twisting their questions to take advantage of system mechanics. For instance, when the Chaos Factor is high, there is a greater likelihood of odds questions coming out yes. Knowing this, they could always ask their question in the negative. For instance, "There are no monsters in this hall, right?"

This could all be turned on its ear if the players decide to intentionally play a comedy adventure, trying to get as ridiculous as possible. This can be a lot of fun, especially if you try to push the system into answering oddball questions. But as a general rule you should keep your questions in the realm of good sense.

Chapter 3

Randomness

Logic is poor at one thing: coming up with surprises. Taking this into account, Mythic builds random events into the adventure so everything doesn't make too much sense. In an adventure that is guided by players' questions and expectations, randomness will add extra dimension to the action, spinning plot twists you may never have thought of before.

Random events can occur at two times during a Mythic adventure: when a scene is first generated (see the next chapter) and when a question is asked on the Fate Chart.

Scene random events

These are unexpected twists that derail the characters assumptions and create new, surprise scenes. As you will find in the next chapter, Mythic adventures are broken into scenes, just like a movie, and scenes are generated from the player's expectations. After the players express what they think the next scene will be, however, they must roll to see if that concept is altered. Sometimes the scene will begin as expected, sometimes it will be changed slightly, and sometimes a random event will create an entirely new, unexpected scene.

This is described more fully in chapter 4.

Fate Chart random events

This is the most common type of random event. Whenever a question is asked on the Fate Chart there is the possibility of a random event occurring. The event does not have to be linked to the question in any way. In fact, the question should be resolved first, and then the random event generated, just to keep everything straight.

When a fate question is asked, and 1D100 is rolled, if a double number is obtained (i.e. 11, 22, 33, 44, etc.), then a random event may have occurred. If this number (the single digit, 1 for 11, 2 for 22, etc.) is equal to or less than the chaos factor (another mechanic covered in the next chapter), then something random happens.

For instance, if the player rolled a 55 to a question, and the chaos factor was 8, then a random event takes place. If chaos was below 5, however, nothing would occur.

Random Events

Random events can throw unexpected twists into the adventure, keeping the adventure fresh and exciting. Mythic adventures are guided by logic, which maintains the structure and continuity of events, but random events will lead the adventure places that logic cannot. This is where surprises pop up and the story can take twists that no one would have expected.

Once it has been determined that a random event has occurred, you must figure out what happens. There are three components to a random event: context, focus, and meaning.

Event context

"Context" is everything that has gone on in the adventure up to this point. The adventure itself, and all that has happened in the adventure, is the context. When generating a random event, the focus and meaning of the event should be shaped by the context of what has already happened. The random event isn't happening in a vacuum; all that has already occurred is the stage on which this new event takes place.

For instance, if the characters are spies sneaking through a Russian castle, looking for stolen plans to a military satellite, any new random events generated will have some relation to this adventure scenario. If they generate a random event that implies something negative happens to one of the characters, perhaps he is spotted by a guard or he drops his gun down a stairwell.

To say that you must consider the context of the adventure before judging a random event may seem like common sense, but sometimes even good sense bears repeating. Keeping the context of the adventure in mind will help you make the logical leap to a satisfying resolution of the random event.

Event focus

Keeping the context of a random event in mind helps frame the possibilities of what can happen. Next, you establish where the action of that event is focused. This is done by using the event focus table.

Roll 1D100 on the event focus table. This tells you what aspect of the adventure the random event directly impacts. For instance, the event may directly effect a player character or it might introduce a new, non-player character. Apply the result to the events that are currently going on in the adventure, the context. This will require interpretation, but usually a clear meaning will present itself. The next step, event meaning, will provide the final piece you need to determine the random event. We'll get to that in a moment.

Following are explanations of the various results of the event focus table:

Event Focus Table

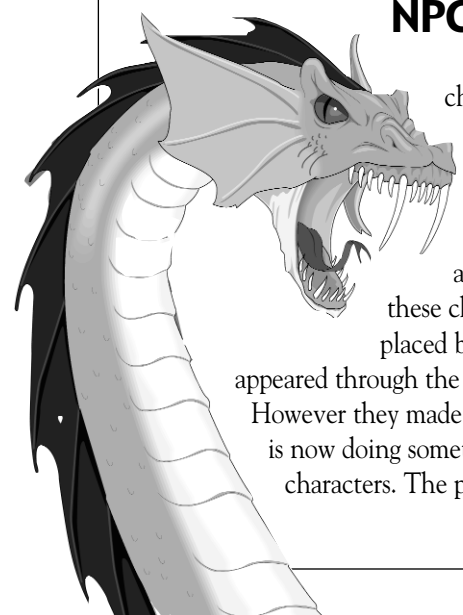
1-7	Remote event
8-28	NPC action
29-35	Introduce a new NPC
36-45	Move toward a thread
46-52	Move away from a thread
53-55	Close a thread
56-67	PC negative
68-75	PC positive
76-83	Ambiguous event
84-92	NPC negative
93-100	NPC positive

Remote Event

Something important has happened that bears on the adventure, but the player characters were not present when the event occurred, they only learn about it remotely. This can result in many ways, from a non-player character telling them some piece of news, to coming across evidence of this other event. For instance, the players may encounter the dead body of a NPC previously met in the adventure. The remote event here is the murder of this character, which the player characters did not directly witness. Or, the characters may wander into a tavern and learn by word of mouth that the enemy hordes have advanced, destroying the next town down the road. Again, they are receiving the news second hand.

A remote event can either by implied or directly stated. In the case of the dead body, the characters only know that the poor chap was killed somehow. In the tavern example, they do not see the advancing hordes, they are only told about it. Both cases count as remote events.

If you are playing your adventure cinematically (see the adventure chapter), then your next scene may be a flashback to this remote event. This will allow the players to role-play the event, adding more tension to the adventure. If you are taking a simulation approach to the adventure, then the players will have to figure out what happened on their own.



NPC Action

An existing non-player character makes a surprise action. These are characters who populate the game world other than the player characters themselves. If you are playing with a GM, some of these characters may have been placed by him. Or, they may have appeared through the normal course of adventuring. However they made it onto the scene, one of them is now doing something that impacts the player characters. The players roll a random character from the character list (see the adventure chapter). There may be any number of NPCs on the list, so just roll a die closest to the total number. For instance, if there are five total NPCs in your game, roll a 1d6 (rerolling if a 6 is rolled) to find the NPC in question.

The next step, event meaning, will help determine what this character actually does. In many cases, when compared to the adventure context, obvious character actions will spring to mind. If one of the characters on the list, for instance, is an assassin, a random action associated with that character may likely involve someone's attempted murder. Or, if the NPC is an ally of the player characters, maybe he shows up just in time to save their lives.

Introduce a New NPC

A brand new face is involved in the adventure. This may be someone the player characters had expected to meet, or a surprise. Either way, this new character is important to the overall adventure and will be added to the character list when the scene is over. The character's appearance will likely be combined with an action of some sort. The nature of this action will come clearer after the next step, event meaning. Determining the meaning will also help figure out just who this NPC is.

The character does not need to be an individual but can be any entity capable of independent action, such as an organized group of townspeople or a government agency.

For example, the characters may be fantasy heroes exploring a cavern. The players come up with a random event and it turns out to be a new character. They determine that the heroes come across a troll wandering the cavern. If the characters kill the troll in this encounter, then that would be the last of that character. However, if the troll escapes, or if they flee from the troll, then the monster may appear again later in the adventure. After this first encounter the troll is no longer a "new" character and

would be added to the character list at the end of the scene. On the other hand, the characters may come across an entire colony of goblins. In this case the character is not a single creature but an entire population. This "character," perhaps entitled "goblin colony" on the character list, would be a persistent character throughout the rest of the adventure, capable of popping up at any time.

Move toward a thread

Threads are the goals that player characters are going after. These are the unresolved missions that the players are trying to solve. There could be more than one thread in an adventure, some big and important while others of less consequence. The next chapter will go more into theads.

This random event has something to do directly with resolving an open thread. If there are more than one, then randomly determine which thread it is. Other random events from the event focus table can also involve a thread, but not necessarily. This random event is directly related to the thread, and should offer the characters an opportunity to step closer to solving the thread.

For instance, the characters may be pulp-era treasure hunters exploring an Egyptian pyramid. One thread is, "Find the ancient tomb of Ank-Tonen." They roll up a random event involving this thread. They determine that they run across an inscription on the wall that talks of the tomb, but warns that the halls are guarded by deadly traps.

Whatever the event is, however, it is helpful to the characters in their aim of solving the thread.

Move away from a thread

Just as the previous random event will help player characters solve an open thread, this random event will make it harder. Perhaps the thread they are trying to resolve is, "Find the escaped criminal." The characters have been tracking him through a jungle, following a trail of footsteps. Suddenly, this random event comes up, and the players determine that it means the trail has disappeared.

This event makes resolving the thread a little more difficult, but not necessarily impossible. The elimination of a thread is handled in the next random event focus and, of course, through normal role-play.

As before, if there are more than one thread, then randomly determine which thread it is.

Close a thread

The random event is so important it actually closes an open thread. If there are multiple threads open, then randomly determine which one it is. To close a thread, the thread is either resolved or the issue goes away. For instance, in the case of our adventurers hunting down the criminal, the thread could be resolved by them coming upon him while he sleeps at his camp. Or, maybe they encounter his mangled dead body. Either way, the thread of "track down the escaped criminal" has been resolved.

Figure out what the most logical way to immediately close the thread would be. The next step, event meaning, will help.

Summary of Resolving Random Events

1) Determine event focus.

2) Determine event meaning (the action and subject).

3) Interpret the random event based on context, focus and meaning. Take the most logical conclusion.

Player Character/NPC Negative or Positive

Something bad, or good, happens to a player character, or non-player character, whichever is indicated on the event focus table. If there is more than one player character or NPC then randomly determine who the subject is. The event meaning will help determine what happens although logical ideas should begin springing to mind. These can be major, or minor, events. Perhaps the slumbering monster in the chamber awakens and attacks the poor, chosen character. Or, maybe while hiking through the desert the character discovers that the only food he has packed is beef jerky. He hates beef jerky.

This can be a very vague event focus, so you will have to rely much upon the event context and event meaning. All this focus tells you is who is directly effected, and if the effect is good or bad.

Ambiguous event

All of the random events previously mentioned have a direct impact on the adventure and the player characters. They are helped, they are hindered, they get closer to their goals or further away. Each has a direct story consequence.

The random event of "ambiguous event," however, is meant to encompass everything else that can happen. This is a catchall category for anything that does not directly

impact characters or NPCs. The event is not necessarily bad or good. The event can be important, but often it is more atmospheric to the scene. For instance, perhaps a chill wind blows and a few dark clouds can be seen in the sky ... portents of future rain. Or, while examining a house, the characters come across a photograph of several people. Is this a clue or just junk? They don't know.

A habit can develop while generating random events for every event to have Earth-shattering importance. This random event focus offers you the opportunity to inject less important elements or even comedy elements into your adventure.

The ambiguous event can be the hardest random event to interpret because of its ... well, ambiguity. Adventure context doesn't matter so much since the ambiguous event may have nothing to do with the course of the adventure.

Often, the easiest way to interpret this event is to generate the event meaning and then take the first thing that springs to mind, even if it's a little odd. For instance, the characters may be walking through a cave when an ambiguous event is called for. The players determine that there is a strange symbol scrawled on the wall in red paint. They have no idea what the symbol means, if anything, or if it's important. It's just there.

Event meaning

After the focus of the event has been determined it's time to figure out the general gist of what the event means. This step is to help the players interpret the random event, putting a spin on the context and focus. By combining the event focus with the event meaning, and taking the most logical conclusion based on the context, an easy interpretation should spring to mind.

The event meaning is derived by rolling 1d100 on the event action table and 1d100 on the event subject table. This gives you a simple two word sentance, basically, that should tell you something.

Some of the meanings given may seem to duplicate results of the event focus table. That's fine; just read it all together and see what you come up with. For instance, a few of the event meanings imply the actions of people. You can take this to apply to existing characters, if it seems appropriate, or introduce a new character. You can do this even though you didn't roll up "Introduce new NPC" from the event focus table.

The important thing is to let the event meaning lend "spin" to the context and focus of the event. Just go with whatever makes the most sense.

For instance, let's say the characters are spacefarers on a futuristic starship. They get a PC positive random event. Checking the event meaning tables, they come up with "adversity business." The PC's current goal, or his "business," is piloting the ship. The players determine that an adversity comes up in the course of his flying: they come across a massive asteroid field that may be difficult to pass through.

If combining the two words sounds odd to you, try adding the word "of" in between to see if it sounds clearer. For instance, if you rolled "failure" and "a plot" as the action and subject, you could read that to be "failure of a plot."

Interpreting the final event

The result given from the event meaning charts is a brief, and vague, description. It is up to the players to interpret what it means when combined with the event focus and context. Often, a meaning that fits nicely into what is currently happening will jump out. If not, then take the most logical interpretation that comes to mind.

If you're stumped, or several meanings come up, you can ask a fate question or two to clarify the meaning.

For instance: The characters are far-future explorers examining the ruins of an alien civilization. That's the context. They roll up a random event, and determine the focus is a player character negative. Checking the event meaning charts, they get, "violate possessions." Hmmm, they're not sure what this means and a ready interpretation is not jumping to mind. To clarify, one of the players asks, "Do I find that something I brought along is missing?" The Fate Chart answers yes. Then they ask, "Is my gun missing?" Again, yes.

All of these elements, combined with logic and interpretation, give a virtually endless stream of possibilities for random events. Do not feel too constrained by the results of the focus and meaning tables. These are meant as guides to lead you to interpretations. Feel free to bend and twist the results until they fit a logical interpretation, although you should take the most logical interpretation instead of just taking the interpretation that most benefits your characters.

The 'I dunno' rule

When using Mythic and the randomness rules there will come times when you follow the rules, perform each step, and are left wondering, "What does all of this mean?" The clues offered by the meaning, context and focus should suggest an immediate meaning to the random event. Generally, whatever occurs to you first, and seems the best fit, is what you go with.

But what if nothing comes to mind? Or, it's taking too long?

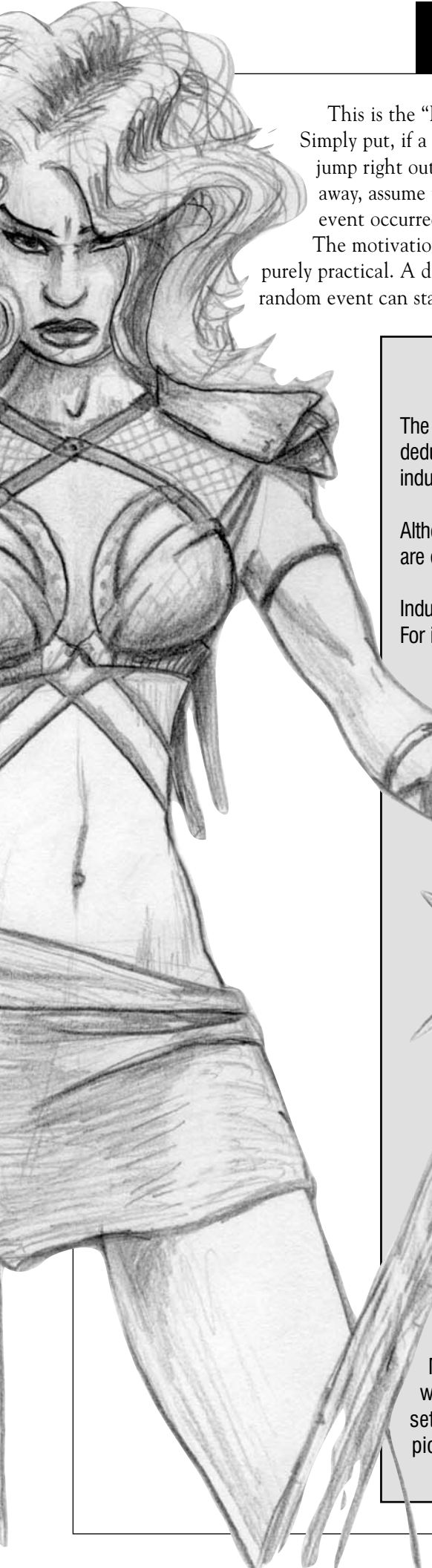
Then forget it.

Event Meaning: Action

1. Attainment
2. Starting
3. Neglect
4. Fight
5. Recruit
6. Triumph
7. Violate
8. Oppose
9. Malice
10. Communicate
11. Persecute
12. Increase
13. Decrease
14. Abandon
15. Gratify
16. Inquire
17. Antagonise
18. Move
19. Waste
20. Truce
21. Release
22. Befriend
23. Judge
24. Desert
25. Dominate
26. Procrastinate
27. Praise
28. Separate
29. Take
30. Break
31. Heal
32. Delay
33. Stop
34. Lie
35. Return
36. Immitate
37. Struggle
38. Inform
39. Bestow
40. Postpone
41. Expose
42. Haggle
43. Imprison
44. Release
45. Celebrate
46. Develop
47. Travel
48. Block
49. Harm
50. Debase
51. Overindulge
52. Adjourn
53. Adversity
54. Kill
55. Disrupt
56. Usurp
57. Create
58. Betray
59. Agree
60. Abuse
61. Oppress
62. Inspect
63. Ambush
64. Spy
65. Attach
66. Carry
67. Open
68. Carelessness
69. Ruin
70. Extravagance
71. Trick
72. Arrive
73. Propose
74. Divide
75. Refuse
76. Mistrust
77. Deceive
78. Cruelty
79. Intolerance
80. Trust
81. Excitement
82. Activity
83. Assist
84. Care
85. Negligence
86. Passion
87. Work hard
88. Control
89. Attract
90. Failure
91. Pursue
92. Vengeance
93. Proceedings
94. Dispute
95. Punish
96. Guide
97. Transform
98. Overthrow
99. Oppress
100. Change

Event Meaning: Subject

1. Goals
2. Dreams
3. Environment
4. Outside
5. Inside
6. Reality
7. Allies
8. Enemies
9. Evil
10. Good
11. Emotions
12. Opposition
13. War
14. Peace
15. The innocent
16. Love
17. The spiritual
18. The intellectual
19. New ideas
20. Joy
21. Messages
22. Energy
23. Balance
24. Tension
25. Friendship
26. The physical
27. A project
28. Pleasures
29. Pain
30. Possessions
31. Benefits
32. Plans
33. Lies
34. Expectations
35. Legal matters
36. Bureaucracy
37. Business
38. A path
39. News
40. Exterior factors
41. Advice
42. A plot
43. Competition
44. Prison
45. Illness
46. Food
47. Attention
48. Success
49. Failure
50. Travel
51. Jealousy
52. Dispute
53. Home
54. Investment
55. Suffering
56. Wishes
57. Tactics
58. Stalemate
59. Randomness
60. Misfortune
61. Death
62. Disruption
63. Power
64. A burden
65. Intrigues
66. Fears
67. Ambush
68. Rumor
69. Wounds
70. Extravagance
71. A representative
72. Adversities
73. Opulence
74. Liberty
75. Military
76. The mundane
77. Trials
78. Masses
79. Vehicle
80. Art
81. Victory
82. Dispute
83. Riches
84. Status quo
85. Technology
86. Hope
87. Magic
88. Illusions
89. Portals
90. Danger
91. Weapons
92. Animals
93. Weather
94. Elements
95. Nature
96. The public
97. Leadership
98. Fame
99. Anger
100. Information



This is the "I Dunno" rule. Simply put, if a meaning does not jump right out at you, right away, assume that no random event occurred in the first place. The motivation for this rule is purely practical. A difficult to interpret random event can stall a game indefinitely as the players sit there thinking. The entire intent of Mythic is to create fast-paced games from nothing. Anything that slows this process down should be discarded.

Don't abuse the "I Dunno" rule, however. If only one meaning suggests itself to you, but you don't like it, beware the temptation to discard it as not good enough. If any interpretation readily fits the facts, then go with it.

A note about logic

The master sleuth Sherlock Holmes was often credited with astounding skills of deduction. However, the type of logic he most often exhibited wasn't deductive but inductive logic, going from the specific to the general.

Although you don't need to know this to play Mythic, it's interesting to note that there are different ways to look at logic.

Inductive logic, generally, is taking specific facts and fitting them into a larger picture. For instance, you know facts A, B and C. All three facts are consistent with theories 1 and 2, but not theory 3. Thus, theory 3 is false, while 1 and 2 are both logically possible. If you learn another fact, and it's not consistent with theory 1, then theory 2 is the only possible final conclusion.

Deductive logic goes at it from the opposite direction, starting with the big picture. In other words, assuming that theory 1 is correct, then facts A, B, and C should be present. If facts A and C are present, but not B, then theory 1 is proven false and another theory must be developed to explain the facts as they are known.

In practice, using both forms of logic together is very effective for analyzing clues, since each has its merits and flaws. For instance, inductive logic is like taking pieces of a puzzle and fitting them together. However, the pieces may fit in more ways than one, giving any number of possible outcomes. Deductive logic begins with the puzzle already put together. If the picture is true, then all the pieces of the puzzle should be present somewhere. However, you may only have available a few of the pieces, so the others are only assumed to exist. This presents an opportunity to test the theory, however. If a deductive assumption predicts the existence of certain facts, you only have to go find these facts, or facts to the contrary, to help prove or disprove your theory.

Mythic tends more toward the inductive model. Characters are presented with facts throughout the adventure. When a new question arises, the current set of applicable facts helps determine, in an inductive way, what the big picture may be.

Random Event Examples

Context: The player characters are treasure seekers digging around in an ancient tomb. They are in a room with frightening stone statues and strange carvings on the walls.
Event Focus: Ambiguous Event.
Event Meaning: "transform reality"
Interpretation: The characters all experience the same vision where the room suddenly becomes shining and beautiful, as though new. They see people rustling about, as if this were an active temple. As suddenly as it came on, the vision goes away. Since this is an "ambiguous event," the vision doesn't seem to offer any useful information, such as where treasure or traps are.

Context: Captain Stupendous has pursued the evil Dr. Nefarious to his lair high atop a New York skyscraper. Captain Stupendous hovers over the lair, debating what to do next.
Event Focus: NPC Action. There are 3 NPCs on the character list: Dr. Nefarious; Nefarious' henchmen; the Team of Justice. Rolling, we get the second character, the henchmen.
Event Meaning: "fight of home"
Interpretation: Interpreting the meaning to refer to Dr. Nefarious concerned that the Captain has discovered his "home," henchmen suddenly appear on the rooftop and begin firing at the Captain, to fight for their home.

Context: Jim Diamond, a secret agent, has broken into the luxury offices of Maxit, a firearms production company suspected of providing weapons to terrorists. He has hacked into their mainframe computer and is trying to access their secret files.
Event Focus: Player character Negative. Since Jim is the only PC in this adventure, this means him.
Event Meaning: "succeed of evil"
Interpretation: As Jim works on the computer, the lights suddenly turn on. He looks up to see three armed men in the room, pointing guns at him. In walks Mr. Maxit himself with a sneer. "You thought we didn't know about your snooping, Mr. Diamond. You thought wrong!"

Context: Their spaceship infested with deadly aliens, the characters desperately barricade themselves in the life-support room. They plan to close the room off and flood the rest of the ship with poison gas through the ventilation system, hoping to wipe the aliens out.
Event Focus: Introduce a new NPC.
Event Meaning: "failure of a plot"
Interpretation: A locker suddenly opens and the characters nearly pee their pants when Crewman Jenkis leaps out. The characters thought everyone else on board was dead, but Jenkis has been hiding in the closet. Frantic, but glad to see them, he casually informs the characters that he had already tried the poison air trick, but it didn't work because the ship's filters automatically clean the poison out of the air as it goes through the vents. The characters are still mulling over the fact that he tried it with everyone else still out there ...

Context: Jonathan Stark is a 1920's occult investigator. It is midnight, and he is locked in his study, looking over an ancient and curious volume of blasphemous lore.
Event Focus: Remote event.
Event Meaning: "waste of goals"
Interpretation: Jonathan is searching for a mystic artifact that has the power to bind demons. He hopes to use it to stop the rampages of a monster terrorizing the local village. He had expected to discover from the book where the relic lies. However, this random event is interpreted to mean that the book tells a tale of how the device was destroyed in a great battle, centuries before. Stark closes the book, determined to find another way to stop the beast.

Context: Sir Trent and his band of adventurers are searching a cavernous catacomb for a princess kidnapped by an evil mage.
Event Focus: Move toward a thread.
Event Meaning: "guide a path"
Interpretation: The hall branches in two directions, and they are not sure which way to go. Sir Trent notices something on the ground and picks it up. It's the princess' shoe. He smiles. "I think I know which hall they took her down."

Context: A modern day mage in the midnight streets of Los Angeles is searching an alley for a secret portal to another dimension.
Event Focus: Player Character Positive.
Event Meaning: "inform travel"
Interpretation: "You'll never find it over there," a gruff voice says in the darkness. The mage sees a homeless man rise from the garbage. He rubs his finger across a wall and suddenly a glowing door appears. The mage stares at the guy, who is obviously more than he seems.

Chapter 4

The Adventure

This section provides the structure for running a Mythic adventure. You've got the basics on how to ask Mythic questions and how to answer them using the Fate Chart. Now, it's time to put it all together.

The structure outlined in this chapter is designed to generate a dynamic, and improvised, adventure. These rules can be used by a game master to help come up with adventures off the cuff, offering as much surprise to the GM as to the players. Or, players can do away with the GM and use these rules to generate their own adventures.

Improvised means "free-form," right? Not necessarily. Mythic is designed to move the adventure along based on improvised ideas, but it provides a structured framework to guide and shape those ideas. This isn't "making it up as you go along" so much as hopping from one idea to the next with rules to navigate the way. The current idea is the current scene, the action of the moment. You may have some clue as to what the next idea is, but you won't know what happens for sure until you get there.

This may sound confusing right now. But it all makes sense in the end.

To start, let's take a look at how Mythic views time.

Scenes

Mythic gameplay is visualized like a movie with an adventure session broken into scenes. Just like in a movie, a scene takes place at a certain location, involving certain characters, and covers a certain segment of action. Usually unimportant stuff is left out of a scene and only the good stuff gets shown. When the action is over and the characters are ready to move on the scene ends and we proceed to the next scene.

Mythic works the same way. A scene setting is envisioned, the characters resolve conflicts within the scene then it wraps up and everyone moves on. A scene is a discrete unit of time within an adventure, but it can be of any length. The scene, in game time, can last a few minutes or many years. The important thing is that each scene must have a purpose. Perhaps the characters have come across a room while exploring a dungeon. They pause to check the room out. This is a scene. When they are done, and all actions have been resolved, the scene is over.

The simplest way to move from scene to scene is for

The End is Near ...

Below are some example scenes emphasizing where they begin and where they end. The important concept to keep in mind is that a scene begins with a setup and ends when action and conflict have been resolved.

Scene 1

Setup: A band of superheroes is breaking into the stronghold of a villain. They discovered an airduct in the previous scene. This scene begins with the heroes crawling inside, entering the building. The scene proceeds with the heroes making their way inside and searching.

Ending: Since the point of this scene is the heroes getting into the stronghold, once they've accomplished this, the scene is over. The players may stretch the scene out with some preliminary exploration of the stronghold to get some flavor for what it's like ("the halls are made of chrome and strips of light glow dimly from the ceiling"), but the next scene will likely deal with initial encounters.

Scene 2

Setup: Earlier in the adventure of a mecha/military game, the players discovered that the alien Battle Pods were staging an attack. This new scene begins with the characters jumping into their War Mechs and charging onto the battlefield. The action for this scene is straightforward: combat.

Ending: The scene ends when the battle ends. Either the aliens are beat back or the players stage a desperate retreat.

Bottom line

There are no hard and fast rules for what constitutes the beginning and ending of a scene, there are just guidelines. The scene structure is designed to help give the adventure shape. The most important rule of thumb is simply to end a scene where it seems natural, and that usually means when the main activity of the scene is concluded.

the characters themselves to physically move. However, they don't have to. Time can pass and move characters to the next scene while they remain in the same physical location. For instance, characters travelling through the woods make camp for the night. They rest up, and the scene ends. The next scene takes place in the morning as they get up and prepare for the day.

Just like in movies, scenes should be about important events. If a scene is nothing more than walking along a path maybe you should just skip it and go ahead to the next scene which is probably more interesting. You won't be missing out on anything and you won't shortchange your characters the opportunity for an unforeseen encounter. Remember that Mythic builds random events into adventures and they can happen at just about anytime, so you don't need to pepper your adventure with boring scenes just to see if anything happens. Stick to what's important and interesting.

In Mythic, it is up to the gamemaster to decide what the next scene will probably be about. Or, if there is no GM, the players decide. However, Mythic will throw a wrench in the works on its own to keep the players on their toes, changing the scene or diverting the players to unexpected scenes.

Cinematic Play Versus Simulation

There are two approaches players can take to the sequence of their scenes. They should decide before the adventure session begins which style suits them best.

Simulation

The simulation approach is like most role-playing games, where the action happens linearly and players only see what their characters see. With this style each scene will follow the next in chronological order.

For example:
Scene 1: A platoon of space marines land on a distant world on a rescue mission to find a lost ship and its crew.
Scene 2: They begin searching the barren landscape for signs of the crashed ship. They find evidence of life where there shouldn't have been any.
Scene 3: Following up on this evidence, the marines make their way to a range of rocky mountains where they have their first run-in with a race of aliens composed of organic metal.
Scene 4: The marines decide there may be a connection between the aliens and the lost ship. They track the aliens to a main cave and learn they live underground.
Scene 5: The marines venture underground, beating back marauding aliens along the way.

Cinematic

Players may also choose to go cinematic. Here, you can play scenes out of linear order, or play scenes where the player characters are not even present. In cinematic play, the scenes follow in order of interest, not time.

Cinematic play is a fun alternative because the adventure will run like a movie or a book, constantly focusing on what is most interesting and entertaining. Perhaps the next scene is a flashback to a previous event. Or, action is taking place somewhere else and the players are just curious as to what may be happening. The cinematic style makes more demands on the players, however. Their characters are not aware of events occurring beyond them so they cannot act on this information. These "cut scenes" are more for the players' interest to flesh out the adventure. Much of the action from these scenes where the characters are actually not present will be determined by asking fate questions.

To reprise our previous example:
Scene 1: This is a setup scene, where we see the crew of the soon to be lost ship orbiting an alien world when, suddenly, alarms start blaring. Through a series of fate questions the players determine that the ship inexplicably malfunctions and begins to plummet to the rocky surface below.
Scene 2: Our platoon of player character marines set out on a rescue mission and to find out what happened.
Scene 3: They begin their search, and find evidence of life on the planet.
Scene 4: A short scene with a lone, non-player character wandering off from the main platoon. He is examining a strange flower when a shadow falls over him. His blood-curdling scream and death at the hands of an alien monster is the first sign to the others that they are not alone.
Scene 5: The marines track the aliens to their cave ...

The Setup

Your players are assembled, the characters are ready to roll and everyone is set to begin a Mythic adventure. The first thing to do is to come up with scene number one. As with any movie, TV show or book, the very first scene of the production is vitally important. It sets the tone for everything that will follow. Chances are, the first scene will give the characters whatever "mission" that they will follow through for the rest of the adventure.

If you've got a GM, then it's her job to come up with the first scene. If there is no GM, then the players need to come up with something. You've got two options in this department: make something up, or roll something up.

If you make it up, keep in mind that the scene does not have to be very complex. You don't need to take all week to create a multi-layered plot. Mythic is all about improvisational role-playing. Just take a few minutes to concoct an interesting concept, or even just a few interesting ideas for a starting scene. For instance, a group of players are running a space-opera style of game. They devise the following initial scene to their adventure: "The characters are traveling through an asteroid belt to find a rare deposit of Trendite, an ore vital to faster-than-light space travel." In this example, the players have a clear idea of what is expected of them, while giving just enough information to allow them to make the next move.

If you are truly playing off the cuff, and want to be surprised from the get-go, use a random event to set up the initial scene. Generate a random event, just as discussed in Chapter 3, and use this as the setup for the scene. Since you are generating a random event out of thin air, without any context or other events to compare it with, you will have a wide range of interpretations to make. I suggest you aim for the most exciting interpretation you can.

For instance, with our space marines, the players decide to roll up a random scene setup. They get the following results:

- Event Context: Since the adventure hasn't started yet, the context is the characters themselves. We know they're marines and they go where they are told to go. Semper Fi!
- Event Focus: PC negative. There are three players in the game, so they randomly determine that the character named "Tristan" is the focus. Tristan is a buff, macho marine who loves his big guns.
- Event Meaning: Action: "Inspect." Subject: "Love."

The players take all of this together and come up with this interpretation: Tristan has a former love interest who is an important scientist. They broke up a year ago, but he still carries a flame for her. Word gets to Tristan's team that communications with the the colony world she is working on have been lost. No one knows why. Tristan and the boys decide to suit up and head on out there to see what has become of the colony.

Keep in mind that the setup should establish a goal for the characters to attain. The setup shouldn't be: "Okay, we're just sitting around. What happens next?" It should set in motion the central conflict that the players will spend the rest of the adventure trying to solve.

It's best to keep a scene setup as detail-free as possible. Maybe just an interesting idea or two, that's it. For instance, the classic "You wake up in a hotel room and have no idea who you are" is about as simple as it gets. The less the players know about what's going on, the better, so that you can spend the adventure figuring all of that out. Whatever goal the setup generates may not even remain the main goal of the adventure. In our first space example, the characters may set out to recover the ore, and end up sidetracking on a mission to save an interstellar princess. The first scene setup got the ball rolling, but players will spend the rest of the adventure seeing where it leads.

Lists

Once you've announced the setup, it's time to get your lists in order. Lists catalog important details about the adventure that change from scene to scene. Lists include: characters, threads, and chaos. By the way, you'll find at the back of this book a handy form to make it easier to keep track of adventure details (see sample on page 49).

List 1: Characters

Keep track of all of the NPCs who pop up during an adventure. At the end of each scene during an adventure, you will review this list and add any more NPCs who premiered during that scene and remove anyone who has exited the adventure (usually, this means they're dead).

For instance, from the space marines the list after their first scene might include: "NPC marines; crew from the lost ship; the marines' superiors on Earth; non-military ship crew."

Characters added to the list should include anyone who actually makes an appearance in the scene and anyone who is mentioned. For instance, we included the marine's superiors in the list above even though they were not physically present in the scene. The fact that they were mentioned during the scene, because they gave the order to go after the ore, is enough to get them on the list.

Characters on the list don't have to be individuals or "people." They can be any entity that is capable of independent action. Your character list from a modern day crime adventure may include: Police Officer Jeffrey; the murderer, identity unknown; Miss Scarlet, the witness; tenants in apartment building where the murder occured; the City Council, which has taken an interest in the murder investigation, etc.

There will be times when you have to randomly choose a character from this list (for random events). Just roll a die closest to the number of characters on the list, or use whatever fashion you are accustomed to. Every character on the list has the same odds of being chosen, so the method is up to you.

Special Note: PC Character Lists

There is a special, additional character list you should keep. Every player character should have his own list of important NPCs that is included on his character sheet. These are people and entities that play major roles in that character's life. They may include family and friends, comrades, foes and enemies, organizations he is a member of, or just about anything. Who and what are on this list is up to the player, but the list should only contain the most important characters in his life. For instance, a superhero may have a personal list composed of: "Cloe Doe, girlfriend; Marauder, arch-nemesis; The Daily Standard, newspaper where his alter ego works."

In between adventues, a player can change his list, adding characters he has met from an adventure who may stick around and removing any who have left.

Why go to all of this trouble? Easy ... the first scene of an adventure. You may have already figured this one out, but what happens if you use a random event to generate the first scene, and you get something like, "NPC action"? You have a problem, because you just started this adventure and there are no NPC's



on the character list. So, you use the player character's own personal character lists.

You will only use them when generating a random event for the first scene of an adventure. Future random events in later scenes will only use the adventure lists, not the characters' personal lists. If there is more than one character playing, first randomly determine which character you are going to use the list from, then roll off their list.

One of the advantages to keeping personal lists like this is that you will occassionally come up with adventures that have great personal meaning to a character. Or, maybe that old villain from three adventures ago suddenly pops back onto the scene. Personal character lists open the door to a few more twists and turns.

List 2: Chaos Factor

This isn't really a list but a single number to keep track of. It starts at 5 and is modified at the end of each scene. The higher the chaos factor, the greater likelihood of a random event occurring and the greater are the odds of fate questions coming out yes.

At the end of each scene, evaluate how out of control the scene was. If nothing unexpected happened and the scene proceeded smoothly, then lower the chaos factor by one point. If the scene was active, however, with the unexpected happening and lots of action that the PCs could not control, increase the chaos factor by one.

If you're not sure how to judge a scene, then evaluate it based on how it ended. If it ended well, with the PC's in control, then it was less chaotic. If it ended poorly for

Examples of Setting the Scene & Maintaining Lists

The current scene: The characters are a band of medieval elves on their way to rescue the fairy queen from the evil orcs who have imprisoned her. In the current scene, the characters successfully navigated their way through the Dim Wood, a dangerous and treacherous place.
List maintenance (Characters): Add fairy queen, orcs, woodland monsters.
List maintenance (Chaos): The experience in the Wood was wild, so they add 1 to chaos.
List maintenance (Threads): No new threads develop, the current thread remains unresolved.
The players decide to...: Since they didn't make it through the wood unscathed, they decide to find a nearby town, hole up in an inn, and get some rest and supplies.
The next scene: The scene begins in the streets of Anderval. There is no need to role-play the trip from the Dim Wood to the small city as that is uninteresting. This scene begins with the characters arriving at the door of the Hunter Inn.

The current scene: In a Hong Kong action style of campaign, the characters have blasted their way through a building full of Yakuza hitmen. They are searching for a stolen gem, taken by an underworld boss. In the current scene, the characters finished dispatching a roomful of thugs as they search the building. The battle was drawn out enough that the players decide it constituted a scene in itself.
List maintenance (Characters): Add Yakuza hitmen, lesser thugs.
List maintenance (Chaos): The scene consisted mostly of an intense battle, so they add 1 to chaos.
List maintenance (Threads): No new threads develop, the current thread remains unresolved.
The players decide to...: Continue their search. They figure that the fight from the last scene was large enough, they probably finished off most of the guards in the building. That only leaves the boss and his bodyguard.
The next scene: It's only a matter of time before the characters find the diamond and its new owner. They decide that this scene is a showdown. They find the kingpin in his private chamber cradling the stolen diamond. At his side is the bodyguard, a skilled marksman with weapons drawn.

The current scene: The characters are soldiers fighting in a jungle when they run across an ancient ruin. Inside they find a portal that bursts to brilliant life as they draw near.
List maintenance (Characters): Friendly soldiers, enemy soldiers, jungle animals.
List maintenance (Chaos): The players decide that the ruins represent a safer environment than the jungle, where the war rages on. They deduct 1 from chaos.
List maintenance (Threads): The discovery of the artifact creates a new thread, "What is the artifact?"
The players decide to...: The portal, obviously, cannot be ignored. The players decide to investigate it more closely and see what it does.
The next scene: The characters step through the portal and find themselves transported to another world.

the PCs, then it was more chaotic.

Chaos in an adventure has a way of building like a snowball. In the beginning of the adventure there may be little chaos and few random events. But as the scenes roll on, the chaos factor will likely jump, which will encourage more chaotic scenes, increasing the factor higher and so on until the adventure comes to its climactic end.

The chaos factor cannot drop below 1 or rise higher than 9. Do not lower it or raise it by more than one point at a time.

List 3: Threads

A thread is a storyline. Usually your adventure will start it's first thread after the first scene. For the space opera adventure, they would begin with the thread, "Retrieve the trendite."

As the adventure continues, more threads may develop as subplots grow. A thread is considered "open" as long as it remains unresolved. Usually, the adventure is over as soon as the main thread is solved, or all of the open threads are closed.

Keep a list of all open threads. At the end of each scene, add any new threads that developed out of that scene, and rub out any threads that were resolved. What constitutes a new thread is up to the players but it will always be a quest of some kind. A new thread can relate to the main thread but it doesn't have to. For instance, in a time traveling campaign, the main thread might be to successfully travel back in time to prevent the assassination of an important world leader. En route to the past, the characters' time-warp machine is damaged. This creates the new thread of "Fix the time machine," so they can return to the future.

Players will occasionally fail to recognize a new thread and forget to put it on the list. Don't worry about it. As long as you catch the important ones, you're doing well. Keeping a thread list helps in the generation of random events but has little function beyond that (other than helping the players keep track of adventure details, that is). The better your thread list, the more meat you can supply to future random events.

Just as with the character list you will occasionally have to roll a random thread. They all have equal weight so use whatever method you are accustomed to for rolling items randomly.

Special Note: PC Thread Lists

Just as player characters will each keep their own personal list of important NPCs, they should also keep their own list of personal threads. This may include life goals, such as "find out who my parents really are," or things they want to accomplish, like "find the ancient Spell of Amarka."

As with PC character lists, PC thread lists should only contain items that are the most important to the PCs, items that define who they are. The players maintain these lists and can modify them as they wish. These lists are only used during an adventure's first scene, whether to randomly determine the scene or to be used during a random event in that scene. If the Event Focus indicates a thread related event, and there are no threads currently in the adventure list, then randomly choose a PC and randomly select one of his threads.

This will give you the opportunity to randomly generate an adventure that will personally impact a player character and may even resolve a life-long dream which could dramatically change that charcter forever.

Running scenes

You've got your first scene setup. Now its time to say "Action!" An entire Mythic adventure is nothing more than a series of scenes which the characters travel through one at a time. Each scene leads to the next, until you reach the very last scene where the central conflict of the adventure is resolved.

Every scene includes the following steps:

Step 1: Set the scene

Before a scene can begin, you need to have some idea just what you think is going to happen. As with all things Mythic, keep this logical. Based on what has already happened, what do the players expect this next scene to be?

The scene setup will usually depend on what the players decide to do. If your characters are investigating a murder, the players may decide to question a witness. The next scene then is at the witness' home. To help set the stage you can make all kinds of assumptions about the scene based on information you already know. In this case, the players can decide what kind of house the witness lives in, what kind of neighborhood, etc. to help flesh out the scene. Use what you already know and apply a little logic.

When deciding on the scene don't include too much detail. Just give enough color to get the scene started. Details will work themselves out as the scene is played.

The players have a great deal of control regarding the

nature of scenes. Pretty much, whatever they want the scene to be, that's what it will be ... at least, as a starting point. If you are playing with a GM, he will decide what the setup is.

This is not the final word on what the scene will be about, however; the scene setup decides how the scene might open, not how it unfolds.

Modifying the scene setup

You've got your scene setup, but don't jump into the scene just yet. After a scene setup has been floated, it's time to see if that idea is modified. Roll 1D10. If you roll chaos factor or less then the scene is modified. If you roll higher, then the scene begins just as expected.

This is the time when an adventure can begin to run out of control for the players. Sure, maybe they plan on driving to the witness' house to ask some questions. But, what if they are followed on the way? What if someone stops them and asks them a few questions instead?

When you roll to modify a scene, and you get a value within the chaos factor, then the scene setup you came up with will be changed; it will either be a variation on the setup idea you had already come up with, or it will be an entirely different scene.

If you rolled an odd value number (1,3,5,7,9) then the scene setup is modified into an altered scene. If you rolled an even number (2,4,6,8) then it's an interrupt scene.

For instance, if the chaos factor is currently 7, then a roll of 7 or less on a D10 will modify the scene setup. If the players roll a 1, 3, 5 or 7, then the scene is an altered scene. If a 2, 4, 6 was rolled, then an interrupt scene occurs.

Altered scenes

If the scene setup is altered, use logic to figure out how. The scene that actually begins is not the one you initially came up with in the scene setup, but the next most logical scene idea.

For example: The scene setup is a pair of swashbuckling characters swaggering into a crowded bar to have a few beers and pry around for information about a certain famous pirate who has been seen in the waters lately. The players roll and find that this scene setup is altered. The most likely alteration, they figure, is that the bar is actually quite deserted tonight and there isn't much opportunity to ask questions.

If, when altering the scene setup, you aren't quite sure

Sample Scene Ideas Modified

Previous Scene Ending: The character is a detective who is trying to catch a group of thieves. He has tracked them to their next job, a bank heist, and arrived just in time to see them fleeing the bank with the loot.
Following Scene Setup: The detective hops into his car and chases the bad guys. This results in a high-speed pursuit through the city.
Altered: Instead of just a standard chase, it turns into a running gun battle as the bank robbers shoot back at the pursuing character.
Interrupt: Something happens instead of the expected chase, and we use a random event to find out what. Rolling on the event focus chart, we come up with "Move toward a thread." The only open thread at the moment is "Catch the thieves." So, something happens to help the detective instead of the chase. Rolling on the event meaning tables, we get, "delay" and "attention." Hmmm .... thinking for a moment, we come up with: the detective is late to the robbery, but he spots the thieves' car as it is driving away. They didn't notice him, so he is able to casually follow them along the freeway to their hideout.

Previous Scene Ending: While enjoying a tankard of mead at a local tavern a fantasy warrior character gets in a brawl with a disapproving patron. The fight erupts into a tavern-wide fiasco, resulting in the character getting his clock cleaned. He winds up unconscious in a corner, a bulging bump on his forehead.
Following Scene Setup: The character wakes up in a dungeon cell, arrested by the local magistrate for instigating a brawl.
Altered: The players aren't sure what to do here, so they phrase the altered scene as a Fate Chart question: "Does the character wake up in the magistrates office, instead of his dungeon?"
Interrupt: The event focus table gives us "Ambiguous event." The meaning tables give us "excitement" and "energy." The interpretation arrived upon is: The character wakes up to the sound of a woman yelling. He sees he is still lying on the floor in the tavern. The owner is being yelled at by his wife, probably over the bar fight. The tavern is empty, except for the arguing couple and a few unconscious brawlers such as the player character.

what the most logical scene would be to replace your original setup, then phrase it as a fate question and check the Chart. This also makes it more random, but still keeps the options within the realm of reason. For instance, with the swashbuckling example above, perhaps the players phrase the alteration as a question, "Is the bar deserted?" A yes answer would get the above scenario, where their quest to ask questions is stymied. A no means the bar is packed, as expected, but something else is happening. Maybe the place is closed for a "private party." An exceptional yes could mean the place has burned down. An exceptional no might mean there is a riot going on there.

Interrupt scenes

This is an entirely different, and unexpected, scene than the scene setup. The characters were on their way to the scene setup, but the interrupt scene preempts it. Since the scene is unexpected, treat this as a random event (in just the same way as you might use random events to generate the very first scene in the adventure). Generate a random event and consider that the cause of the interrupt scene. The rest of the scene is logically built around this random event.

The interrupt is very different from the altered scene. In an altered scene, you are still going with the original scene setup, but with a twist. An interrupt scene, however, is an entirely different scenario. The scene setup is tossed out the window and replaced with this new one, based off of a random event.

For instance, in our swashbuckling example above, there are many interrupt possibilities. Maybe, on their way to the tavern, the characters are waylaid by bandits. Or, a stranger pulls them aside and promises information about the pirate, for a price. The possibilities are endless, and unexpected.

Interrupt scenes are where Mythic adventures begin throwing big curveballs at players. With the chaos factor starting at 5, early scenes in an adventure should play out pretty much as expected. However, if chaos increases, the adventure will rumble more and more out of control as characters veer from one unexpected scene to the next.



Step 2: Play out the scene

This is the heart of the adventure, where all the action unfolds. The scene has been determined. Now what happens?

That's pretty much up to the players. The scene begins as dictated by the setup or the modifications. But, that's just the beginning of the scene. Now it's up to the players to begin asking fate questions and resolving conflicts. Likely, the first set of questions will involve clarifying details about the beginning of the scene itself.

For instance, in our murder investigation example, the players set off to the witness' house. A player may ask, "Is the house nice?" They check the Fate Chart and come back with "Yes." From that, they interpret that the house is a nicely kept, two-story home. Then someone asks, "Is there a car parked out front?" Consulting the chart: "Yes."

After two questions, they have some detail on what the scene looks like and what they can expect.

They then decide to walk up to the front door and knock, asking, "Does the witness answer?" The answer from the chart is exceptional yes.

Hmmm, exceptional. They decide that the most logical interpretation is that the witness opens the door and is very excited to see them, immediately ushering them into the house. The characters, a little confused by this reaction, go along with the witness.

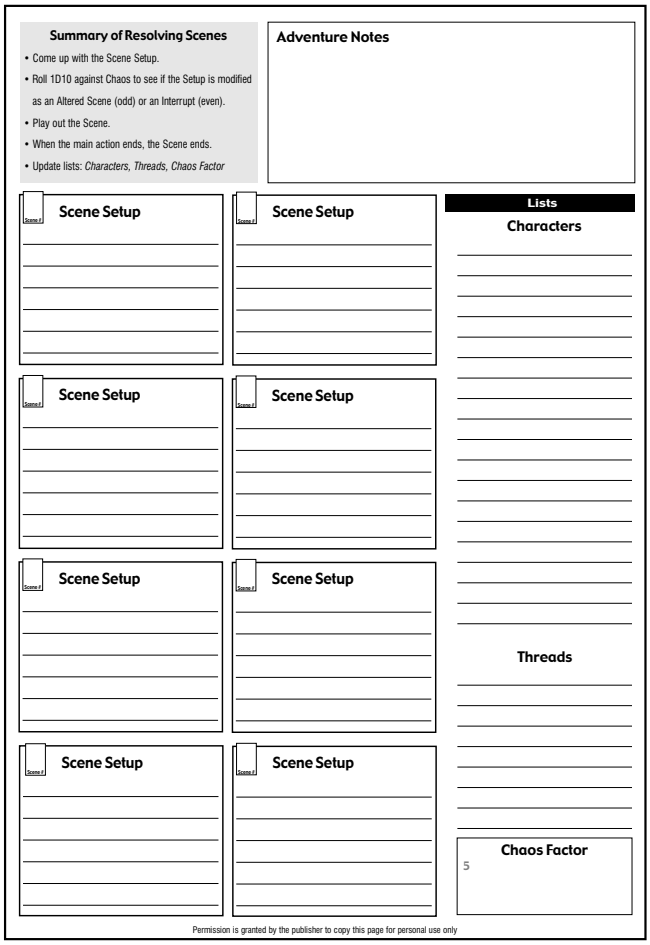
The players ask, "Does the witness know who we are?" The answer: "No."

They interpret this to mean that the witness has mistaken them for someone else. The characters decide to play along with this, pretending to be whoever the witness thinks they are. Using whatever persuasion skills they possess, they try to keep the witness talking, then they ask, "Does the witness talk as if he were a party to the murder?" Answer: "Yes."

They interpret that the witness thinks the characters are also in on the conspiracy. As the scene plays out, the characters might learn that the murder was a mafia hit and the witness merely a plant to throw off suspicion. The witness thinks that the characters are mafia representatives there to pay him for his services. He is anxious to get paid so he can leave town.

Scenes progress in this fashion, by asking fate questions and making logical assumptions, until the main action is over. In the example above, the scene might end when the characters are through with the witness and decide to leave.

Mythic, using this scene structure and the Fate Chart, gives the players all the information they need to realize the adventure universe. The actual mechanics of game-play, such as conflict resoltuion and combat, would likely be handled by a particular rpg game they are using. In the above example, this may involve communication skill checks, or even combat if the witness realizes his mistake and tries to kill the characters. Of course, failing that, they can always frame a fate question and consult the chart to resolve gaming issues.



Adventure summary sheet. Find a full page version on page 51.

Scene length

The length of a scene is based on the action of the scene, not the passage of time. Whatever the main purpose of the scene is, when that business is concluded, then the scene is concluded. In the example above, the scene takes as much time as the characters are in the house and until they are done with the witness. But a scene could last years: a princess lies in suspended animation until that magic kiss comes; a dragon slumbers on its hoard until disturbed; a man searches the world for clues to the identity of the criminal who killed his wife.

A scene doesn't require success to reach its end. With the investigators, they may have arrived at the witnesses house, asked a few questions, received little information in return, and left empty-handed. The important thing is that the purpose of the scene is addressed (meeting the witness) and is dealt with.

Scene topics

It's been stated before, but bears stating again, that a scene should be about something interesting. Although a scene should be what logically happens next, you can fast forward through uninteresting material. For instance, explorers in a cavern might come upon a room, kill a monster and find some treasure. The next scene doesn't have to be, "Alright, they go out in the hall and walk a few feet. Anything happen?"

What would make more sense would be a scene setup like: "They delve deeper into the caverns, wandering through dark halls until they come across another room that looks interesting."

What is important to a scene are interesting bits that move the adventure along, in the same way that a movie or novel doesn't bother staging scenes or chapters on pointless information. Every scene setup should at least contain the potential to advance the story.

Cinematic scenes

As stated before, you may want to consider a cinematic style to your adventure. Most gamers take the simulationist approach, where scenes follow each other chronologically and the players know about as much as their characters do.

A cinematic approach uses techniques found in the movies: flashback scenes portraying events from the past, dream sequences, events in remote locations that the characters are not aware of. Any of these drama techniques, and more, are available to you in a cinematic style of game. The caution is that you really have to want to play like this and be prepared to limit your character. You, as the player, will likely learn information that is impossible for the character to know or act upon.

Randomness

Mythic is based on logic, but not everything happens as expected. Random events, discussed in the previous chapter, will give your scenes the necessary twists to keep your characters on their toes. Wherever you think the adventure might be heading, a single random event could send it spiraling in an entirely different direction. Remember, whenever a double-digit (11, 22, etc.) is rolled on the Fate Chart, and that digit is within the range of the chaos factor, then a random event occurs.

Step 3: End the scene, update the lists

When the action ends so does the scene. The scene should end at a logical break and can cover any amount of time. If the characters are involved in a boxing match, each scene may last only as long as a round of the fight. If the characters were on a long march across the country, a scene could last weeks.

At the end of each scene, run through the three lists and update them.

Characters

Scratch out any characters who have dropped out of the adventure and add any new ones who have appeared or were mentioned. Remember, this doesn't just mean individuals. Characters can be any force in the adventure with the ability to act on its own. That means crowds, organizations, anonymous thugs, etc. This also means adding the less important characters, not just the heavy-hitters. You never know when that maid you ignored in the last scene may show up in the dark ... wielding a knife!

Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene (odd) or an Interrupt (even).
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: *Characters*, *Threads*, *Chaos Factor*

Chaos

Update the chaos factor based on the level of activity from the scene and the players' success. If the scene was out of control, add 1 to the chaos factor. If the scene was controlled by the characters, then subtract 1 from the chaos factor. Chaos stays in a range of 1-9. The chaos factor must move up or down at the end of each scene unless it is already at 1 or 9.

Threads

Remove completed threads and add new ones. A thread is complete when the goal has been accomplished or it no longer matters. If the goal is to rescue the princess, but she dies when the dragon you slew falls on her, then that pretty much ends that thread.

Adding new threads is a judgement call for the players. New sub-plots have a tendancy to develop on their own, growing out of the action of a scene. It's up to the players if this is a plot they wish to pursue.

For instance, the characters are fantasy adventurers searching for the lost Wand of Varza. Along the way they spend the night at a peasant's home. The peasant bemoans the fact that his son disappeared in the forest days before and has not returned. The characters can search for him if they wish, or forget about it and move on. If they decide to find the boy, then this forms a new thread.

New threads do not necessarily need to have anything to do with other threads. Multiple threads may all be related, or not. The important thing is to identify objectives that the characters deem are important.

SAMPLE SCENE

The following scene is a "transcript" of two players in a Mythic adventure session. They are playing without a GM. For the sake of the example, we will assume they are playing a standard superhero rpg.

The adventure

This adventure teams The Fantasm, a gun-toting anti-hero who can phase through solid objects, with Mighty May, a spandex-clad superheroine of tremendous strength. The pair have teamed up to root out the evil Marzitron, a sentient robot bent on the eradication of all things human.

The scene

In previous scenes, the two superheroes hunted down the robot until they discovered he was hiding in the sewers beneath the city. The players propose the following scene setup for the next scene: "Fantasm and May descend into the sewers through public manholes and begin searching around. The sewers are dank and, of course, stink."

The chaos factor is 8. Rolling 1D10, they get 3, within the range of chaos, which means the scene setup is modified. They rolled an odd number, so the scene setup is altered.

Fantasm: "How about, we see a track of footprints in the sewer, for an altered scene."

May's player agrees. The scene isn't radically different from the one first envisioned, but different enough to give the players something additional to work with.

Fantasm: "Are the footprints all going in one direction?" They decide the odds on this are very likely, and roll a 22 on the Fate Chart. This results in a yes answer, but also gives them a random event since they rolled a double number that is within the chaos range of 8.

Rolling for the event, they get a focus of "Ambiguous event." They roll "passion" and "friendship" on the meaning charts. The two players agree on an interpretation.

May: "As we climb down a manhole and enter the sewer, we see there's a message scrawled on the wall. 'Jack loves Susan,' with a crude heart drawn around it. 'Charming,' May sighs in her southern drawl. 'Love in the sewers.'"

Fantasm: "'Come on, let's move,' Fantasm says gruffly. We follow the prints in the muck, trying to make as little noise as possible. I have my twin .45s drawn. We just keep following the footprints. I assume they will lead to a room or something. Do they?" This possibility seems likely. They roll 96, however, above the 95 needed.

May: "They lead directly into a solid wall. The footprints continue, and then just stop, as if the walker disappeared."

Fantasm: "I lean over and examine the footprints closely. 'What the hell?' I muse."

May: "May looks up, worried there may be something lurking on the ceiling. Is there?" The odds seem unlikely, and she rolls an 83. No.

May: "I have an idea. May says to Fantasm, 'Poke your head underground, maybe there's a room below.'"

Fantasm: "I nod and phase out, ducking my head through the pavement. Do I see a room below?" They give this question a rank of very unlikely, 65%, and roll 21, a yes.

Fantasm: "I pull my head back up with a grin. 'You were right. There must be a trap door here or something.' I examine the concrete, looking for secret mechanisms. Do I find any?" The players use the mechanics in the rpg they are using to determine if he

successfully searches out a secret latch. He fails his skill check.

Fantasm: "I scratch my head in confusion. 'If there's a door here, I can't figure it out," I say, annoyed."

May: "'Stand back," I instruct to Fantasm. 'I'll do it the old-fashioned way.'"

Fantasm: "I step back out of the way."

May: "I lean over and give the floor a heavy-duty punch, trying to knock through it. " Again, they use the rpg mechanics to resolve this.

May: "I easily punch through the floor and drop down into the room below."

Fantasm: "I follow her into the room."

May: "I look around quickly. Does this place look different from the sewers, all shiny metal like a high-tech complex?" Since they really have no idea what the odds for this question would be, they go for 50/50 odds and roll 55. A yes, but also a random event (chaos is 8).

May: "'I think we've found his hideout,' I say." They check for the random event on the event focus table and get "Player character Negative." With two players, they randomly determine that the player character in question is Fantasm. Rolling on the event meaning charts, they get "triumph" and "the phsyical." They interpret this to mean that Fantasm gets attacked.

Fantasm: "Does Marzitron himself attack?" The odds seem very unlikely, since the master robot has used minions to do nearly all of his dirty work in the past. They roll a 71, for a no.

The next most logical idea is that they have stumbled upon a guard, who attacks Fantasm. Instead of assuming what kind of guard it is, they decide to form this as another fate question.

Fantasm: "Is the guard a robot, maybe kind of a spidery thing that was lurking near the ceiling, which is why we didn't notice it at first?" Odds are 50/50, and they roll 43 for a yes.

The players enter combat with the guard robot, using the rules in their super hero rpg. The combat is fairly straightforward, not requiring any additional questions from the Fate Chart. After Fantasm squeezes off a few shots and May knocks the guard around a bit, they finish the robot off.

May: "I smash it against the wall and it explodes in a spray of sparks and metal pieces. 'Take that, you darn spider. I hate spiders!'"

Fantasm: "'Well done,' I say. Is there a door out of here?" The odds of this are a near sure thing, and they roll 52. Yes.

Fantasm: "We head for the door, keeping a wary lookout for more guards."

Since they have successfully searched the sewers and found the hideout, this ends the main action of the scene. The next scene would involve them looking deeper into the headquarters, perhaps finding the evil robot, and so on. Ending the scene, they run through their lists quickly and make the following changes:

Characters: Add Robot Guards to the list.

Threads: No changes here.

Chaos factor: This scene was chaotic, with the robot attack, but the characters remained firmly in control throughout. This lowers the factor from 8 to 7.

A note about asking questions

The scene struture described in this chapter is fairly simple and straightforward. The idea is to drive the action forward with as little clutter as possible. What makes everything work, however, is asking questions of the Fate Chart.

Players will quickly find, however, a tendancy to want to ask more and more questions to get more specific results. This can lead to bogging down the game when you really don't have to. Very rarely should you have to ask more than one question to get a good final answer.

Keep in mind that when you ask a question, there are four possible results from the Fate Chart: yes, no, exceptional yes and exceptional no. This alone gives you a fairly wide range of potential outcomes with just one question. For instance, in a game where the characters are FBI agents pursuing terrorists, a character walks into a room and encounters one of the men he had been chasing. The player asks, "Is the man armed?" Given the four possible answers from the Fate Chart, you could have the following results:

- Yes: He is armed with the most likely weapon, a handgun.
- No: He is unarmed, and probably surprised to see the agents.
- Exceptional yes: He is armed with something mightier than a handgun, a submachine gun.
- Exceptional no: Not only is he not armed, he's asleep in his bed.

To keep the game flowing smoothly, you should limit yourself to asking no more than a single question of the Fate Chart to answer a question. In the example above, all of the potential answers are plenty to satisfy the dramatic needs of the scene. Any additional specifics, such as exactly what type of handgun is he wielding, is there a full clip of bullets in the weapon, etc. can be handled through sheer logic. Just make the most reasonable assumptions based on the results of that one question.

Chapter 5

GM Emulation

Emuwhat?

So, you all want to be players, and no one wants to run the show. Well, that's just great. The Mythic adventure engine is designed to build games off the cuff, making the game master's life easier. Or, these same tools can be used to replace the GM entirely. After all, a GM can use the Mythic engine to develop an adventure even if he doesn't know any more about what's going on than the players do. It's not a far cry to cut out the GM entirely.

If you want to try playing without a GM, this chapter offers some suggestions that might make the adventure run smoother.

First ideas

You can come to the gaming table armed with only your character and nothing else. In fact, it's often best if you don't have any clear ideas for an adventure. You may have a first scene setup idea in mind, or you may decide to generate it randomly as detailed in the adventures chapter. Whatever idea you come up with doesn't have to make a lot of sense. You don't even have to know what it means. The point is to come up with something and see what unfolds from there.

For instance, some first scene setup ideas:

- "The players are called in by the FBI to investigate a mysterious murder. The body was found with strange occult symbols drawn across it and other oddities that government investigators cannot explain. They are seeking the help of the characters."
- "The characters wake up in a hotel room with no memory and no possessions besides the clothes on their back. There is a set of keys on the dresser, a video store rental card with the name 'Sue' on it, and a bloody knife on the floor."
- "The characters are hanging out in a tavern when a cloaked figure approaches. He plops a bag of gold on the table, sits and explains he wants to hire the group to eradicate a nest of goblins that are marauding the countryside."

As you can see from the examples above, some ideas offer more information than others. Regardless of the content, each idea is a seed that can lead anywhere. It's all up to the players and the questions they ask.

Taking a hint from the movies

The first scene setup should be interesting, whether the players understand it or not. Of course, you could start with, "We are walking along a dirt road on a pleasant afternoon. The sun is shining, the birds are singing." This could still work as a setup, but it is bland and doesn't spark the imagination. Starting from such a place is, in a sense, begging the dice to throw in some random events to take the adventure in a more intriguing direction.

To get the action started faster come up with something that ignites your interest. For inspiration, just think about nearly any movie you have ever viewed. The opening scene almost always sets the tone for the whole movie.

If you are playing a cinematic Mythic adventure, then the first scene doesn't have to flow sequentially with the rest of the adventure, and it doesn't even have to involve the player characters directly. It might even be a flashback. For instance, the scene setup might be: "In 469 BC, King Musdah of the desert city of Kasmar sealed into a tomb the Ocular of Anzla, an amulet said to be made from the eye of an evil, dead god. The king so feared the relic that the tomb was sealed and hidden beneath the sands, and all who worked to build it were killed to protect the secret." Boom, there you go. This scene might lead into an archaeological dig, involving the characters, where the tomb is discovered in modern times.

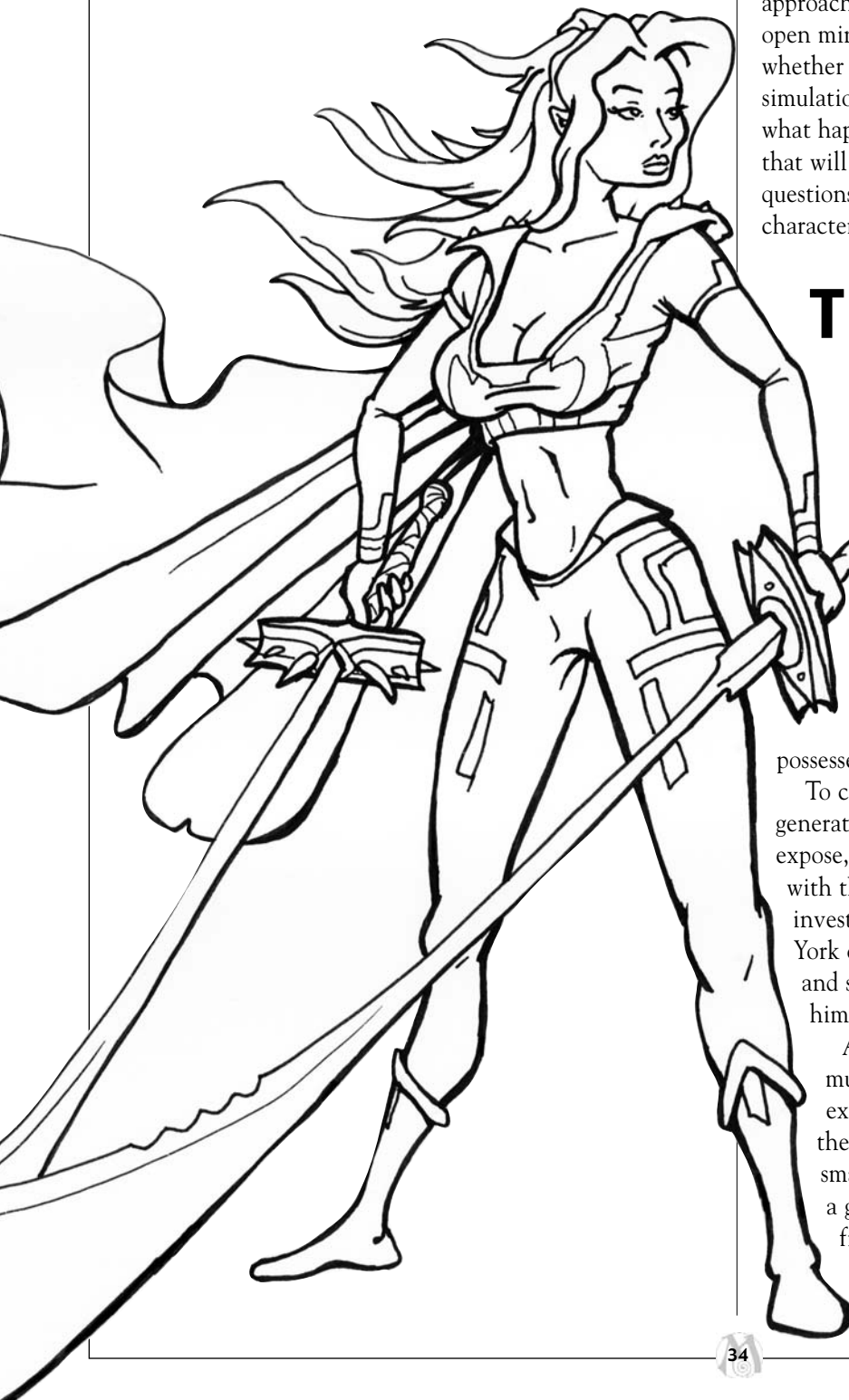
Where to go from here

There is really not much difference between playing a Mythic game with a GM and without. Whether you use a GM or not, you still ask yes/no questions for all situations, and they are resolved using the Fate Chart. Without a GM, however, the players are responsible for interpreting the answers as opposed to a single person shouldering the responsibility. Logic is still the prime rule when interpreting the yes/no question results.

Scenes progress the same way, also. Players travel through a scene, asking yes/no questions along the way, until the scene runs out of steam. The players wrap up the scene, adjust the NPC list, the threads list and the

chaos factor. Then they proceed to the next scene, deciding what they think it should be, and then rolling the dice and seeing if that is actually what happens.

Playing this way is clearly not the same as playing with a well-prepared GM. Nevertheless, the experience can be the same, if not better. The adventure still progresses along logical lines. The players are still embroiled in a mystery that unfolds before their eyes, scene by scene, and which will eventually lead to an answer. Just because that mystery, and those answers, don't objectively exist yet in the real world does not make them any less real when they reveal themselves to the players.



The gaming experience

Since you, the player, are in near-total control of the adventure, there is a degree of responsibility you have to toe. If you are a powergamer this may not work out so well for you. After all, without a GM, you have free reign to manipulate events nearly any way you wish. This doesn't sound like much fun, however.

Your best gaming experiences will come when you approach the adventure with a character you like and an open mind to what can happen. It doesn't matter whether you are a cinematic type of player, or a simulationist, you both want to know the same thing: what happens next? You should ask the types of questions that will move the adventure forward, instead of questions that manipulate the rules and will help your character the most.

The example

Enough babble, let's get down to an example. Following is a transcript of two players adventuring with Mythic and without a GM. For the sake of argument, we won't mention the actual role-playing game the players are using, we'll just reference adventure events as they unfold. The adventure is set in the modern world with a dark, magical twist. The character Michael is an FBI agent who investigates occult murders. Sara is an occultist herself who has teamed up with Michael. She possesses a range of mystic talents.

To create the first scene, the players decide to generate it randomly. They come up with: remote event, expose, death. They interpret these results to come up with the following first scene: "Michael and Sara are investigating the murder of a homeless man in New York city. His body is found with the heart removed and strange runes chalked on the sidewalk around him."

As you can see, they decided not to take a mundane interpretation of the results but a more extreme one, adding details such as the runes and the grisly method the man was killed. This is a smart move for the first scene to get the plot off to a good, exciting start, as long as the interpretation fits the results that were rolled.

As the scenes unfold, Michael and Sara

Sample adventure openings

Campaign background: A race of insect-like aliens have invaded the Earth, destroying human civilization. Those who have not been captured and enslaved live in the wastelands, desperate to stay alive.
First scene setup: The characters are captured by a village of humans. The players decide to play the game cinematically and set up the scene just before they are captured, so they can role play the event. Their characters are making their way across a desert when they are ambushed. They will put up a good fight, but will be outnumbered, so the odds are hopeless. However, the ambushers will not kill the characters, but take them hostage.
Where the players may go from here: With their capture inevitable in the first scene, the characters may still get a little banged up. Subsequent scenes may involve them negotiating with the village elders on the terms of their release, a period of healing, or the characters' own plans to escape. Perhaps the characters escape and are so embittered by the experience, they side with the aliens long enough to wipe the village out. Or, maybe the characters discover the village elders are in league with the aliens.

Campaign background: The characters are investigators of the paranormal in a modern setting.
First scene setup: The characters have been invited to dinner at the home of a wealthy friend. The house is a mansion deep in a secluded forest. At the dinner, which involves ten other people, the host declares that he believes one of his friends is an extradimensional monster who has been prowling the earth for centuries, feeding on the souls of innocents. He cannot figure out who it is, since the monster seems human in most respects. So, he will let his guests figure out who among them is a monster. If no one can prove to him by midnight who the creature is, the house is rigged to blow up, killing all inside. The doors and windows are all locked and barred; there is no escape. The players decide on a lengthier scene setup and to start the action at the dinner table, after the host makes his announcement. This scene will mostly involve watching the reactions of all of the guests, and learning a little about who they are.
Where the players may go from here: The players will likely either play their hosts game, and try to figure out who the monster is, or they will decide their friend is insane and try to find a way out of the mansion before it blows sky high. Either way, the adventure will likely end with the characters learning whether their host was correct, or mad.

Campaign background: The characters are American secret agents.
First scene setup: The characters are suddenly arrested by their own agency. It appears they are accused of murdering a US Congressman and of being double-agents. The first scene can involve the characters' incarceration, and their plans to escape.
Where the players may go from here: The characters know they are being framed, and must escape and prove their innocence. A former teammate who believes them may help free them so they can prove their own innocence. Anyone could have framed the characters, from an old enemy to a new one who just wanted to pin the murder on someone else, to the friend who helps them escape. The characters will likely use personal contacts to discover their initial clues, and take it from there.

Campaign background: The character is a normal, everyday man in modern America.
First scene setup: The character has been attacked by a wolf in the woods and bitten. The man wanders helpless and finds a light through the trees that leads to a small house. Their he discovers an old woman who, upon seeing his wounds, shuns him, but not before informing him of what his fate will become. She says he has been bitten by a werewolf! She proves it to him by showing him a mirror and pointing out his extended canines and his own desire for live meat.
Where the player may go from here: Gleaning a clue or two from the old woman, the character may seek out myth experts and other sources of werewolf lore to learn of a cure. Once he does, the rest of the adventure involves his quest to cure himself, perhaps running across others like him, or even becoming the target of werewolf hunters, who would rather destroy him than help cure him.

discover that there have been two other similar murders that had gone underreported, each victim with his heart removed. Checking some of her resources, Sara identifies the runes as Aztec in origin and discovers the treatment of the bodies is similar to some ancient, Aztec rights to appease cruel gods.

We pick up now at the beginning of Scene 4, with the setup: "Check Sara's theories with an expert. Seek out an expert at a local university."

Michael's Player: "That sounds like a good scene setup. Let's check it." Before starting the scene, he checks against the chaos factor to see if the scene setup is modified. Chaos is 2, he rolls a 1D10 and gets a 2. This means an interrupt. They have to roll a random event to see what interrupted the expected scene. He rolls on the Event Focus Table and gets, "Character action." He rolls among the four characters in the list and comes up with Agent Summers, Michael's contact with the FBI who helped him uncover the information on the previous murders.

Checking the Event Meaning tables, he gets, "oppress" and "the intellectual."

Sara's Player: "Hmm, that's an interesting one. Sounds like he's gone insane."

MP: "Yeah. We get a call from Summers, sounding agitated. He's been working on the case and wants to

Adventure Worksheet

Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene (odd) or an Interrupt (even).
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: *Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor*

Adventure Notes

1 Scene **Scene Setup**
Michael and Sara investigate the murder of a homeless man in New York.

2 Scene **Scene Setup**
Michael uses police contacts to review other murder records, looking for similar cases.

3 Scene **Scene Setup**
Sara reviews her textbooks, looking for the meaning of the runes.

4 Scene **Scene Setup**
Visit an agitated Agent Summers, who might have a lead.

Scene **Scene Setup**

Scene **Scene Setup**

Scene **Scene Setup**

Scene **Scene Setup**

Lists

Characters
Detective Richards, NYPD
Officer Daniels, NYPD
Reginald Morrow
Agent Brian Summers, FBI

Threads
Find the killer.

Chaos Factor
5
2

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meet us at a hotel. When we get there, the place is a mess and he's acting very strangely."

SP: "Sounds good. Sara eyes the hotel room as Summers lets them in. Are there papers and files anywhere? I figure this is very likely, given the setup." With the chaos factor so low, she rolls on the Fate Chart against an odds rank of very likely. She rolls an 84, a no.

MP: "I guess it just looks messy then, bed unmade, coffee cups, but not a total wreck. How does Summers look? Is he manic, talking fast?" They figure the odds on this are very likely, and roll a 2 for an exceptional yes.

SP: "Sara is alarmed by Summers, who is wild-eyed and barely coherent."

MP: "He's talking so fast, moving about the room aimlessly. Michael tries to understand what Summers is ranting about. Does any of it make sense?" He uses a mechanic from the RPG they are using to determine if Michael can understand the raving Summers. He fails his roll.

MP: "Michael shakes his head at Sara, shrugging. He approaches Summers and says in his most soothing voice, 'Calm down, buddy. Why don't you sit on the bed and start at the top.' Do I get him to calm down?" Again, they use a game mechanic to see if Michael succeeds. Michael does succeed in the attempt and calms Summers down.

SP: "Oh, good. He calms down a little, sitting on the bed, still chattering away though. While Michael talks to him, Sara will casually drift about the room, looking for any files or exposed papers. Does she see anything interesting?" They decide the odds are likely, and rolls a 95, an exceptional no.

MP: "Does that mean the room is exceptionally uninteresting?"

SP: "More likely, I just don't see anything unusual. I can't think of an exceptional result."

MP: "I ask Summers if he called us because he discovered the killer." This seems very unlikely, and they roll a 47, for a no.

SP: "Sara speaks softly to Summers, and asks him if he was trying to warn us. Are we getting close to something and it's getting dangerous for us?" They assign this a likelihood of somewhat likely and roll a 5, an exceptional yes.

MP: "Exceptional, great. He gets nuts again, jumps up, ranting about how all our lives are in danger. We need to flee New York immediately."

SP: "Danger from whom? Sara asks him. Does he say?" They give this 50/50 odds and roll a 27 for a no.

MP: "He's too bonkers, and isn't listening to Sara."

SP: "Is Summers afraid?" They assign this odds of very likely and roll 68 for a no. Sara's player interprets this result to mean that Summers is acting out of anger, not fear.

MP: "If angry, then he must be angry at us. Summers says, 'You're messing around with stuff you don't understand. You're gonna get us all killed!'"

SP: "Sara tenses up at Summers' tone. She studies him closely. Is he armed?" Summers is an FBI agent, so they decide on likely odds and roll a 4, an exceptional yes. "Uh-oh. He's got one gun in a shoulder holster, visible with his open coat, and another gun on the nightstand near the bed."

MP: "Is he behaving threateningly toward us now?" Given the previous conclusion about his anger toward the characters, and his manic behavior, they decide on very likely odds and roll a 67, for a no.

SP: "The low chaos factor coming to our rescue. OK, so he's ticked off and telling us to back off the case, but he's not threatening. He's just one freaked out guy."

MP: "Michael tells him, 'We can't back off this case. But if you're so worried then you're free to run.' Does he accept this?" Given Summers' anger and attitude, they decide the odds are unlikelly and roll a 66 for a no. They rolled a double digit, but since the single number ("6") is greater than the chaos factor, no random event is generated.

SP: "He gets angrier..."

The above scene would continue playing out until Michael and Sara were done with Summers, at which point the main action for the scene would be over, ending the scene. Since this scene was an interrupt, the players are free to make the next scene setup the same one they had tried before. Or, if they learned something interesting from Summers, they may decide to go off in a different direction.

The players in this scene asked the questions they needed answered to move the scene along. When a question was answered on the Fate Chart, the first player with a ready interpretation threw it out.

The players didn't rely on the Fate Chart for every detail. This is where logic comes into play. It's also the area where a game master usually does most of his work, generating details. Many of the smaller, colorful details don't matter much in the long run, so there is no harm in running along with an improvised description if it seems fitting. Both players here ad-libbed some, describing Summers' demeanor and the condition of his hotel room. However, even though they made up these details, the facts they came up with still fit the results of the Fate Chart and were consistent with the context of the adventure.

Chapter 6

World Creation

Just because Mythic adventures are created off the cuff is no reason why you have to stop at just one scenario. Mythic can be used to create an entire campaign, or even the setting itself. Creating the world that your characters adventure within can be as simple, or complex, as you want it to be. Many players come to the table with a highly prepared game master armed with complete data on a very realized gaming universe. Others come to the table with a few ideas and the desire to have fun.

There is no right way to approach gaming, it is all a matter of style. Mythic, however, caters to the other players, the underprepared.

If you are using Mythic Emulator, you are also role-playing with another rpg, using those mechanics to operate the game world. Whatever game that is, it probably came with its own setting.

However, what if you want to create a brand new setting? Or perhaps create a character and then just drop them into a gaming universe and see what happens next?

This chapter offers some advice on how to use Mythic Emulator not just to create a single adventure, but how to create an entire campaign or game world.

Where to begin

You can begin a Mythic Emulator adventure with as little detail about the world as you wish. If playing with a GM, she will likely have some ideas about the adventure universe. On the other hand, she may start without a clue about the adventure world, or perhaps the players are forging ahead without a GM and the only notion they have about the universe is that it is a "light fantasy" one.

Whether you start detailed or with a blank slate, if you are running a Mythic Emulator adventure, the key word to keep in mind is "evolution." Since the Mythic engine is guiding the progress of the adventure, there is no telling what details about the game world this will reveal. Players could begin with their characters in a very generalized concept of a game world and, by the end of their first adventure, have a much more concrete picture of where it is their characters live.



Evolution of a setting

All of your setting details can evolve from gaming sessions, without having to specifically generate world facts outside of the course of adventuring. For instance, if a pair of players decide they want to adventure in a fantasy world, in the beginning they may only know the name of the village their characters come from and the fact that the kingdom is at war with a nation of orcs. By the end of the adventure they may have learned that a secret society of humans is working to help the orcs, that magic is difficult to cast and has unpredictable results, that the kingdom's armies are broken into factions each loyal to a certain general, and that their village lies on a major road that stands in the way of the approaching orc army.

These are all important details that help define the adventure world. These facts will have a profound impact on future adventures, which will evolve the world even more.

By the end of the first adventure, the players will find the world their characters inhabit is a much different place than they may have first thought. They will learn about it as their characters learn.

Issues of control

This is not to say that you have to leave it all up to Mythic. If you are playing with a GM, that person ought to consider the results of random checks and altered scene ideas as suggestions and not hard-and-fast rules. As the adventure speeds along, they will find ideas popping into their heads that they like better than the ones evolving in front of them. Or maybe not. The choice is theirs.

If playing without a GM, the situation is more controlled by Mythic. Still, the course of the adventure is largely shaped by the questions the players ask and the scene ideas they generate.

Global questions

Everyone, even the least educated, knows something about the society and world they live in. Even if you begin an adventure knowing nothing about the campaign world, your characters know more than you, the player, do. It is fair to ask fate questions that reflect general knowledge. For instance, if players are adventuring in a generic sci-fi universe, which they know nothing about, some questions they might ask right away are: Is faster than light travel possible? Are aliens common? Does everyone speak the same language?

These kind of global questions will help shape the adventure world fairly quickly. Some you may already know, especially if the campaign world was not started completely from scratch. But even if you come prepared, your characters may stumble into areas where they should have knowledge, but you don't.

Many of these questions will involve large issues and will be easily remembered. If there is any question about the fallibility of your memories, however, it may be a good idea to keep a notebook handy and write some of these findings down.

Evolution by example

Following is a sample game world evolved during the course of several adventures.

Welcome to Durnam

The kingdom of Durnam is a fantasy realm with an economic and caste system straight out of the middle ages. Mancers, the mages of this world, are fairly common although magic is difficult to control. The kingdom is in a period of great turmoil as a pestilence, the Withering Fever, scours the land. Warlords are beginning to take advantage of the unrest, rising up against once strong barons.

This is the adventure world as envisioned by a pair of players who want to try their hand at a dark fantasy game. Their characters are Turvol, a wandering soldier whose lord has been toppled and Abner, a mancer of some ability.

Right at the outset, at the beginning of their first adventure, the players decide that social station is very important in this world. In areas where civilization still stands, he of the highest caste rules.

For the purposes of this example, we'll say that the players are using a popular fantasy rpg for their game mechanics. However, they are tossing out the setting that comes with the game and making up their own, using the rpg's mechanics for task resolution, magic, combat, etc.

The game they are using has a mechanic for dealing with social station, so the players make sure to emphasize this when they create their characters.

Turvol is a professional soldier and of about average social standing. Abner hails from a small, noble family, giving him a slightly elevated position. Early in the first adventure, as Abner and Turvol team up, Abner establishes himself as their leader in the cities, while Turvol takes over in the untamed wilds.

Through a series of fate questions and completed scenes, the characters end up going on an adventure to avenge Turvol's fallen lord. Abner agrees to help kill the warlord who usurped command and decimated Turvol's comrades.

As they journey through the countryside, they come across a lieutenant of the offending warlord who refused to follow his boss' evil commands and fled. He knows a secret way into the castle where the warlord is residing, and agrees to show the two adventurers the way in. Unfortunately, he has come down with a case of Withering Fever so he isn't long for this world. Since this character is important, the players decide they better learn a thing or two about the disease.

The rpg they are using has mechanics for dealing with disease, but they decide the Withering Fever is unique to their game world. Through the Fate Chart, they determine that the fever is a magical disease that slowly dehydrates the victim until they die a dessicated, dried up husk. During the course of the adventure, Abner uses his magic to keep the guide alive.

As scenes unfold, the adventurers discover entire villages suffering from the disease, and they learn that the warlord they seek is spreading the plague in an attempt to bring about the end of the world.

When the characters wrap up this adventure, the players can set their notes aside and bring them out again for another adventure in the kingdom of Durnam. After only one adventure they have learned a lot about the place: warlords prey on the weak; the Withering Fever threatens all; and social standing is of utmost importance in this society.

The more adventures they have, the more the world of Durnam will become fleshed out for them.

Chapter 7

Notes and Suggestions

Q&A

Following is a list of common questions about Mythic. If you have questions that are not answered in these pages, you can contact me by email at mythic@wordpr.com.

Can this really be played without a GM? I don't see it happening.

If you've read this book, and you don't believe me, you're just going to have to take my word for it until you find out for yourself. Granted, a GM-free game is not for everyone. You may prefer a highly prepared game master controlling the behind-the-scenes action. However, impromptu adventures, such as those created by Mythic, can take you to surprising places and are often more satisfying than a prepared adventure.

There isn't enough detail. Without a prepared adventure, how can you tell what's in a particular room, etc.?

You have to use some common sense and a few logical leaps. It all boils down to asking those yes and no questions. If your characters have been walking through a dungeon full of orcs, a good first question when entering a room might be, "Is the room empty?" If a no, then, you can either assume there are some orcs in there, or you can ask another fate question. If orcs are present, you might assume a warband of some 4 since that's been the most common encounter. If you want more detail you either ask another question or take the most common sense assumption. You can have as much detail as you like, framed as questions. If you were playing with a live GM, you'd be asking the same questions anyway.

I like the games I play now. Why should I switch to Mythic?

You don't have to switch. You can use Mythic as a GM "emulator" to help create impromptu adventures for use with your other RPGs. There is another version of Mythic, which includes a generic, universal system based around Mythic concepts.

What's the difference between Mythic and Mythic Emulator?

As stated above, Mythic is the original game system that includes a universal rpg and the emulator rules. Mythic is designed so that you can use the game system and the emulator either together, or just take one and leave the other. This product, Mythic Emulator, is a tweaked and updated version of the original emlator rules. This book only contains the emulation rules, and not the universal system. The reason for this is, judging from the feedback by players, the emulation portion is the most popular part of the product. Both of these products are available online at rpgnow.com, with Mythic Emulator a few bucks cheaper than Mythic.

What's with the name? Is there a story behind "Mythic"?

Nope. I just like the way it sounds. Well, actually, there is a tad more thought involved. Since Mythic is intended to create any kind of story for any situation, I thought "Mythic," as in generating myths and legends, was fitting.

I don't like to ask questions. Thinking makes my head hurt. What can I do?

I can't help you.

You mention at the beginning that Mythic can be used as a writing tool, but that isn't addressed in the book. What's up?

I figured I didn't have to specifically address this issue, but here we are now, doing that. Simply, to use Mythic as a writing tool, you just do a solo adventure using only Mythic. You sit, you write, and you refer the questions to Mythic, just like you would in a game with other players.

You can keep track of data, such as threads, characters, chaos, and all of that, or not. Mythic is centrally an adventure generating tool so it also works great for helping craft written stories as well.

I hate freestyle games. Will I hate Mythic?

I don't like freestyle games much either, that's one reason I came up with Mythic. The big advantages to freestyle games ("freestyle" as in rules-light and more story-teller oriented) are that they are simple to learn, play fast because they don't require a lot of rules-searching and page flipping, and are able to create a wide range of adventures very easily. The big downside to freestyle games is that their adventures can come across to players as arbitrary, as if things only happen because the GM wanted them to happen. In many cases, this is quite true of freestyle games. Many players begin to feel that their choices are meaningless.

Mythic is an attempt to draw in the advantages of a freestyle game while cutting out the disadvantages. It is freestyle in the sense that the action is directed by the players (they decide how each scene begins, their questions direct the course of the adventure, etc.) However, there are random, built-in mechanics that modify these decisions. Events rarely always work out the way players think they will and adventures have a tendency to spin in unexpected directions, just like "real" adventures do. The story, then, is not entirely up to the whim of the players and the GM as in many freestyle games.

Is there an origin to this game? How did it come about?

Mythic originally developed as an idea to create a solo role-playing game. As a teenager who loved role-playing games, but was always light on finding players, I dreamt of discovering a good, solo game out there. The only attempts at solo play were some adventures written in the "choose-your-own-adventure" style, where you follow a path in the book and are limited to only a few choices at each important juncture.

This was disappointing to say the least.

I experimented with various ideas, from creating reams of random tables that describe just about everything to using tarot cards (after all, if a tarot card can tell the future, why not use it to tell the present, even a fictional present?)

None of these ideas worked out so well.

Then, like sunlight breaking through the clouds, a concept dawned: why not use a system based on simple logic? From that idea came Mythic, where logic and interpretation are the foundation. I tried to develop the fate question system as a type of artificial intelligence, able to answer any question like a real, living game master. The choice to make the questions all yes/no is simply for the sake of efficiency (an early draft of Mythic allowed for any question to be asked and the answers were created by interpreting a combination of randomly rolled words. This was unwieldy as the list of words was over 10,000 strong and produced some wild results.)

So there you go.

Tips for Better Play

This section deals with a few issues and ideas that were not covered fully in the preceding chapters.

This isn't '20 Questions'

It's easy once you get knee deep into a Mythic adventure to not only get in the habit of asking questions, but of asking too many questions. Resolving answers is a balance of forming yes/no questions and using simple logic. You shouldn't need to ask more than one question before logic can finish the rest.

It's best to live with a one question limit to prevent the "20 questions" syndrome and only breaking that limit to clarify really important situations. When you know a few facts and compare them against the larger context of the whole adventure then a logical conclusion should be easy to come up with.

Only when logic eludes you should you resort to asking more questions until you have enough new information to form a conclusion.

Mythic as the game

The rules set out in this book describe how to use Mythic as a Game Master emulator. However, the same rules that are used to answer narrative questions can also be used to answer game mechanic questions. In other words, Mythic could be used to role-play without any other game product.

Mythic Emulator's parent product (just "Mythic") contains fully fleshed out rules for using Mythic as a core role-playing game. However, you can run a rules-lite game using nothing more than this book. Characters would be described in everyday language, such as: "Randal is a desert barbarian renowned for his strength and his ferocity in battle. His favored weapon is the

scimitar, and he can travel for days without sleep." Such a description gives you a basic idea of the character, and will help when assigning odds to answer questions on the Fate Chart.

The fine art of interpretation

You've been warned about the excessive use of questions. There is another, similar, trap to avoid: excessive interpretation. Commonly you will be faced with a handful of facts and some vague references from the event meaning charts, and find yourself cooking up several possible interpretations. Instead of sitting there all day mulling each one over, just take the one that seems most logical. If you aren't sure which one that is, take the one that came to mind first.

This is especially important if you are playing Mythic with a group. Everyone will suddenly throw out interpretations. Take the first one that seems to fit and move on. If someone has an interpretation that seems more logical, then quickly consider it as a group.

This leads me to my (almost) last topic ...

You are SOOO immature!

A successful Mythic adventure relies on mature role-playing. This means enjoying yourself and respecting the other players. An adventure can be ruined by a player who attempts to take advantage of the system's free-form nature. For instance, the characters are walking down the street when one player suddenly asks, "Do I find a pot of gold on the sidewalk?"

Technically, this is a valid question. But it makes no sense to ask. The player could ask the same question every time he enters a room, opens a door, or gets out of bed.

Obviously, this kind of play should be discouraged.

Such "strategy" is usually self-defeating in Mythic, fortunately. If this player shows up in a Mythic group, or even a well-meaning player asks the occasionally self-serving question, Mythic can discourage the question automatically. For instance, the odds of finding a pot of gold on the sidewalk are pretty slim, let's say impossible. With a chaos rank of 5, this gives him a 4% chance of a simple yes (with a 1% chance of an exceptional yes), a 76% chance of a no, and a 19% chance of an exceptional no. In a question like the "pot of gold" question, an exceptional no could mean the opposite, perhaps the character gets mugged for his wallet! By asking such a question the character may actually put himself at greater odds of the opposite happening than gaining a benefit.

The point is that Mythic should be played by those who want to play it for its free-form nature. And, oh yeah, be careful what you ask for!

Any more questions?

As if you haven't heard enough about "questions," I'm going to talk about it once again. This time, however, I'm talking about YOUR questions. If you have any questions about Mythic, you can email them to mythic@wordpr.com. Or, go to the Mythic website at http://www.mythic.wordpr.com

Thanks!

Thanks for giving Mythic a try! I hope you find it a valuable new tool in your role-playing arsenal. Like most games, this has been a labor of love several years in the making. If you've enjoyed it half as much as I have, then I will consider it a success.

Chapter 8

Extended Example

This chapter is a great, big extended example of play, from beginning to end. The example here is essentially a transcript between two players: John is the GM and Samantha is the player. Even though they are playing with a GM, they will be using Mythic to create the adventure. In this example we will assume game mechanics are handled by another rpg.

Keep in mind that, in this example, the two are playing with a GM, but he is generating the adventure with Mythic. John has no more idea what is going on than Sam does. In this example, you will see John ask fate questions. He isn't phrasing these questions out loud, however, so as not to tip off Sam to what he's thinking. Whenever the adventure reaches a point where John needs to determine the next direction, he checks with the Fate Chart if a logical answer isn't already apparent.

John and Sam get together without any prepared adventure, although Sam has some ideas. She's been reading Michael Moorcock lately and wants a female version of Elric. The two chat for a bit and come up with the following new campaign world.

The place is Rantha, a fantasy, medieval world that has been wracked by war. The clash between kingdoms has been immense and involved powerful magics which have devastated the countryside. The final blow in the war came when a great dragon arose from his ancient slumber to decimate the staggering armies and claim the land for itself. In desperation the kingdoms gathered together and blasted the beast with unheard of magical might. The dragon literally exploded in a fantasy equivalent of a nuclear blast.

The armies and kingdoms had already been devastated and fractured. The cataclysmic death of the dragon ended what little civilization remained and showered the land with evil magic, which mutated plant and animal life into horrific forms. With their liege lords dead, and the soldiers gone, commoners found themselves at the mercy of walking horrors.

Into this world comes Sam's character, Gloranna. She was once a commander in the army of one of the fallen lords. During the wars, she came into possession of a magic sword that sapped the life out of those the blade bit and converted that energy into magical power. Gloranna became adept at manipulating these forces, using the ancient blade to devastating effect on the battlefield and earning herself a fearsome reputation.

They construct Sam's character, making her part warrior and part mage, and get ready to play her first adventure.

John decides he'll let the dice come up with the adventure seed, so he rolls a random event to see what kicks off the first scene. He comes up with "introduce a new NPC" on the event focus table, and "break" and "legal matters" on the event meaning charts. After a moment of thought, he comes up with the following scene setup.

John: "Gloranna has been living in a valley for months now with a ragtag group of refugees, those who survived the war and found each other. They have formed a loose kind of village, and Gloranna has risen to become their leader. One day, however, a band of warriors rides into the village lead by a young man wearing a crown. He announces himself as Prince Vilmor, the rightful heir to the lord who previously ruled these lands, and he is looking for men to join his army. He is claiming the land, and the people, for himself. Several members of the village lead him to Gloranna's tent, where he introduces himself. He extends his hand, expecting Gloranna to kneel and kiss it."

Sam: "Hmm. Right off, she doesn't like the look of this. She gives the prince a bow, but does not kiss his hand."

John: "Alright. He looks at you, surprised and somewhat offended." John decides to check on the Fate Chart to see how offended he is. He asks the fate question, "does the prince demand fealty?" and gives the odds as likely. He rolls an 18, for a yes. "The prince looks at you and says, 'I am your rightful lord, soldier. Kneel and pay me homage!'"

Sam: "Alright, Gloranna's just not in the mood for this. She says, 'We've moved beyond the age of kings, my prince. I bow to no man.'"

John: John has already established that the prince is a proud man, so he knows this will probably not go over well with him. He asks the fate question, "does the prince order his men to force her to kneel?" He considers the odds very likely, and rolls a 37 for a yes. "'Guards! Make her kneel!' the prince cries." At the start of this adventure, John had simply stated that the prince had ridden into the village with a band of warriors. He is going to assume that there are two nearby who will answer his call. "A pair of soldiers draw their swords and come at you, with menacing looks in their eyes."

Sam: "I'm not going to mess around. Prince or no prince, he's on my territory. Gloranna draws her sword

and attacks the guards.

At this point, a battle ensues between Gloranna and the two guards. John adjudicates the combat, which Gloranna wins by swiftly dispatching the two men with her magic sword.

John: "You stand above the two bodies, a little smoke rising off your sword as it drinks up the last of their life force and feeds it into you. The prince stands by shocked and horrified." John is not entirely sure what the prince will do next, but decides to ask the following Fate Chart question, "Does the prince flee, vowing revenge?" He gives the odds as likely and rolls a 26 for a yes. "The prince flees from the tent and back to his men. Some of the villagers had seen what happened, and they have grabbed what makeshift weapons they can, and start approaching the prince and his men. Leaping upon his horse he cries out, 'You will regret this, fool! I will destroy you all!' With that, he and his men ride away."

John and Sam decide at this point that the main action has ended for this scene. John updates his adventure sheet. To the character list, he adds the prince, the people of the valley, and the prince's guards. He adds to the thread list, protect the village from the prince. This is going to be the primary thrust of this adventure, John figures. Finally, he decides that, although Gloranna won in her battle against the two guards, that the situation was not really under control. So, he moves the chaos factor up from a 5 to a 6.

It's time to move on to scene 2. John asks Sam what her next move is so he can figure out what the next scene setup will likely be.

Sam: "I gather a group of villagers, five able-bodied men, and we leave in the night to try and scope out the prince and his troops. We need to find out how many soldiers he has."

John rolls a d10 to see if this is how the scene actually begins. He rolls a 1, well within the chaos factor of 6, and indicates an altered scene. John goes with the following setup: "Your plan to gather up a scouting party has met with a problem. The village has only one horse. There is no way that six people could make much distance in the dark, so Gloranna will likely have to go alone."

Sam: "Alright. She works better alone anyway. She'll take the horse and follow the prince's trail as best she can."

John: "Gloranna rides from the village as the sun begins to set, following the prince's hoofprints." John uses game mechanics to test Gloranna's skill at tracking during the night. He decides that it takes her a few hours, but she manages to locate where the prince is camping. Before he decides, though, he asks the Fate Chart, "Is the prince camping in a clearing?" with odds of near sure thing. John figures, where else is the prince going to camp out in the wild? He rolls a 95. A very high roll, but since the chaos factor had moved to a 6, the roll still provides a yes answer. "As you top a ridge, you see firelight past the trees below. You can see that the prince and his men have camped in a clearing." John needs to decide just how large the prince's horde is, now that Gloranna can see it. He decides that since the prince road into the village with only a small band, and since he was looking to take the village as his own, he figures the prince is only now beginning to gather people to him, and so likely has only a very small force. He asks the fate question, "Does the

Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene (odd) or an Interrupt (even).
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: *Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor*

Adventure Notes

Scene 1 **Scene Setup**

Prince from nowhere rides into the village and claims it.

Scene **Scene Setup**

Scene **Scene Setup**

Scene **Scene Setup**

Scene **Scene Setup**

Scene **Scene Setup**

Scene **Scene Setup**

Scene **Scene Setup**

Lists

Characters

The prince
People of the Valley
Prince's guards

Threads

Protect the village from the prince

Chaos Factor

~~5~~ 6

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prince only have about twenty men?" with odds of likely. He rolls a 65 for a yes. "You can see that the camp is not large and there are about twenty men about."

Sam: "Hmm, okay. I am going to creep closer and see if I can get a better look at them."

John: The GM makes some rolls, using their chosen rpg mechanics to see if Gloranna can sneak closer without being detected. "You succeed, slipping from tree to tree, treading silentlly over the wilderness ground until you are close enough to hear men talking." John decides that, if the prince is planning on attacking the next day, it's likely the men would be talking about it. He puts this to the Fate Chart, and rolls a 35. "A pair of men sit beside a fire, cooking something on a stick. They are talking about the raid scheduled for dawn. One is laughing about how easy it will be to take down a bunch of refugees." John has an idea and takes it a step further. The prince had told Gloranna that he was looking for fighting men, but perhaps he was only looking for slaves. John puts this question to the Fate Chart, with odds of somewhat likely. He rolls a 100, for an exceptional no! Exceptional no results usually mean the exreme opposite of what was asked, so John knows they are not looking for slaves. He thinks of something that fits the results. "One of the men takes a bite of his food and sneers at his friend. He says, 'I can't believe we are going to all of this trouble just to find one man.' His friend answers, 'Yeah, well, the prince seems to think Rakhim knows where the vessel lies. He's hiding out here somewhere, and it looks like we're going to take apart every village we come across until we find him.'"

Sam: "Rakhim? Is that a name I recognize? And what is the vessel?"

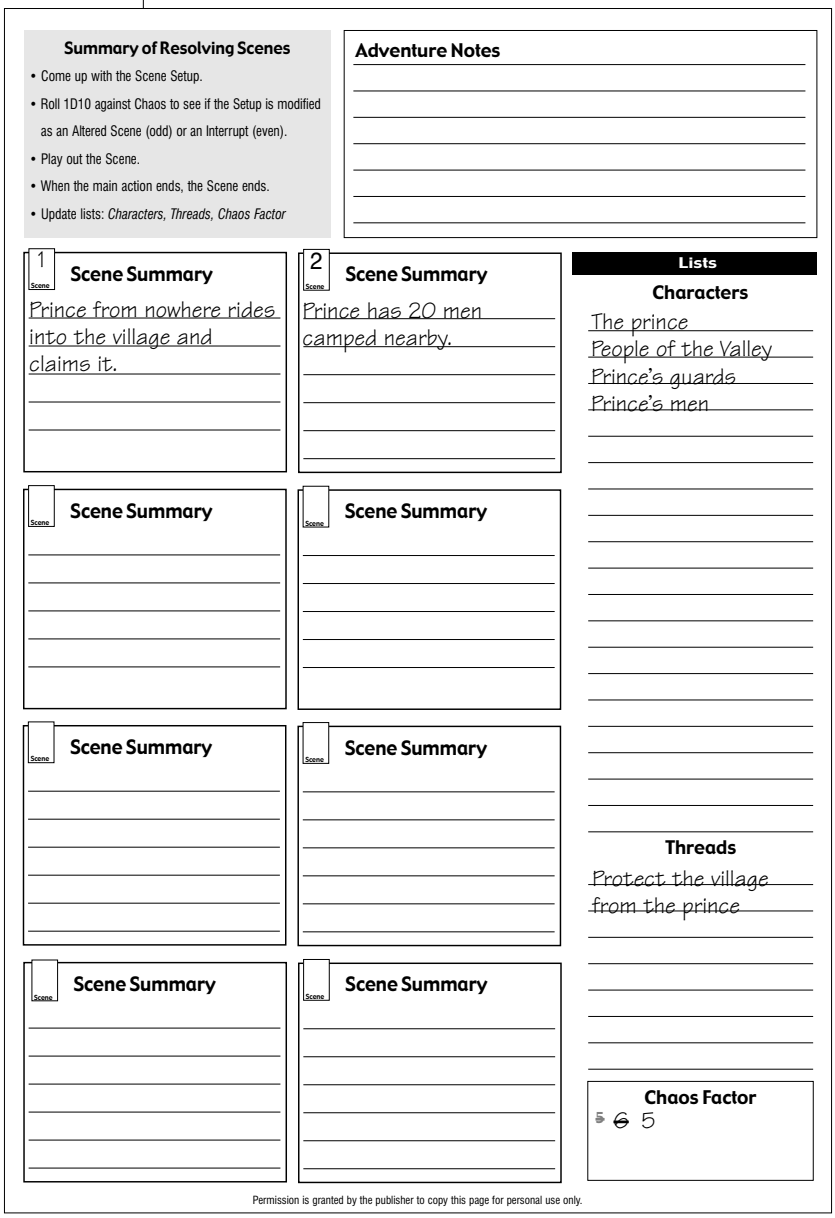
John: John doesn't know either, since he just made up those details to fit the results of the Fate Chart. He puts both of Sam's questions to the Fate Chart. For, "does Gloranna know a Rakhim?" he gives odds of very unlikely, and rolls a 46 for a no. For the fate question, "does Gloranna know what the vessel is?" he gives odds of very unlikely as well, and rolls a 24 for a yes. "The name Rakhim is unfamiliar to you. However, you have heard of an artifact called the Vessell. It is said to contain some of the living blood of the great dragon whose death caused the kingdom so much misery. Whoever possesses the vessel is said to have access to a vast amount of magical energy."

Sam: "Well, Gloranna frowns at that. She's only met this prince once, and already she doesn't want him having that much power. If she were to hightail it back home, could she round up some of the villagers and get them back here before dawn?"

John: John thought about that, and made it a fate question with odds of 50/50, since he really had no idea. He rolls a 39 for a yes. "Gloranna seems to think so, if she can ride straight through without incident. What do you have in mind?"

Sam: "You'll see. She'll try and slip away then."

John: John determines that Gloranna slips away from the camp without a problem. Since the major action of this scene is over, John declares Scene 2 complete and prepares for Scene 3. He updates his adventure chart, adding a note to the scene summary. To the character list, he adds "prince's men." He already has "prince's guards," but he decides to make a distinction between those who personally guard the prince and the rest of the men in



Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene (odd) or an Interrupt (even).
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: *Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor*

Adventure Notes

1 Scene **Scene Summary**
Prince from nowhere rides into the village and claims it.

2 Scene **Scene Summary**
Prince has 20 men camped nearby.

Scene **Scene Summary**

Scene **Scene Summary**

Scene **Scene Summary**

Scene **Scene Summary**

Scene **Scene Summary**

Scene **Scene Summary**

Lists

Characters
The prince
People of the Valley
Prince's guards
Prince's men

Threads
Protect the village from the prince

Chaos Factor
~~5~~ ~~6~~ 5

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general. The threads list doesn't change, since Gloranna's mission is still to protect the village from the prince. Gloranna was in control throughout Scene 2, so John lowers the chaos factor to 5.

Sam said she planned to have Gloranna head back to the village and gather people together. This is how he pictures Scene 3 starting then. He tests this scene setup with a roll of a d10, and gets an 8, which means the scene begins as envisioned.

"Gloranna rides back fast, her skill at horsemanship allowing her to cover a lot of ground despite the dark. She encounters no problems along the way and reaches the village in the dead of the night. What's her plan now?"

Sam: "I go through the village, rousing anyone who is able to go with me. I tell them to take ropes, weapons, shovels, tarps and cloth, and just about anything they can get their hands on."

John: "If you're going to have them go back with you, time is of the essence. You've got the only horse, so they are going to have to gather quickly and move." John decides to make this a fate question, to see if the villagers are able to get it together as quickly as Gloranna wants them to. He makes a fate question of, "Do they move as swiftly as Gloranna wants?" and gives it odds of likely. He rolls a 9 for an exceptional yes. "When the villagers hear what Gloranna has to tell them about the impending attack, they move with amazing speed. In fact, most of them were already awake and alert, waiting for your return. Faster than you would have believed, they gather the materials you want and head off with you in the lead."

Sam: "Since I know where the camp is, I move as quickly as I can with them back to near the spot. With twenty men, I am going to figure that the prince will use the same road that Gloranna is using when he moves to attack the village. So, when we are about a mile out from the camp, we stop. I order the villagers to begin digging pits in the road, and cover them with tarps and leaves. We can tie the ropes to trees, and attach logs to them so we can swing them down at riders."

John: "So, basically, you're going to trap this section of the road."

Sam: "Yeah."

John: "The villagers work for the next four hours, following Gloranna's directions and erecting the traps. As the sun begins to top the horizon, they have finished with all they could get done. Soon, the riders should appear."

Sam: "Gloranna tells them all to hide, grabbing whatever weapons they can. She'll hide as well and wait for the attackers. The plan is, when they come, I'm hoping they'll hit the traps and be a bit scattered and confused. Gloranna will attack then, and any of the villagers who feel game can weigh in as well. At least, they can help finish off anyone who has been incapacitated by a trap."

John: "Sounds good." That seems like a good place to cap off Scene 3. John updates his adventure sheet.

No new characters were introduced, and no new threads, so John leaves those lists alone. Gloranna was in control once again this scene, so he lowers the chaos factor to 4 this time.

The character is simply waiting now for

Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene (odd) or an Interrupt (even).
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: *Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor*

Adventure Notes

1 Scene — **Scene Summary**
Prince from nowhere rides into the village and claims it.

2 Scene — **Scene Summary**
Prince has 20 men camped nearby.

3 Scene — **Scene Summary**
Villagers lay a trap for the invaders.

Scene — **Scene Summary**

Scene — **Scene Summary**

Scene — **Scene Summary**

Scene — **Scene Summary**

Lists

Characters
The prince
People of the Valley
Prince's guards
Prince's men

Threads
Protect the village from the prince

Chaos Factor
~~5~~ ~~6~~ ~~5~~ 4

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the invaders to come. The setup for scene 4 is to have the invaders ride into the trap, and Gloranna attacks them. John rolls to see if this is how it pans out, and gets a 2 for an interrupt scene. He needs to roll a random event to see what causes a different, unanticipated scene. Checking the event focus table, he gets a 24 for NPC action. Randomly determining an NPC, he rolls up the prince's men. Using the event meaning tables, he gets "transform" as the action and "expectations" as the subject. John thinks about this for a moment, and comes up with the first thing that comes to mind.

It's time to start Scene 4 now. "In the distance you hear the pounding of hoofbeats. The riders are coming, the ground shaking slightly from their approach. Gloranna can see that the villagers around her are nervous. These are not fighting people. She can only hope that their traps will do most of the damage. The riders come into view, galloping hard, and Gloranna realizes she has made a mistake. At the lead of the riders are about four men, two of whom were the ones she heard talking the night before. Behind them are about sixteen additional riders. However, they are not men. Even from a distance, she can see that the remainder of the prince's force are mutants and mishapen humans, their faces warped and snarling. These aren't just fighting men, but creatures warped by the land's evil magic. Each one is far tougher than a standard human, and hard to put down."

Sam: "Oh, man. Well, there's nothing else to do at this point. Hopefully those traps will work."

John: Deciding to make this a fate question, he silently asks of the chart, "do the traps take out the first 10 riders?" He gives this odds of 50/50, since there seems to be a fair amount of luck involved. He rolls 42 for a no. "The riders charge into your trapped area, and the first one hits a pit. He goes down into it, and the other riders immediately try and pull up on their reigns. Another one tumbles into a pit. The villagers release their ropes, swinging the logs down at the invaders. A human and a mutant are knocked from their horses and into the woods. That's a total of four taken down. However, the others have managed to avoid the traps. The mutants snarl as the humans bark orders, preparing for a counter attack. The prince is at the rear of the group, screaming at them to attack."

Sam: "Hmm, that didn't go so well. Gloranna draws her sword and wades into the group, attacking them. She will try to use her knowledge of where the remaining pits are to keep them from all attacking her at once."

John: The adventure has turned into a battle royale, with Gloranna at the center of it. John uses the game mechanics from the rpg they are using to figure out how the battle goes. Occassionally during the fight, he needs to answer a fate question. Such as, "does the mutant attacking her accidentally step into another pit?" During the course of answering questions, John rolls a 22 ... a double number, with the single digit within the chaos factor range. This means a random event occurs. Gloranna is in the midst of a major, pitched battle, so John already knows what the context of this event will be. That part is easy. For the event focus, he rolls "NPC action," and he randomly determines that the NPC in question is "prince's guards." For the meaning, he rolls "inspect" and "pain." John comes up with the following event. "Gloranna, you notice that one of the villagers had gotten through the line and actually attacked the prince, who has been standing back the whole time. His personal guard killed the villager, but they are huddled around the prince now and are pulling him back. This is drawing off the guard, and just leaves about five more mutants to deal with." Gloranna continues her battle until she is the last one standing, bruised, battered and bleeding, but victorious.

Sam: "Any sign of the prince? I'd like to save him for desert."

John: Figuring the odds to this question are "no way," since the prince high-tailed it out of there, John rolls anyway and gets a 37. "No. He is long gone."

With the battle concluded, this scene draws to a close. John gives Sam some parting images of the villagers cleaning up and gathering their dead before they head back home.

With the prince's men destroyed, John decides this completes the thread and ends the adventure. John decides to throw in one more scene as a kind of epilogue. His scene setup is, "The people throw Gloranna a party in appreciation of her saving their butts." Since she dominated in the last scene, he lowered the chaos factor another point, to 3. Rolling d10, he gets a 6. The scene setup stands as is.

"In appreciation for your leadership and bravery in battle, the villagers throw a tremendous celebration in Gloranna's honor. Their is feasting, dancing, music, and much merriment. As she sits and enjoys the festival, one of the village elders comes near and sits beside her. He says, 'You know the prince will return some day. A man like him does not take a beating lightly.'"

Sam: "Gloranna looks at him, but says nothing. What can she say, he's probably right. She smiles at him instead and takes a big chug of her drink. 'Let him come!' she says."

John: "Nice. A good end to the adventure."

Since John figures the elderly villager is probably correct, he adds the prince to Gloranna's personal NPC list of important people, leaving the door open for a future adventure involving that character.

Fate Chart

To use this chart, cross reference the odds of a question resulting in a "yes" answer with the current chaos rank. The result is the percentage chance of the question resulting in a "yes" answer. A roll within the range of the number on the left is an "exceptional yes" and equal or more than the number on the right is an "exceptional no."

Odds	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Impossible	10 50 91	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82	0 0 81	0 0 81	0 -20 77
No way	15 75 96	10 50 91	7 35 88	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82	0 0 81
Very unlikely	16 85 97	13 65 94	10 50 91	9 45 90	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82
Unlikely	18 90 99	15 75 96	11 55 92	10 50 91	7 35 88	4 20 85	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82
50/50	19 95 100	16 85 97	15 75 96	13 65 94	10 50 91	7 35 88	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83
Somewhat likely	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	16 80 97	13 65 94	10 50 91	9 45 90	5 25 86	4 20 85
Likely	20 100 0	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	15 75 96	11 55 92	10 50 91	7 35 88	5 25 86
Very likely	21 105 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	15 75 96	13 65 94	10 50 91	9 45 90
Near sure thing	23 115 0	20 100 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 80 97	15 75 96	11 55 92	10 50 91
A sure thing	25 125 0	22 110 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	16 80 97	13 65 94	11 55 92
Has to be	26 145 0	26 130 0	20 100 0	20 100 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	16 80 97
Exceptional Yes The lower 1/5 of the success range.									
Exceptional No The upper 1/5 of the failure range.									
				Chaos Rank					

Summary of How to Use the Fate Chart

1: State a question: Form a yes/no question.

2: Determine odds: Estimate the odds of the question coming out "yes."

3: Determine probability: Cross reference the odds with the current Choas score to get your percentage chance of a "yes" answer.

4: Roll: Roll 1D100. If you roll within the percentage range, the answer is yes. If you roll above, the answer is no. If you roll in the lower 1/5 of the range, then the answer is an exceptional yes. If you roll in the upper 1/5 of the failure range, then the answer is an exceptional no.

5: Interpret the answer: Draw the most logical conclusion from the results. If this is not possible, then ask another question to clarify, returning to step 1.

Summary of Resolving Random Events

1) Determine event focus.
2) Determine event meaning (the action and subject).
3) Interpret the random event based on context, focus and meaning. Take the most logical conclusion.

Event Focus Table

1-7 . . . . . .Remote event
8-28 . . . . . .NPC action
29-35 . . . . . .Introduce a new NPC
36-45 . . . . . .Move toward a thread
46-52 . . . . . .Move away from a thread
53-55 . . . . . .Close a thread
56-67 . . . . . .PC negative
68-75 . . . . . .PC positive
76-83 . . . . . .Ambiguous event
84-92 . . . . . .NPC negative
93-100 . . . . . .NPC positive

Event Meaning: Action

1. Attainment
2. Starting
3. Neglect
4. Fight
5. Recruit
6. Triumph
7. Violate
8. Oppose
9. Malice
10. Communicate
11. Persecute
12. Increase
13. Decrease
14. Abandon
15. Gratify
16. Inquire
17. Antagonise
18. Move
19. Waste
20. Truce
21. Release
22. Befriend
23. Judge
24. Desert
25. Dominate
26. Procrastinate
27. Praise
28. Separate
29. Take
30. Break
31. Heal
32. Delay
33. Stop
34. Lie
35. Return
36. Immitate
37. Struggle
38. Inform
39. Bestow
40. Postpone
41. Expose
42. Haggle
43. Imprison
44. Release
45. Celebrate
46. Develop
47. Travel
48. Block
49. Harm
50. Debase
51. Overindulge
52. Adjourn
53. Adversity
54. Kill
55. Disrupt
56. Usurp
57. Create
58. Betray
59. Agree
60. Abuse
61. Oppress
62. Inspect
63. Ambush
64. Spy
65. Attach
66. Carry
67. Open
68. Carelessness
69. Ruin
70. Extravagance
71. Trick
72. Arrive
73. Propose
74. Divide
75. Refuse
76. Mistrust
77. Deceive
78. Cruelty
79. Intolerance
80. Trust
81. Excitement
82. Activity
83. Assist
84. Care
85. Negligence
86. Passion
87. Work hard
88. Control
89. Attract
90. Failure
91. Pursue
92. Vengeance
93. Proceedings
94. Dispute
95. Punish
96. Guide
97. Transform
98. Overthrow
99. Oppress
100. Change

Event Meaning: Subject

1. Goals
2. Dreams
3. Environment
4. Outside
5. Inside
6. Reality
7. Allies
8. Enemies
9. Evil
10. Good
11. Emotions
12. Opposition
13. War
14. Peace
15. The innocent
16. Love
17. The spiritual
18. The intellectual
19. New ideas
20. Joy
21. Messages
22. Energy
23. Balance
24. Tension
25. Friendship
26. The physical
27. A project
28. Pleasures
29. Pain
30. Possessions
31. Benefits
32. Plans
33. Lies
34. Expectations
35. Legal matters
36. Bureaucracy
37. Business
38. A path
39. News
40. Exterior factors
41. Advice
42. A plot
43. Competition
44. Prison
45. Illness
46. Food
47. Attention
48. Success
49. Failure
50. Travel
51. Jealousy
52. Dispute
53. Home
54. Investment
55. Suffering
56. Wishes
57. Tactics
58. Stalemate
59. Randomness
60. Misfortune
61. Death
62. Disruption
63. Power
64. A burden
65. Intrigues
66. Fears
67. Ambush
68. Rumor
69. Wounds
70. Extravagance
71. A representative
72. Adversities
73. Opulence
74. Liberty
75. Military
76. The mundane
77. Trials
78. Masses
79. Vehicle
80. Art
81. Victory
82. Dispute
83. Riches
84. Status quo
85. Technology
86. Hope
87. Magic
88. Illusions
89. Portals
90. Danger
91. Weapons
92. Animals
93. Weather
94. Elements
95. Nature
96. The public
97. Leadership
98. Fame
99. Anger
100. Information

Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene (odd) or an Interrupt (even).
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: *Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor*

Adventure Notes

Scene #

Scene Setup

Scene #

Scene Setup

Scene #

Scene Setup

Scene #

Scene Setup

Scene #

Scene Setup

Scene #

Scene Setup

Scene #

Scene Setup

Scene #

Scene Setup

Lists

Characters

Threads

Chaos Factor

5

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Index

Adventure 20
Adventure setup 33
Adventures 6
Altered scenes 26
Artists 2
Big Picture 11
Chaos Factor 24, 30
Character Action 14
Characters 22
Cinematic 21
Cinematic Play 21
Cinematic scenes 29
Common questions 40
Context 13
Deductive logic 18
Event context 13
Event focus 13
Event focus table 14
Event meaning 16
Event Meaning Table 17, 50
Exceptional results 11
Fate chart 8, 11, 49
Fate chart random events 13
GM 5, 6
GM Emulation 33
I dunno Rule 16
Improvisation 7
Inductive logic 18
Interpretation 6, 7, 11, 42
Interrupt scenes 27
Introduce a New Character 14
Lists 22
Logic 7, 18
Modifying the scene setup 26
Notes 40
NPC 22
Open thread 15
Q&A 40
Random Event Examples 19
Random events 13
Randomness 13
Remote Event 14
RyK 2
Scene length 28
Scene random events 13
Scene setup 25
Scenes 20, 25
Set the scene 25
Setup 22
Sherlock Holmes 18
Simulation 21
Solo 6
Subplots 25
Suggestions 40
Summary of Resolving Random Events 15, 49
Summary of Resolving Scenes 29
Threads 25, 30
Tips 41
World Creation 38
Writing 6

