

Introduction

In Flash ARGHHHHH! you will play the part of Flash Gordon and his friends as they battle the evil Ming the Merciless!

This game is inspired by the 1936 black and white cliff hanger series starring Buster Crabbe.

You can download the series from the Internet Archive.

The structure of the game follows the classic cliff-hanger formula, meaning your play session will end with a hero perched on the very edge of destruction! The next session will pick up where the last one left off, and the adventure continues until they reach the next cliff hanger!

Characters

Three pre-generated characters are supplied for you to play with. Each character has both a "Prone" and "Good" attribute.

Flash Gordon: (Polo player)

Prone: to adventure.
Good: in a fight.

Dale Arden: (Reporter)

Prone: to being captured.

Good: investigator.

Alexis Zarkov: (Professor)

Prone: to flattery.
Good: at inventing.

If you have more than three players then you'll need to invent a new character. These characters are always an ally to Flash and his friends. Allies should be exotic, possibly coming from Ming's home planet of Mongo. Mongo has all kinds of peoples; Lion-Men, Winged-Men, Robotic-Men, Ice-Men, Lizard-men etc. In the original serials Buster would often find a friend in the most unexpected locations. Once you've decided on the type of character you must come up with a "Prone" and a "Good" for the character. Then all you need is a good space-age name, and a wacky hat for them to wear (*seriously, wacky hat is required, watch the series if you don't believe me!*)

Prone

A characters "Prone", is a liability of the character. During play as the story is told you

will use the "Prone" to get the character into trouble. It's a fallibility.

For instance Flash has "Prone to adventure." If he sees something adventuresome, such as a fight, a mysterious cave, or an unclimbed mountain he has to get involved, and this gets him into all sorts of scrapes. Even before you've cleared up the last adventure, the Flash player can drag everyone into a new disaster using his Prone!

When coming up with your own "Prone" consider how it could be used to get the character into scrapes, the more scrapes, the better, it'll give you more problems to solve.

Good

A characters "Good", describes what the character is good at doing, their speciality in the stories. You should make use of it when telling the stories to highlight your character.

A Good can be interpreted in any way you want. For instance, Dale is good at investigating; you can interpret that as being able to hunt through files, spot hidden doors or even getting the villain to monologue his plot!

Doing Things

This game is "rules light", meaning that your characters can do lots of things without having to resort to the traditional Role Playing game technique of rolling dice to accomplish things. Instead, your characters are able to do pretty much anything they want. This game is all about telling a fun adventurous story, so if you think it is fun for your character to knock out seven bad guys with his fists, then he does it. Likewise if you think it's fun for him to be overpowered by two sickly waifs, go for it. Tell the story you want.

However! The players at your table can call for a die roll, if they think you've gone too far, or not far enough. For instance if Flash takes out a nine dudes with his fists, the other players might think you've gone too far. At this point they can call for a die roll. Roll a standard six sided die, and consult the following table.

- 1: Failed, and went really wrong.
- 2-3: The character failed at the task.
- 4-5: The character succeeded.
- 6: Success! But introduce a twist!



Just when they'd escaped the Ice Giants, killed Ming's Lieutenant and stopped the poison gas attack, Flash did it again. He saw an interesting cave and in he charged. Dale and Zarkov called after him "Flash! " Then frustrated, "Arghhhhhh!"

This scene is a great opportunity to implement a characters "Prone". One of the players characters needs to find themselves in a most perilous situation. Perhaps they're captured by Ming or one of his minions. Perhaps the rocket ship they're in runs out of rocket fuel and they're plunging into the sun! Work together to produce an exciting climactic end for the session. Don't be afraid to create an EPS (extreme peril situation)!

The Cliff

In this scene the characters rush to and fro battling the evil villains, they fly from Earth to Mongo, battle the enemy hordes, defeat minor enemies, destroy death rays and make lucky escapes. If you have enough ideas, you can add additional "Drive" scenes.

The Drive

In this scene the players should work to get their characters embroiled in the new story for this episode. Chat together and come up with the episode goal, and tell the opening scene of this story. Does Ming kidnap someone, attack a village or enslave a race, you decide!

The Hook

If it's your first game, skip this scene. The classic serials always ended with a cliff-hanger where one of the heroes was in terrible peril with no way of getting out of it. In the next episode they do get out of it. Help often arrives in the nick of time or the ending of the previous session gets re-written! During this scene the players come up with the most exciting way they can think of to get their characters out of trouble.

The Cheat

Each session of the game is broken down into a number of scenes, these reflect the structure of an episode of the classic serial.

Structure of a Session

Each time you sit down to play "FLASH ARGHHHHH!" you are recreating something like that 1936 adventure series. But to create that series you need to create a plot that will drive the series. Start by rolling a die and consulting this table:-

- 1-3: Ming is trying to destroy the Earth
- 4-6: Ming is trying to conquer the Earth.

Now roll a second die to determine how Ming is trying to accomplish his goal:-

- 1: Spreading a plague
- 2: Mounting an invasion
- 3: Using a super-weapon
- 4: Highly placed spies
- 5: Using an evil ally
- 6: Controlling a giant Monster.

Now you know what Ming is trying to do and how. The details of that plan are up to you to bring out during play. Be sure NOT to plan the details ahead of time. Let everyone add details to this during each scene as play progresses.