



アニメ シング

ANIME THING

A STORY GAME
OF LARGER THAN LIFE HEROES
FACING LARGER THAN LIFE THREATS
INSPIRED BY EPISODIC ACTION ANIME

FOR 3-5 PLAYERS

happionlabs.com/anime-thing-rpg

Version 2016.4.2

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Because you're the one who has the book you'll probably be facilitating the game, but you shouldn't need to read the instructions first. When you're playing, the players who aren't familiar with the instructions (including you if you haven't read the rest of this yet) will take turns reading out loud and teach each other the game that way.

If you want to avoid some confusion you could read the instructions ahead of time and check out the examples and clarifications at the end, but it's possible to just start playing.

You will have to prepare some before play: besides having a copy of the instructions, you'll want to print out one or two of each playbook and the double sided sheet of Ideas.

You'll also need a lot of dice—about thirty to be safe. Having them in two or three different colors will help. It's also useful to have a twelve-sider, for rolling on the random idea tables.

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PILOT EPISODE

Read aloud. As you're the first reader you can set an example for the other readers to follow, reading clearly and slowly so everyone can hear.

What kind of anime is this?

This game is inspired by certain mainstream episodic televised action anime. It's intended to be 'TV-14' and be about larger-than-life—usually teenage—heroes who come together in the end despite their flaws and differences. The shows that inspired this game are all fantasy: space fantasy, criminal fantasy, mech fantasy, or fantasy fantasy. They switch back and forth between being serious and over-the-top. How serious our game will turn out will depend on us, but we can't expect it to be completely serious or completely silly. This game doesn't aspire to be Studio Ghibli.

Let's let those of us who have not played read the instructions aloud to everyone. We'll take turns with each section and we'll all learn—or be reminded of—the instructions. If we're confused there are examples and some clarifications to frequently asked questions at the end.

We don't need to read the 'things to try' in the light-colored text boxes; they can be helpful but aren't necessary, particularly if you're veteran story gamers.

Hand the instructions to the next reader.

The premise

We'll start by creating a premise. Let's discuss what our anime show is going to be about. If we're stuck for ideas or short on time, there are tables of ideas in the play materials.

After we've chosen a premise we drill down and get more specific.

What time period does this take place in?

Where does it take place?

What is magic or technology like in this world?

There's no need to discuss it for long. We'll find out about our world as we play.

Things to Try
Finding Consensus

Ideally we'll avoid the situation where only one player is excited about an idea and all the other players shrug and say, "whatever, ok." We want most of the players to be excited and the others willing to rock it. So it's worth spending a little time (or a lot of time if you're about to play a campaign) finding that.

A consensus building trick can be helpful here: once a player has suggested an idea, have everyone simultaneously vote with a thumbs up, thumbs sideways, or thumbs down. Up means excited about the idea; down means veto the idea; and sideways means even though the idea isn't your first choice, you'll still try to rock it. There's no 'whatever' option. At least half the players should have thumbs up, and nobody should have thumbs down.

Once you've created a summary of what our show is about hand the instructions to the next reader.

The Characters

Put the playbooks in the middle of the table.

Everyone choose a playbook. Once you've chosen a playbook think about how your character fits the premise. Let's talk about our ideas and decisions as we go.

Everybody should also two dice, and we'll set aside two for the Clock and six for the Threat of this episode.

Things to Try
Color coded dice

I like to have all the Threat dice be red, all the player dice be white, and the Clock dice be some other color. They're harder to mix up that way.

Fill out your name and check off the bubbles that you feel fit your character. If you can't think of a name, there's a table in the play materials.

Make sure everyone has two dice each. Once everyone has filled out the front of the playbook hand the instructions to the next reader.

Skill Sets And Powers

A 'skill set' is a category of abilities like ice magic, street racing, or being a sexy alien.

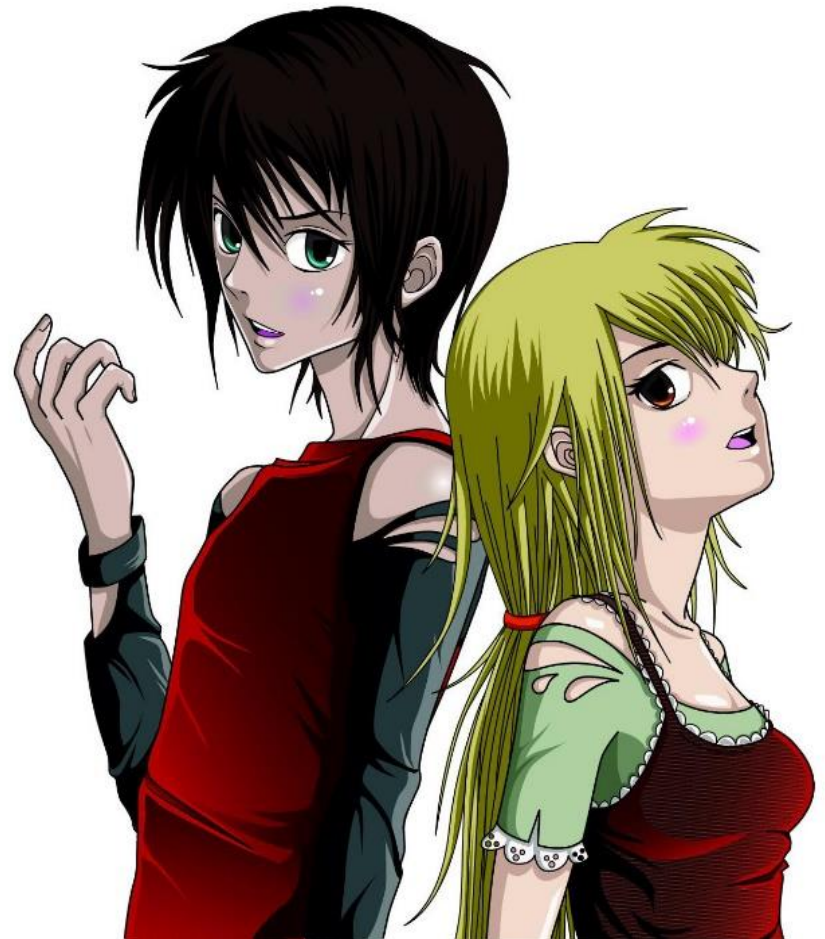
Powers are discrete, specific abilities within that skill set like 'create blizzard' or 'tokyo drift' or 'undress provocatively.'

We'll each have one skill set—that's permanent. We'll start with one power, and reveal or acquire more as we play.

Let's write down our skill set and invent one power now. It can be anything. If you're stuck for ideas, there's a bunch of examples in the play materials. You can use one of those or make up your own.

We don't answer the Questions in the playbooks yet. We'll do that as we play.

Once everyone has come up with their skill sets and powers hand the instructions to the next reader.



TITLE SEQUENCE

Let's imagine what the opening sequence for our show might look like.

Let's answer these questions one at a time:

- What kind of music does our title sequence have?
- What establishing shots of our world do we see?
- Let's take turns saying what our characters look like when they're being awesome.
- What poses are we in in the final still image?

We don't have to, but do we want to name our show? If we want to name it but aren't sure what there's a table of ideas in the play materials.

Once you've created the title sequence hand the instructions to the next reader.

CHARACTER SCENES

Framing and playing a character scene

We don't watch a pilot of a TV show already knowing what the characters are like or what their motivations are; we find out by watching.

Likewise, we don't go into an episode of this game knowing what our characters are like; we find out by playing.

Here's how it works. When it's your turn to frame a scene, you hand your playbook to another player.

Who wants to go first?

If someone has played the game before, they should go first to demonstrate. After someone has volunteered, keep reading to them:

They choose a question from the list that hasn't been answered yet and hand it back. Almost all of these questions will reveal something about your character or develop your character.

It's tempting to just blurt out an answer to the question but don't. We're going to show, not tell.

Wait for the second player to pick a question.

Now, think about how to frame a scene that might answer that question. Everyone else should keep their mouths shut and have some patience, so you can come up with your own idea without being poisoned. But if you do want suggestions, go ahead and ask for them.

Then you frame the scene. This time, make sure another player's character is in the scene. Ask for volunteers to play any supporting characters. Say what's going on as we fade from black.

And then we'll roleplay. We'll all drive towards an answer to the question.

Anyone may call "scene!" even if we haven't answered the question. These scenes are supposed to be short. If this were an anime episode it would be over in half an hour.

Play the scene. Once someone has called 'Scene!' hand the instructions to the next reader.

Things to Try

Scene Framing

Describe things so everyone can imagine the scene: where we are, what time it is, the weather, the sound the music.

Sometimes, frame arbitrary scenes that don't even try to answer the question. The answer will probably come out anyway as everyone searches for it.

After a character scene

If you've answered the question check it off.

Now we decide which player's character, on the basis of that scene alone, seems to be shaping up to be this episode's protagonist—the character who it seems this episode is going to be mostly about.

That player gets a die for their pool.

Once you've decided who gets a die pass the instructions to the next reader.



Another Kind of Character Scene: The Solo Scene

Time for another character scene. This time, let's have the player frame a scene where their character is the only player character in the scene. (There can still be supporting characters.)

Things to try

Describing Things as If It's an Anime

Incorporate conventions you've seen in anime. Tell us the background music; have it always be sakura season; have the drawing style get more cartoony when things get sillier; have snot bubbles come out of characters' noses when they sleep; have drops of sweat beside open mouthed characters when things get unbelievable; and so on and so on.



After A Solo Scene

Solo scenes work a bit differently when you're done. Instead of just getting the die for being the only protagonist in the scene, you have to Roll Against the Clock to see if you get it.

Rolling Against the Clock

To roll against another die pool you roll your dice, and someone else rolls for the Clock's dice. You add together your top two dice, and they add together their top two. Whoever has the highest total wins. You win in the case of a tie.

In this case if you win you get a die for your pool.

Whether you win or lose, the Clock gets another die.

Once you've decided who gets a die pass the instructions to the next reader.

Things to Try

Maintain Continuity

If all we do is focus on the question from the playbook, we'll probably end up with a bunch of disjointed, unrelated scenes. We'll have flashbacks out of nowhere and big jumps forward that leave things unresolved.

If instead we also try to narrate something that naturally follows from what has happened so far, we'll get a *story*.

To do that, we can think of it like we're trying to answer two questions: the one from the playbook and another one that is simply 'what happens next?'

The character scenes keep going

We take turns following the same steps: ask a question; frame; play; and decide who the protagonist of that scene was.

From here on out, and when we play again in the future, we'll mix it up. Sometimes the scenes will have more than one of us; sometimes they'll be solo. Occasionally we'll narrate a whole scene by ourselves; usually we'll include more players. Sometimes we'll have a flashback to establish character; sometimes we'll want to find out what happens next.

If it's a three player game, we'll do three scenes each;

If it's a four or five player game, we'll do two scenes each.

Play the requisite number of scenes, then hand the instructions to the next reader.

Things to Try

Invite Others to Play

While it's fine to narrate a whole scene by yourself, everyone else will be more engaged if you try to include them, by putting their characters in the scene or having them play supporting characters. If you find you're having a conversation with yourself, stop putting on a puppet show and let someone else play the other character(s).

Time is running out

The Big Conflict sequence that our episode is going to climax with is rapidly approaching.

If it's your turn to frame, you decide whether to try to keep going with character scenes or jump straight to the Big Conflict sequence. Just to see how it works let's have you try to frame another character scene now.

To do that you have to Roll Against the Clock.

If you win, you get to frame another character scene, but the Clock gets another die.

If you lose, time has run out. The Big Conflict sequence begins.

(So if you frame a solo scene now the Clock gets *two* dice: one for time running out, and one for the solo scene!)

Keep framing character scenes until someone wants to start the Big Conflict or loses the roll. Then hand the instructions to the next reader.

THE BIG CONFLICT SEQUENCE

Who Plays the Threat?

Before we go into the Big Conflict we have to choose a Threat player, the player who will get to say what the Threat is this episode and describe and roleplay the opponent characters.

It should be the player with the fewest dice, but if they don't want to do it someone else can. It should definitely not be the player with the most dice.

The Threat player's character gets relegated to the sidelines.

The Threat player will roleplay the forces of opposition, from the biggest boss to their lowliest minion. This can include details like the layout of the foreign embassy where the high value target is or the inclement weather making things tough for your street racer. They can veto anything other players say about the threat.

Once we've chosen the Threat Player we'll take a small break while the Threat player reads the next section.

Break for Commercial

Hand the instructions to the Threat Player and they'll read the next part to themselves.

Threat Payer, it's up to you to play a consistent Threat for this episode.

Think about answers to these questions, but don't think too long. We've probably been building up to this and the obvious answer is best, and it doesn't hurt to run some of your thoughts by the other players before starting the Big Conflict sequence.

Who is the main opponent? Are they one of the supporting characters we've seen so far? Do they have minions or allies? There's almost always someone behind the forces of opposition.

What is the opponent planning? What will happen if they succeed? In some episodes think small—they'll get away with the gold, capture the heroes, or just get in our way. In some episodes think big—they'll destroy our academy, or Tokyo, or the Earth. The opponent can't kill the heroes, but anything else is fair game.

What will the first sign of trouble be? That's probably how you're going to frame the opening scene. Could be troops appearing on the border; could be when the thieves begin their heist...or when they discover their floorplans are wrong.

Optionally, you may also want to give these questions some thought:

How will the opponent's plans be revealed to the audience? Maybe we'll cut to the boss explaining their plan to their minion. Maybe someone will call in a bomb threat.

How will things get steadily worse? Imagine the opposition getting stronger and stronger as it goes from the first sign of trouble to revealing the opponent's ultimate weapon, boss, or double-cross.

Your hero character has been put on the sidelines. It's ok to give them a cameo or a few lines of dialog, but keep it to a minimum. They don't get to use powers, do sacrifice plays, or use finishing moves. It's great if they don't show up at all. This episode is not about them.

During the Big Conflict you can control the pacing. Ask the other players what they do and tell them what happens. Help them share the spotlight. When one player rushes ahead you can slow things down by asking them questions about how they got there. The other players can do all these things too, but if they don't it's up to you. It may be useful to draw maps of the action to make sure everyone's imagining the same thing.

Try to roll with other player's suggestions, modifying your idea of the Threat if you can; but if another player narrates something that you can't make fit with what you had in mind, tell them so.

Now tell the other players you're ready and read the next section aloud to them.

The Threat Escalates

We've taken our commercial break and we're ready for the Big Conflict.

The Big Conflict can be one long scene but it will probably be a bunch of smaller scenes. Anyone can cut away and frame a new scene whenever they feel like it; and someone else can cut right back if they wish. But it's my job to frame the opening of the Big Conflict.

Once I've framed, we can mostly narrate whatever we want. There's no turn-taking to this part; anyone can jump in at any time to describe details, say what happens, suggest an idea, play their character or a supporting character, or cut to a different scene.

But you won't be describing what the Threat is and does. That's my job.

Also, you won't describe yourselves winning. You can describe yourselves preparing for the conflict or avoiding it completely, being outwitted, losing allies, getting hurt, attacking fruitlessly. If you do have some success the cost will be too high or you will have gone out of the frying pan into the fire. And I might let you have some small victories. We'll see.

Let's try that for a while. Enjoy getting yourselves beat up for a while.

Frame the opening scene. When you've enjoyed that enough, or one of the players narrates using their power, go to the next section.

Powers

It's time to try to turn things around a bit and use one of the powers we wrote on our character sheets.

To use a power, you simply say that you're using it, maybe narrating how the situation evolved so that it made sense, and describe it in action.

Don't say whether it helps us or not yet. You'll Roll Against the Threat to find out.

You can only use a power to Roll Against the Threat once an episode.

Who wants to use their power now?

Once they've described their power and Rolled Against the Threat read the appropriate section:

If you win or tie, you get to say how you strike a serious blow against the enemy or make significant progress.

You may choose:

- You get two dice
- All the players get one die

If you lose, the Threat player says how, despite your power being and looking awesome, your opponents are even more awesome. The Threat gets a die.

Let them narrate the outcome and hand the instructions to the next reader.

Things to Try

Action Dialog

Keep talking in character during the Big Conflict sequence. Make excuses for it to make sense, like everyone—including the opponents—are broadcasting their chatter on the same radio frequency in their mechas or spaceships. If you can't make it make sense, roleplay your inner monologues. Roleplay the opponent's inner monologues too.



Sacrifice Play

There's something else you can do to turn the tide of battle in our favor, even if you don't have any powers that make sense or don't want to risk Rolling Against the Threat: the sacrifice play.

You say how you sacrifice yourself to strike a telling blow or make significant progress. Say how you're knocked out of the conflict for now and every player gets a die.

You can use a power *or* do a sacrifice play in the Big Conflict, not both.

Who wants to do a sacrifice play now?

Let someone describe a sacrifice play, remove a die from the Threat, and hand the instructions to the next reader.

Finishing Moves

It's probably time to do a Finishing Move and end this episode.

Finishing Moves are usually one-two punches where one player's character sets things up for this episode's overall protagonist—the player with the most dice—to deliver the final blow or solve the final problem. Usually only one player gets to do a Finishing Move each episode.

Each playbook has its own Finishing Moves which describe various things that character might do in the story to set up the protagonist for the win.

They describe what has to happen to be eligible for the Finishing Move to be executed.

A character can still execute a Finishing Move if they've been taken out of the Conflict. Sometimes you'll have to make something up to get you back into the Conflict for the Finishing Move to make sense.

If we're not eligible to do one yet, or nobody wants to do it now, let's keep playing the Big Conflict sequence until someone is ready.

Keep playing until that happens.

When you're using a Finishing Move follow the instructions on the playbook about what you should narrate and who to give dice to.

There's an optional instruction described in your playbook that allows you to put your life on the line when executing a Finishing Move, but let's skip that this episode.

Let the player executing their Finishing Move say what they do.

Resolving The Conflict

The Finishing Move will say who is going to Roll Against the Threat; it's usually the overall protagonist of this episode. If that's you, describe how—thanks to the help from the character who executed their Finishing Move—you attack the final problem with gravity and finality, possibly revealing a new power.

Then you Roll Against the Threat to see if it actually works.

Roll the dice and read the appropriate section:

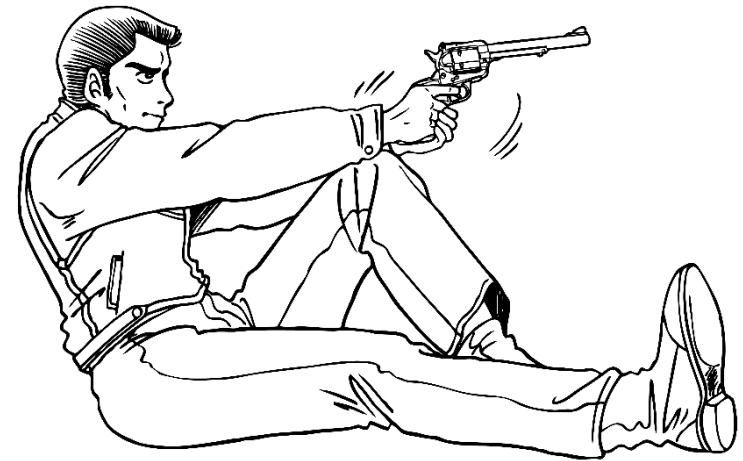
If we win, the protagonist gets to say how they defeat the Threat. The world is saved; the heist is pulled off; the big bad is "dead."

If we lose, the Threat player gets to say how, despite it looking like we were going to win the day after all, the Threat has the last laugh and their

plans come to fruition. But even if the world is destroyed, the players' characters do not die or suffer permanent injury unless their player wishes it.

Whether we win or lose, if other players want to embellish the outcome of the Big Conflict, they certainly may.

Resolve the Big Conflict sequence and hand the instructions to the next reader.



EPILOGUE

We may or may not want to do an epilogue. If we lost the big conflict, maybe it will continue in the next episode, and we won't need an epilogue.

If we won, we may want a heartwarming or bittersweet epilogue. Are you carrying the body of our fallen comrade off the battlefield? Are we all having a laugh together on the bridge of our starship? Anybody can make suggestions and we can play it out together. It can be one scene or several, but don't let it go on too long. Let mysteries stay unsolved.

Anyone can suggest we 'roll credits' but respect those who have one last thing to say.

Narrate the epilog and then everyone high-five each other.

If you have time you should play another episode. It will go a lot quicker! If some of you are familiar with the game, you may even want to start using the optional Ties or Supporting Characters rules. Also, here's a few details to check out before your next episode:

NEXT ON. . .

New Power

If you revealed a new power during the episode, for example in the character scenes or when striking the final blow against the Threat, you may add it to your list and it will be something you can use in the Big Conflict of the next episode.

Questions

You may erase one of the checkmarks on your questions list if you'd like someone to ask you that question again: maybe you have a different answer this time, or want to hammer on that aspect of your character.

You may have noticed some questions don't get unlocked until you've played for a while. Erasing checkmarks doesn't count against this, and answering the same question twice counts for it.

The Threat Grows

If you beat the Threat this episode, it gets one more die the next episode. So you'll have to learn to game the system to keep on winning, and will eventually have to put your life on the line...

Sharing the Spotlight

Try to let different players be the main protagonist and the Threat each time around.

To do that, let the Threat player of the last episode frame the first scene. Whoever goes first is a little more likely to be the ultimate protagonist. But you can also help it along by framing them in more scenes.

Ultimately, all you can do is tilt it, but try anyway.

Future Big Conflicts

A thing we can do from here on out is mix things up the Big Conflict sequence: maybe we'll narrate failing for a while, someone will do a sacrifice play, we'll fail some more, someone else will use a power, and so on until someone wants to use their Finishing Move.

New character?

If your playbook isn't doing it for you, switch. Turn your current character into a supporting character and create a new one with a different playbook.



OPTIONAL INSTRUCTIONS

Here are some additional ideas that you might want to roll into your game after you've played it the vanilla way once or twice.

Ties

This works best with six-sided dice because you'll get more ties and they can be fun. When you roll ties, a few interesting things happen:

During the character generation scenes, if you're Rolling Against the Clock because you're the sole player character, on a tie you *and the Threat* get a die. (And the Clock, as usual.)

When time is running out, you're Rolling Against the Clock and you get a tie, you get to choose: frame your scene but The Threat and The Clock get a die each, or go straight to the Big Conflict.

If you Roll Against the Threat to use a Power and tie, you get two dice and the Threat gets one.

And with the final roll at the end of the Big Conflict, if you tie against the threat:

- Both you and the Threat lose a die from your pools.
- Roleplay a short conversation with your main opponent. Usually it will be about how the other can't possibly win because they're a lesser person, they've wronged you in the past, or they subscribe to an inadequate philosophy. (If your opponent doesn't speak, roleplay your inner monologue. If you can't hear each other switch back and forth between your inner monologues.)
- Once your conversation comes to an end someone who hasn't done a Finishing Move yet does one. The protagonist can be the same or different. And then you roll again. If you get a tie *again* the process repeats.

Supporting characters

We see a lot of recurring supporting character tropes in anime, whether it's the villainous mastermind, the old sage, the captain of the ship, or the ridiculous minion. These characters are very rarely the protagonist of any given episode, so they aren't really fun for a player to play, but they keep coming back so it's nice to give them a little extra weight.

If you want to play with this rule, print out a couple of the Supporting Characters sheets. It's okay to have multiple characters that are the same type.

Whenever you introduce a new supporting character that you expect to see in more episodes, go down the list and see if they fit one of the existing supporting character archetypes. You can also wait and see if a character you've introduced warrants inclusion on the list.

The list will give you some bubbles to describe them, a sentence of description, and a couple of questions. Together, decide on appropriate bubbles to check.

Keep the sheets in the middle of the table. After each round of the player's character scenes, do a supporting character scene: one of the players with the least dice will frame a scene. They have someone ask a question from the sheets, about any of the supporting characters in play, frame a scene to answer it, and you play it out.

If a player character seems to be the protagonist of the scene, go ahead and give them a die.

You can roll in this rule in after you've already played a couple episodes; you may find that a bunch of the characters you've already introduced fit the supporting characters sheet nicely. Work together to fill out the sheet with them.

Nobody owns the Threat

If nobody wants to own the Threat you can share the responsibility. Don't discuss the answers the Threat player would normally think about ahead of time; let them come out as you play.

Doing this will usually lead to a more chaotic and disjointed Big Conflict sequences with an inconsistent Threat, disagreements, and rewinding but will still be fun and maybe a better choice for a three-person game or a season finale where you want all the player characters to be active in the Big Conflict.

Character Development Episodes

Sometimes you'll want to take a break from action and have an episode which just explores the characters and their relationships. Maybe it'll be comic relief or a not-necessary-to-the-overall-plot OVA episode; maybe it'll be slow and introspective; maybe it'll be an episode where the characters throw down with each other, beating each other up without doing any real damage. Play to find out.

If you've decided to have this kind of episode, play as normal, but play five scenes each in a three player game; four scenes each in a four player game; or three scenes each in a five player game. After that each player may choose to Roll Against the Clock to keep it going or simply roll credits. There is no Big Conflict sequence.

Changing Playbooks

Sometimes it will make sense to change playbooks completely. Maybe the Innocent isn't so innocent anymore – maybe now they're a Weapon. Maybe the Weapon becomes the Veteran (and vice-versa.) Try to keep it so there's no more than two of each playbook in play at a time. If you change

playbooks, you keep your skill set and powers but have a new set of questions to answer and Finishing Moves to do.

Season Finale

If a player's character has died, or the Big Bad of several episodes has been defeated, or someone has changed playbooks, maybe that was the end of the Season, huh? Sometimes you see the Season Finale coming because a couple of players are ready to answer their deepest questions.

If you want to start a new Season, have the Threat go back to its initial level plus one.

Between Sessions

The long breaks between sessions are a good time to search for anime images online that are close to your idea of your character and supporting characters, to get everybody on the same imaginary page.

EXAMPLES

Example of coming up with a premise:

Jay, Nathan, and David are playing. Nathan scans the list of ideas and immediately says, "5! Martial artists and magicians in a fantasy world."

Jay and David think they can rock that so agree.

That immediately begs the question, "What do we mean by a fantasy world?" After some discussion they decide that it is mid-Samurai era Japan, gunpowder has been introduced, but magic is common. They don't particularly care about realism or getting history right.

Example of creating characters:

Jay takes the Innocent playbook; Nathan takes the Veteran; David takes the Scoundrel.

David: "Sunglasses or a scarf wouldn't be appropriate for Samurai era Japan, but I have a mop of hair and a cape. Hmm, all the anime I can think of has male scoundrels, but I'm going to try a female one. (Checking all the bubbles under Personality) I'm a legend in my own mind, lewd, and a joker. You know, I think I'm a magician who pretends to be a geisha. I don't have a cape after all. (Rolls on the name table.) I'm Erika."

Jay: "I think I'm a girl who dresses up as a guy. From a noble family. I learned how to do a perfect tea ceremony but also some swordplay, though I've yet to try it out. Then my village was overrun, they killed my family, left me for dead. Now I go around in my brother's armor. I'm Sochiko, but when undercover as a boy I'm Mitsuru."

Nathan: "I have armor and beard or stubble. I think in the first episode I'll have stubble. I'm a ronin. I think I'm dead. Or a ghou, or something. And the ghost of my murdered wife travels with me, and gives me powers. Like she whispers to me and warns me of danger, and that can include an

upcoming sword strike. I'm Ichiro." (Writes down "Foresight – Aiko warns me of impending danger.)

David: "I think my skill set is summoning spirits. My go-to power is I can summon a wolf spirit. (Rolls on the name table.) The wolf's name is Satoshi."

Jay: "What's cooler, shapeshifting or wind powers?"

David: "Shapeshifting's always cooler."

Jay: "That's my skill set then."

Example of creating a title sequence:

Nathan: "I think your family and mine were killed in the same fight, when our village was overrun and burned. So that would be in the opening."

David: "So how about it's peaceful at first, wind across the rice paddies, people about their business, maybe the music is soft and sweeping – and then the music turns kind of metal as the village is attacked and burning?"

Nathan: "I think we see a shot of me drilling some soldiers."

David: I'm imagining the camera revolving around me as I'm casting a spell, and then Satoshi appears, and the camera follows him as he dashes towards an enemy and leaps at him.

Jay: "I'm thinking we see me as a female, tying my hair in a top knot, strapping on my armor and putting a helmet over my face."

David: "What are the final poses? I think the Innocent should be between the other two. Do you have your helmet on?"

Jay: "It's under my arm. I think we see boy-me phasing into girl-me as the camera pulls back and there the two of you are."

Nathan: "We can see my dead wife behind me, with her hands on my shoulders."

They don't bother naming their series.

Example of framing a scene:

It's Jay's turn to frame. He arbitrarily hands his playbook to Nathan, who decides to ask him "How do you get into trouble?"

Jay thinks for a moment.

Jay: "Ok, I have just been bathing in a stream on the outskirts of town, and I'm strapping on my weapons, still in girl-form, when Kazu the noble, encounters me on his walk."

(Kazu is a noble that has already been introduced, that one of the other characters has already had problems with.)

Nathan, why don't you play Kazu again?"

Nathan: "Sure."

Jay: "Action."

Example of playing a scene:

David has framed a scene answering the 'How do you offend someone?' question and called 'Action!'

David: "Okay, as Ichiro and I are staggering up the stairs, drunk, I put my hand on his package and say, 'Hey, the ghost of your wife realizes you have certain needs, right?'"

Nathan: "You can see the ghost of my wife is appalled. I'm like, screw that noise, and I normally wouldn't hit a lady, but I punch you through a wall."

David: "I'm sprawled out there with bits of broken wood and plaster around me. I shake my head and say, 'Yoshi is going to want us to pay for that.'"

Jay: "Scene?"

It's a gonzo, silly, short scene in an otherwise dark, serious story. And that's fine.

Example of choosing a protagonist:

After the above scene Jay is the first one to make a suggestion.

Jay: "Seems like Ichiro to me. The way he honored his wife and put off Erika's unwanted advances... it shows both heroism and maybe a difficult choice, depending on how into Erika he is. Erika was just being selfish."

Example of putting off the Big Conflict

Since Nathan, David, and Jay are playing a three player game, now that they've played three character scenes each and Nathan is starting his fourth it's getting close to Big Conflict time.

Nathan: "I'm having fun with these character scenes. I don't want to go to the big conflict yet."

Nathan rolls his dice, and David rolls for the Clock, which starts with two dice. Nathan's highest two are 14; David's are 13. They get to frame another character scene, but next frame might not be so lucky; the Clock gets another die.

Example of beginning the Big Conflict:

The protagonist dice are pretty evenly split this game. David has 6 and Nathan and Jay have 5 each. Jay agrees to be the Threat Player. As they're taking a break and Jay is thinking...

Jay: "Hey, should it be Samurai or Ninjas?"

David: "Samurai. Well, it's anime, so it could be ninjas."

Nathan: "This Kazu is an underhanded dude so ninjas work."

Jay: "I'm liking ninjas."

After thinking a little more on it he frames:

Jay: "Ok, there are a bunch of ninjas, and they're creeping over the rooftops towards the inn."

Nathan: "We cut back inside to where Erika is still helping me up the stairs and we see Aiko whisper in my ear and I'm like, 'Damn it!'"

I think "Damn it!" is my catchphrase..."

Jay: "We cut to a hill outside the village. A bunch of spearmen are driving a post into the ground where they plan to tie you up and execute you and from there Kazu is watching the village." (Even though the player characters can't be killed we can still threaten.)

Example of using anime-style dialog:

Jay: "I look up into the rafters above the kitchen. One of the ninjas is there. 'Get Yoshi and Kimiko and run,' I yell to Hiyoko." (A brief line of dialog for Jay's character is fine even though he's the Threat player.)

Nathan: "We hear glass breaking in the upstairs bedrooms and I'm all, 'Damn it! We've got to leave, now!'"

David: "I jump up on the railing and run down it. 'Kimiko! Hurry!'"

Jay: "The ninjas are all crowding on the upper landing. 'There she is. Get her!'"

David: "I tell Yoshi, 'Bar the door!'"

Jay: "Yoshi is hiding behind the checkout counter type area. 'I'm not going out there!'"

David: "'Just do it!'"

Jay: "So he goes, running and throwing a bar over the door. He leans his back against the door, panting, and throwing stars stick through the door all around his head. 'You're going to get me killed!'"

Example of using a Power:

David: "I see that Kimiko and Hiyoko are cornered by the ninjas, so I do this flying leap to get between them and the ninjas. Um, even if they're cornered they need to be able to get away while I'm holding the ninjas off. So I summon my wolf spirit." (Rolls six dice against six and loses; the Threat gets a die.) "Whoops."

Jay: "Hmm. How dark should I go here?"

David: "As dark as you like."

Jay: "Okay. So your wolf spirit is tearing up the ninjas, but one of them throws a shuriken and it gets Hiyoko's mom in the neck."

Example of triggering a finishing move:

Nathan: "I really want to use my 'Trauma Damsel' finishing move. As I'm holding Kimiko over my shoulder and the ninjas are coming over the rooftops I'm flashing back to when my village was taken, and I'm holding my wife over my shoulder and laying about me with my sword and my armor is all covered with blood. And then I've killed them all, and I lay my wife's body gently down, just as I'm setting down Kimiko now; and I'm off my game. The ninjas swarm me the way the second wave of samurai did back then, and we cut back and forth between then and now as I get overwhelmed in both scenes. It's up to Erika to save me now..."

He hands a die to David.

Example of resolving the Big Conflict:

David has the most dice other than Nathan (who triggered the Finishing Move) so his character, Erika, is considered this episode's main protagonist. (Even though she did a Sacrifice Play.)

David: "Okay, how about we're surrounded and brought up to that hill where Kazu is waiting? I think maybe the ninjas took Hiyoko hostage, so Erika and I surrendered, and Ichiro is already toast..."

Jay: "Works for me. Thanks for reincorporating the hill I introduced earlier."

David: "Ichiro is tied up to the post as Kazu watches, and the spearmen get into position, about to stab him. And then my wolf-spirit—invisible to everyone else—starts to nuzzle me, whining. And I open my eyes. And I'm going to reveal a new power now: I start chanting something and the demon? Who has I think a red aura and red eyes up until now? Changes – its eyes are blue and its aura is blue. I've repossessed it. I'll call that power 'Rebind.' I guess I should roll the dice now before I narrate more. (He has a total of seven dice, including the die that Nathan just gave him. The threat also has seven. The threat's top two dice add up to 24 and David's top two dice add up to 23.)

David: "Crap. So Jay gets to say what happens."

Jay: "Oh, I think you do bind the demon...and it goes crazy, slaying some of the spearmen, and it picks Kazu up and is about to crush him, but the ninja-sorcerer dispels it.

Let's see... nobody was really threatened in this episode other than us, but we should still lose, and we can't die... Kazu's father, the head of the Uesegi clan, shows up at this point and is like, 'What the hell are you doing?' And although he dresses down Kazu he can't just let us go, so we're carted off to the Uesegi dungeons... To be continued."

Nathan: "Wait, hat about the family?"

Jay: "I guess Yoshi and Hiyoko are kneeling by Kimoko's body. She's bled out."

CLARIFICATIONS

Do we have to limit ourselves to stuff in the tables and bubbles on the playbooks?

It almost goes without saying: no, you don't have to limit yourselves to the options presented. You can come up with your own looks, premises, titles, scenes. And if you like a look or personality trait from a different playbook and want it for your own, nothing's stopping you from taking it.

If I'm this episode's overall protagonist, can I do a Finishing Move?

Yes. But in that case, you're not the episode's overall protagonist anymore; that honor goes to the player with the next highest number of dice. You can't give a die to yourself.

What if we run out of dice in our pools?

You (or the Threat) can go down to one die in your pool, in which case whatever you roll is all you get. You can never go down to zero.

Is the Threat always a big bad?

The Threat will often be some sort of final boss of the episode and their minions, but it could also represent the forces of opposition in general.

The rival crime gang *and* the police *and* the target you've been hired to eliminate...

The terrorists *and* the ticking time bomb *and* the commissioner who is taking away your gun and your badge...

What's the point of learning new powers?

You've noticed that no matter how many powers you have, they don't increase your chances of winning against the Threat, because you only get to use one mechanically in the Conflict—and even using one power is usually a risk.

The powers are indeed mostly for flavor and color; but having new or extra ones does make it easier to narrate something into a given Big Conflict.

By giving me more dice are you incentivizing me to be the protagonist?

It's not a competition. Although it's true that whoever has the most dice at the end is going to try to strike the final blow against the Threat, we'll have to work together to elevate one character above the rest if we want to have the best chance of winning.

Also, strategy-wise, it's not a bad idea for the character shaping up to be this episode's main protagonist to frame themselves in solo scenes, but with other characters it's a risk.

The tension between 'should I frame myself in a solo scene to better answer this question?' and 'should I not frame myself in a solo scene so we have a better chance of defeating the threat in the end?' is intentional.

Do I *have* to answer the Question they've asked me?

You may have an idea about your character that the scene question doesn't fit. For example, maybe you're a Veteran but you don't see yourself as being hung up on a past trauma. So when you hear 'What trauma can't you get over?' you think, 'Well, nothing.' It's better not to block questions like that, they're on your character sheet for a reason, but if you really want to duck a question you can. Frame a scene to serve your own purposes and keep it short.

Can I invent my own questions?

Veteran story gamers might want to come up with their own questions. If you want to ask a made-up question someone else, first get their permission to ask something off-list.

And if there's a question you'd like to be asked, you can write it on your sheet as an option.

So what makes a good question? The questions serve a variety of purposes:

They let us show, rather than tell, important aspects of the characters.

They provide backstory and create relationships between the characters.

They reinforce genre tropes, both with characters (the Veteran almost always has some kind of trauma; the Scoundrel is almost always inappropriate) and in general (blushing and secret crushes are an anime staple.)

So if you can think of questions that do some of those things, go for it. You may also want to drill down into more detail about something you find interesting, or borrow a question from another playbook.

Try not to use the questions to lower other players or elevate your own character. Questions like "Why did you kill a child?" or "Why are you in love with me?" aren't cool: "What's the worst thing you've done?" "Why did you do it?" or "Who are you in love with?" are better. "Why am I in love with you?"

For game mechanical purposes, consider these questions 'starting questions.'

What happens if I put my life on the line and we tie, using the optional 'ties' rule?

It's up to you: you can sacrifice your life and kick in your dice to try and get a better result, or you can let the tie play out as normal, but if you still lose then you're really dead.

What if another player goes more gonzo than I like? Or darker than I like?

The anime this is inspired by often switches suddenly from being very serious and dark to silly and over-the-top. A quiet scene about how a character lost his mother might be followed by a scene with an Innocent punching a Scoundrel through a building because he hit on her. Maybe the show you're creating is mostly gonzo, maybe it's mostly dark, maybe it will grow up as it goes along... No need to get on the same page about it; just try to accept the show for what it becomes.

I get how to do a show that has a big fight every episode, but how do we do a 'big heist' or 'street race'?

There's a couple ways they might play out:

In one, the Big Conflict would be the heist or the race: we'd narrate how we're executing the first steps of our plan and things gradually go awry, with each security system or road hazard bypassed leading to a more difficult problem, until at the very end we've been caught red-handed or our tire blows and it seems all hope is lost.

In another, the beginning of the race or heist could be in our character scenes. The heist or race seems to be going okay at first and we learn more about the characters in the process... and the Big Conflict starts when things really go pear shaped—a double-cross or sabotaged engine, for example.

When playing several episodes, we'd mix it up, only finding out each episode what kind of episode it is.

Should we try to incorporate the sexism commonly found in anime?

Short answer: no. Here's just a couple of ways we can approach it:

One is self-aware parody. You'll notice that 'hypersexualized' and 'lolita' as options in the playbooks; it should be clear that we're satirizing that aspect of anime, and we can play with that, having the Innocent guy walking into the girl's bathhouse and being punched out, and everyone at the table is aware that it's one of the lamer tropes. But make sure it's clear; when you're about to introduce something sexist, ask first to see if everyone's okay with it.

The other way is to reverse the gender stereotypes. For example, the male Scoundrels in anime are usually men who say lascivious things to the women and get slapped, while the female Scoundrels seduce men to get their way. Why not reverse that have a Scoundrel woman who says lascivious things to the men, or a man who uses his sex appeal to his advantage? We can have shirtless men with big muscles and a big package, and the women can get nosebleeds when they see him. And we can have badass men who become damsels in distress, and we can put guys' heads in refrigerators to inspire their lovers to revenge.

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PLAYING THE INNOCENT

The Innocent is Campbell's hero with a thousand faces. Their ordinary life is interrupted by a call to adventure that will lead them into extreme ordeals. Will they overcome their fears? It's quite possible that the reason they've fallen in with this crowd of more experienced heroes is because they have special skills or amazing potential. They just don't know it yet.

Innocent Inspiration

Lucy Heartfilia from Fairy Tail; Simon from Gurren Lagann; Hiyori from Noragami; Katara from The Last Airbender; Luke Skywalker from Star Wars IV.

CHEAT SHEET

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Solo Character Scene

If I'm the only player character in a scene, I roll against the Clock:

If I win I get a die.

The Clock always gets a die.

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Using A Power in The Big Conflict

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(Optional 'Ties' Rule) If we tie, I get two dice and the Threat gets one.

Making A Sacrifice Play in The Big Conflict

All the players (including me) get a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated. We achieve our aims.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

(Optional 'Ties' Rule) If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.

THE INNOCENT

I am young and naïve and have gotten involved in matters over my head. If I

Name

Personality

- Earnest
- Anxious
- Kindhearted
- Starry eyed

Look

- Teenager
- Cowlick
- Hunched
- Big eyes

Fashion

- School uniform
- Button down
- Lolita
- Meaningful jewelry

Who Am I?



Unique Skill Set:

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "How do you get involved with us?"
- "How's your family life?"
- "Why do we need you?"
- "Who do you not want to admit you have a thing for?"
- "How do you get into trouble?"
- "Who gave you that keepsake that means so much to you?"
- "What's an ordinary moment in your life?"
- "Why don't you believe in yourself?"
- "What makes you blush?"

Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "What hard choice will you have to make?"
- "What new responsibility are you going to take on?"
- "What do you do for your secret crush?"

Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook not currently in play.

Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you tell your secret crush how you feel?"
- "Why do you believe in yourself?"

Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.

FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem

and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their power

and

I wasn't the last to do one.

Damsel

I may say how I'm in serious trouble, and it's up to this episode's overall protagonist to save me. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against the Threat.

Power of Friendship

If I'm this episode's overall protagonist, I can say how we put aside our differences and pool our talents together so someone else can make a focused attack. We *all* give a die to the character who has the next highest die pool, and they will Roll Against the Threat. I can't put my life on the line with this move.

PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed.

I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

If we win, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how they rush to my aid and either save me or maybe my eyes flutter open or we cut to a hospital room where I'm recovering.

If we lose, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead - we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

PLAYING THE WEAPON

The Weapon is all about servitude. They're a Samurai, or maybe they transform into a literal weapon, or they're cybernetic, or they're in some other subservient but badass role. Whatever it is, they obey their master not out of fear but out of honor, loyalty, duty, or love... but that doesn't stop the bonds from chafing, and it doesn't stop them from sometimes disobeying. And whatever the Weapon is, they still have some kind of humanity, somehow.

Weapon Inspiration

Soul Eater from Soul Eater; Yukine and Kazuma from the second season of Noragami; Chamber from Gargantia; Senketsu from Kill la Kill; Chewbacca from Star Wars IV.

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All the players (including me) get a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated. We achieve our aims.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

(Optional 'Ties' Rule) If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.

THE WEAPON

I am a living weapon. In the hands of my master I am nearly unstoppable, but without them I have no purpose.



Name

Personality

- Emotionless
- Rebellious
- Prudish
- Loyal

Look

- Genderless
- Butch or Femme
- Inhuman
- Teenage

Fashion

- Cheap
- Samurai, Monk, Geisha
- Spiked hair
- Transforming

Who Am I?

Unique Skill Set:	
Powers (make up one to start)	
Name	Description

Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "Who is your master?"
- "Why do you serve your master?"
- "What was your biggest mistake?"
- "Why are you lonely?"
- "Who are you uncomfortable around?"
- "What do you do for your master that you don't agree with?"
- "How do you disobey your master?"
- "What makes you self-conscious?"
- "How do you train?"

Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "Which of us is your master now?"
- "What do you teach your master?"
- "Why do you want to escape your master's service?"

Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook not currently in play.

Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "Why does your master offer to let you go?"
- "How does your relationship with your master change?"

Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.

FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem
and
at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers
and
I wasn't the last to do one.

Soul Bound Weapon

If my master is this episode's overall protagonist, I may narrate how they are about to die and how I risk myself to protect or assist them. I narrate what new power I gain or reveal—writing it in my playbook. I *must* put my life on the line if I use this move.

Clear The Way

I take out all the enemy minions between this episode's overall protagonist and the big bad of this episode, then step aside to allow them to deal the final blow. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against the Threat.

Combo!

I say how this episode's overall protagonist and I combine into one fighting unit. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against the Threat. Combining becomes one of our Powers; we both write it in our playbooks.

PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed.

I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

If we win, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how they rush to my aid and either save me or maybe my eyes flutter open or we cut to a hospital room where I'm recovering.

If we lose, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead – we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

PLAYING THE VETERAN

The Veteran has been around the block a few times, but in anime that might just mean they're in their late twenties. They're tired of conflict, sorry that a new generation is getting wrapped up in it, but trapped by a sense of duty. Something happened to them—maybe in an earlier conflict—that haunts them to this day.

Veteran Inspiration

Bishamon from the second season of Noragami; Misato Katsuragi from Neon Genesis Evangelion; Urza from Fairy Tail; Koichiro Marito from Aldnoah Zero; Obi Wan Kenobi from Star Wars IV.

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The Clock always gets a die.

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I roll against the Clock:

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Using A Power in The Big Conflict

I roll against the Threat:

If I win, I choose: I get two dice or all the players (including me) get one.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

(Optional 'Ties' Rule) If we tie, I get two dice and the Threat gets one.

Making A Sacrifice Play in The Big Conflict

All the players (including me) get a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated. We achieve our aims.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

(Optional 'Ties' Rule) If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.



THE VETERAN

*I've been doing this for a long time:
I've forgotten more techniques than you've
learned. But I have scars...mostly on the inside.*

Name

Personality

- Sardonic
- Angry
- Confident
- Determined

Look

- Hypersexualized
- Grizzled
- Blonde
- Faraway eyes

Fashion

- Beard or stubble
- Shirtless
- Armor
- Bogarted cigarette

Who Am I?

Unique Skill Set:

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "What trauma can't you get over?"
- "What reminds you of your trauma?"
- "Why won't you let anyone touch you?"
- "What is your secret?"
- "Who do you believe is our ultimate enemy?"
- "Which of us are you trying to mentor?"
- "What is your plan?"
- "What habit can't you give up?"
- "Who do you still have strong feelings for?"

Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "What unwelcome figure from your past shows up?"
- "How is your secret revealed?"
- "How does your experience help?"

Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook not currently in play.

Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you learn to live with your trauma?"
- "What do you teach me?"

Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.

FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem

and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers

and

I wasn't the last to do one.

Trauma Damsel

If this episode's threat is related to or reminds me of my trauma, I may narrate how I freeze up or lose my nerve and allow myself to be overcome. It's up to this episode's overall protagonist to save me. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against the Threat.

Second Guess

I tell this episode's overall protagonist why they're just not ready and they need to sit this one out, and how I'm trusting someone else to finish the job. I give *two* dice to the other player, and they say how they face the final problem and Roll Against the Threat. If they succeed, my wisdom will be praised. But if they fail, we both lose respect. I can even Second Guess myself if I'm the overall protagonist for the episode.

PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed. I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

If we win, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how they rush to my aid and either save me or maybe my eyes flutter open or we cut to a hospital room where I'm recovering.

If we lose, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead - we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

PLAYING THE SCOUNDREL

Seemingly confident to a fault, superficial, and selfish, there is more to the Scoundrel to that. They try to hide it but they have a heart of gold, and will do the right thing when push comes to shove. But they're going to offend a lot of people on the way.

Scoundrel Inspiration

Lupin and Fujiko from Lupin III; Yato from Noragami; Roy from SDF Macross; Spike and Faye from Cowboy Bebop; Ryoji Kaji from Neon Genesis Evangelion; Han Solo from Star Wars IV.

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If I win I get to frame a scene, and the Clock gets a die.

If I lose we go to the Big Conflict.

(Optional 'Ties' Rule) On a tie I choose: frame a scene and the Threat and the Clock get dice, or go to the Big Conflict.

Using A Power in The Big Conflict

I roll against the Threat:

If I win, I choose: I get two dice or all the players (including me) get one.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

(Optional 'Ties' Rule) If we tie, I get two dice and the Threat gets one.

Making A Sacrifice Play in The Big Conflict

All the players (including me) get a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated. We achieve our aims.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

(Optional 'Ties' Rule) If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.



THE SCOUNDREL

Let's party.

Name

Personality

- A legend in my own mind
- Lewd
- Joker

Look

- Crooked smile
- Ice blue eyes
- Skinny
- Sexy slouch

Fashion

- Sunglasses
- Mop of hair
- Scarf
- Cape

Who Am I?

Unique Skill Set:

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "Who do you keep getting rejected by?"
- "What is your catchphrase?"
- "What reckless thing are you planning now?"
- "How do you offend someone?"
- "Why are you the one for the job?"
- "What's your favorite vice?"
- "How do you hint at your hidden depth?"
- "What trouble follows you?"
- "Who do you really care about?"

Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "What hidden depth are you concealing?"
- "Who did you used to be?"
- "How does your trouble get the better of you?"

Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook not currently in play.

Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you reveal your true self?"
- "How do you put your trouble behind you?"

Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.

FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem
and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers

and

I wasn't the last to do one.

Believe in me believing in you!

If this episode's overall protagonist is taken out or is losing hope, I give them a pep talk inspiring them to believe in themselves and try harder. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against the Threat. If I put my life on the line this pep talk may turn out to be my last words!

Let's blow this thing and go home!

If I have yet to narrate my involvement in the Big Conflict, I may appear out of nowhere to protect or assist this episode's overall protagonist. I say how I show up, what I do, and give them a die. They'll Roll Against the Threat.

PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed.

I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

If we win, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how they rush to my aid and either save me or maybe my eyes flutter open or we cut to a hospital room where I'm recovering.

If we lose, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead - we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

PLAYING THE CONSCRIPT

Like the Innocent, the Conscript is another one of Campbell's heroes of a thousand faces, but the Conscript answers the call to adventure reluctantly. Their conscription can be literal or metaphorical; maybe what traps this hero on the team is they've been drafted or have made a deal with the government, but usually what traps them is their own sense of honor or duty, or a need for approval, or a promise they made.

Conscript Inspiration

Hikaru from SDF Macross; Shinji Ikari from Neon Genesis Evangelion; Yukine from the first season of Noragami; Ledo from Gargantia; Aang from The Last Airbender.

CHEAT SHEET

To roll against the Threat or the Clock: I roll the dice in my pool and add together the top two. The Threat or the Clock does the same.

Solo Character Scene

If I'm the only player character in a scene, I roll against the Clock:

If I win I get a die.

The Clock always gets a die.

(Optional 'Ties' Rule) On a tie I get a die and the Threat gets a die.

Having Another Character Scene When Time Is Running Out

I roll against the Clock:

If I win I get to frame a scene, and the Clock gets a die.

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All the players (including me) get a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

The Moment of Truth

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If I win, the Threat is defeated. We achieve our aims.

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(Optional 'Ties' Rule) If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.

THE CONSCRIPT

*I don't want to be here, doing this.
I'm not ready for this. But I have to be.
I have no choice.*

Name

Personality

- Unconcerned
- Something to prove
- Bottled up

Look

- Young
- Pale
- Pointed chin
- Faraway eyes

Fashion

- Glasses
- Doesn't care
- Neat hair
- Tie

Who Am I?



Unique Skill Set:	
Powers (make up one to start)	
Name	Description

Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "Why do you have to be doing this?"
- "Why do we need you?"
- "What do you have to prove?"
- "Who are you doing this for?"
- "What wrong did you or do you commit?"
- "What line would you never cross?"
- "How are you socially awkward?"
- "How do you try to get away?"
- "What makes you blush?"

Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "Who do you fall for?"
- "Who do you befriend?"
- "How does your wrong come back to bite you?"

Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook not currently in play.

Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you prove yourself?"
- "Why don't you have to do this anymore?"

Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.

FINISHING MOVES

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and
at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers
and
I wasn't the last to do one.

That's Why You Need Me

I say how I figure out our opponent's weak spot and either pass that information on to this episode's overall protagonist, or act on it myself, opening up a core vulnerability to the protagonist. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against the Threat.

At What Cost

I say how I sacrifice my ideals or compromise my morals to give this episode's overall protagonist a shot at victory. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against the Threat.

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PLAYING THE RIVAL

The Rival. The frenemy. If they're on the same side as the other heroes, they're not a team player and particularly antagonistic when it comes to *their* rival—the one person who they feel has wronged them in some way. If they're on the other side they're a recurring thorn in their rival's side. Still, when a real threat emerges and the stakes are high, they do the right thing.

Rival Inspiration

Inspector Zenigata from Lupin III; Norio Kunato from Knights of Sidonia; Bishamon from the first season of Noragami; Asuka from Neon Genesis Evangelion; Zuko from The Last Airbender.

CHEAT SHEET

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If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated. We achieve our aims.

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(Optional 'Ties' Rule) If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.

THE RIVAL

It's wrong that someone so undeserving gets what is rightfully mine. I shall beat them and reveal to the world what they really are.



Name

Personality

- Arrogant
- Unflappable
- Driven
- Cruel
- Vocal

Look

- White hair
- Chiseled features
- Scarred
- Erect posture
- Languid

Fashion

- Long straight hair
- Regulation haircut
- Crisp uniform
- Expensive

Who Am I?

Unique Skill Set:

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "Which of us is your rival?"
- "Why do you hate your rival?"
- "Who is your gang?"
- "Why are you lonely?"
- "What is an interesting facet of our world?"
- "How are you going to show up your rival this time?"
- "How do you taunt or bully your rival?"
- "What mischief are you up to?"
- "How do you refuse help?"
- "How does your gang embarrass you?"

Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "What secret are you keeping?"
- "How does resentment get the better of you?"
- "Who do you actually care about?"

Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook not currently in play.

Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you learn to accept your rival?"
- "How do you nearly lose the person you actually care about?"

Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.

FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem
and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers

and

I wasn't the last to do one

and

my rival is this episode's overall protagonist.

Sabotage

I reveal how I have sabotaged my rival. They still Roll Against the Threat but they only get half their dice, rounded up. If they lose, they are blamed for our failure and they are the only one who knows I was really responsible. I can't put my life on the line with this move.

Stealing Glory

I say how I get in my rival's way to try to strike the final blow or solve the final problem instead. I get to Roll Against the Threat instead of them, rolling my own dice without a bonus die. If I fail most will blame me, and even if I succeed I'll be seen as kind of a jerk.

Bigger Issues at Stake

If the Threat affects me or people I care about too, I may say how I have a change of heart and team up with my rival to defeat the threat. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against the Threat.

PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

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I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

If we win, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how it turns out I'm alive after all.

If we lose, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead – we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

ANIME THING IDEAS

Premise Ideas

- 1) We're mecha and/or spaceship pilots and support in a defense force
- 2) We're students and faculty at a magic and/or combat academy
- 3) We're professional criminals executing heists
- 4) We're various different supernatural beings brought together
- 5) We're martial artists, samurai, and/or magicians in a fantasy world
- 6) We're race car drivers and their pit crew
- 7) We're a crew of space pirates
- 8) We're a team of spies
- 9) We're mercenaries, detectives and/or bounty hunters
- 10) We're a specialized police unit
- 11) We're students in high-school...but some of us are aliens
- 12) Heroes in an established setting we all like—doesn't have to be anime

Title Ideas

1) Alpha, Gamma or Omega	1) A, D, X, Q or Z
2) Argon, Krypton or Xenon	2) Blossom or Flower
3) Cherry or Apple	3) Combination or Chain
4) Destiny or Karma	4) Judge, Hunter or Avatar
5) Exodus, Genesis or Leviticus	5) Machine or Mechanism
6) Silent or Death	6) Maestro, Sorcerer or Demon
7) Snow, Mist, Sun, or Darkness	7) Origami, Kabuki or Sumi-e
8) Soul or Heart	8) Pilot, Bandit or Ghost
9) Steel, Gold, Silver or Diamond	9) Soldier, Ronin or Vampire
10) Sugar or Glitter	10) Symphony, Orchestra or Music
11) White, Black, Blue or Red	11) Testament, Revelation or Psalm
12) Zero or Ninety-Nine	12) (Number of players on team)

Scene Ideas

- 1) You / We are on patrol or doing reconnaissance
- 2) You meet a companion on the way to your new home
- 3) A stranger arrives at our home
- 4) You / We are caught in the middle of a battle
- 5) You / We are going about your / our daily routine
- 6) It's a duel –anybody could be in it except maybe The Innocent; maybe we're fighting each other
- 7) The Innocent is being bullied
- 8) *In medias res* battle / quest / race / ritual / heist
- 9) You / We are running away from something or someone
- 10) You / We are doing a training exercise
- 11) You / We witness someone in trouble
- 12) You / We are being tested

Names

Surnames

1-4

- 1) Asahara
- 2) Asai
- 3) Chiba
- 4) Enomoto
- 5) Fujita
- 6) Ishimura
- 7) Kigure
- 8) Kogure
- 9) Kojima
- 10) Koyama
- 11) Maebashi
- 12) Mizutani

5-8

- 1) Murakami
- 2) Numata
- 3) Okuda
- 4) Omura
- 5) Oshima
- 6) Otani
- 7) Saito
- 8) Sasaki
- 9) Shibukawa
- 10) Shimizu
- 11) Suwa
- 12) Suzuki

9-12

- 1) Taguchi
- 2) Takahashi
- 3) Takayama
- 4) Takeda
- 5) Tamura
- 6) Tanaka
- 7) Togawa
- 8) Torimoto
- 9) Uesugi
- 10) Watanabe
- 11) Yamada
- 12) Yoshida

Male Names

1-4

- 1) Akio
- 2) Daisuke
- 3) Eikichi
- 4) Eikichi
- 5) Genyu
- 6) Hideyuki
- 7) Hiroyuki
- 8) Ichiro
- 9) Kazu
- 10) Kazuichi
- 11) Kazuki
- 12) Kei

5-8

- 1) Kentaro
- 2) Kohei
- 3) Kunihide
- 4) Makoto
- 5) Manabu
- 6) Masahiro
- 7) Mitsuru
- 8) Motoki
- 9) Naoki
- 10) Naoto
- 11) Nobu
- 12) Osamu

9-12

- 1) Riku
- 2) Ryu
- 3) Saburo
- 4) Satoru
- 5) Satoshi
- 6) Seiji
- 7) Shigure
- 8) Shogo
- 9) Takeru
- 10) Tenyu
- 11) Yoshitomo
- 12) Yuske

Female Names

1-4

- 1) Aiko
- 2) Chika
- 3) Erina
- 4) Fumiko
- 5) Hidemi
- 6) Hotaru
- 7) Kaede
- 8) Kaori
- 9) Karin
- 10) Kotomi
- 11) Kumiko
- 12) Kyoko

5-8

- 1) Machiko
- 2) Mari
- 3) Mayumi
- 4) Minako
- 5) Mizuho
- 6) Namie
- 7) Nanako
- 8) Nao
- 9) Reiko
- 10) Rikako
- 11) Rin
- 12) Ritsuko

9-12

- 1) Sachiko
- 2) Sadako
- 3) Sakura
- 4) Sanae
- 5) Saori
- 6) Sayaka
- 7) Sayuri
- 8) Setsuko
- 9) Taeko
- 10) Wakaba
- 11) Yomiko
- 12) Yukiko

ANIME THING IDEAS

Skill Set And Power Ideas and Examples

Shapeshifting

Disguise – morph into someone else

Animal form – turn into whatever animal I choose

Undercover – turns out a supporting character was me

Last Of The Martial Artists

Monkey punch – a flurry of blows; they don't know what hit 'em

Serpent strike – a mortal attack on the enemy's chi

Bear hug – a crushing judo hold

Chosen Mecha Pilot

Faster – coax a higher speed out of my mecha than anyone else can

Harder – spot enemy weaknesses and target them

Deeper – dodge enemy fire to get to the heart of the opposition

Telepath

Read minds - know what they're going to do before they do it

Control minds – take someone over like a puppet

Horrible truth – make someone aware of who they really are

Summoner

Spirit of Wolf – summon wolf spirit

Spirit of Darkness – summon demon

Spirit of Destiny – summon an oracular god who gives us guidance

World's Best Marksman

Bullet ballet – a whirling dance with two guns

Sniper shot – take down an opponent from afar

Headshot – I never miss

Master Thief

Hide in plain sight – people don't notice me until too late

I already stole it – reveal that I've picked your pocket / replaced the treasure with a forgery ... or I'm making you think I have

Concealed carry – reveal an item I shouldn't have been able to get past security

Experimental Cyborg

Hack – hack into computers and robots, make them do what I want

Overclock – everything goes in slow-motion except for me

Tase – hand transforms to become a gun that fires paralytic darts

Ice Magic

Crystallize – cocoon someone or something in ice

Ice surfing – create a slick of ice to skate along

Ice needles – shoot deadly needles of ice

Dragon Spawn

Dragon's breath – breathe fire

Form of the dragon – take the shape of a human-sized dragon

Freeze prey – look into someone's eyes and root them to the spot

Car Wizard

Bullet drift – spin my car so I can shoot out the window at any target

Two wheels – navigate alleys and narrow spaces by popping my car up on two wheels

Big air – jump wide gorges, canyons, or from one rooftop to the next

Luck Powers

Fortune – a reckless thing an ally attempts succeeds

Misfortune – the enemy makes an unfortunate mistake

Friend – summon my wind kami friend to blow your house down

Blade Witch

To Me, My Blade – return my magic sword to me, no matter where it is

Master cut – bisect any object

Blink strike – strike so fast they don't realize they're dead

Master Tactician

Reinforcements – troops come out of nowhere

Flank – the enemy doesn't see my troops coming

Air strike – flyover. Boom.

Self-Aware Mecha

Missile salvo – decimate the enemy minions

Transform – switch from high speed jet to anthropomorphic robot

Rage – lose my shit and pummel something into submission

Sexy Alien Powers

Undress – paralyze men and women when in my underwear or less

Seduce – make the enemy forget why they were fighting

Heat vision – just like Superman

ANIME THING SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

THE CAPTAIN

Name:

Whether literal captain, headmaster, or whatever, the Captain is in charge around here.

☐ Stern ☐ Mask ☐ Beard ☐ Eyepatch

Notes:

O How do they hint at their secret agenda?

O What are they asking you to do now?

THE SHY ONE

Name:

The Shy One doesn't shirk their responsibilities but usually only speaks when spoken to.

☐ Willowy ☐ Sad ☐ Subservient ☐ Long hair

Notes:

O What is their internal monologue?

O Who are they crushing on?

THE VILLAIN'S PET

Name:

The villain's pet is usually on the villain, except when it's spying on the good guys...

☐ Bird ☐ Snake ☐ Rat ☐ Frog ☐ Psychic

Notes:

O What secret do they discover?

THE SAGE

Name:

The sage trains us, gives us murky advice, and tells us everything turned out as they foresaw.

☐ Wizenod ☐ Irreverent ☐ Enigma ☐ Cranky

Notes:

O What do they think of you?

O What do they foresee?

THE LUNK

Name:

A gentle giant, the Lunk is a simple soul but not stupid.

☐ Tall ☐ Wide ☐ Immovable ☐ Thoughtful

Notes:

O Why do they refuse to take sides in this fight?

O What motivates them to finally strike out?

THE RIGHT CLAW

Name:

The Villain's most powerful servant.

☐ Jacked ☐ Cloaked ☐ Laconic ☐ Arrogant

Notes:

O How did they enter the service of the Villain?

O What makes them so powerful?

THE HOTHEAD

Name:

Overconfident to an absurd degree, the Hothead is a badass but a loose cannon.

☐ Short ☐ Spiky Hair ☐ Tattoo ☐ Blunt ☐ Sleeveless

Notes:

O How are they showing off?

O How do they get us in trouble?

THE GOOD GUYS' PET

Name:

Probably anthropomorphic in some way, the good guys' pet often gets underfoot.

☐ Cat ☐ Dog ☐ Chimp ☐ Fox ☐ Talking

Notes:

O Whose pet are they?

O How do they stow away on our mission?

THE TOADY

Name:

Could be the villain's or ours. Tiresome, but the Toady does have a trick or two up their sleeve.

☐ Ridiculous ☐ Short ☐ Whining ☐ Sycophantic

Notes:

O What is their weird ability?

O How can we convince them to switch sides?

THE AIRHEAD

Name:

They love their team and will rush in to help, heedless of danger, often making things worse.

☐ Rosy cheeks ☐ Round eyes ☐ So excited

Notes:

O How do they fail to respect your boundaries?

O How do they mistake wrong for right?

THE VILLAIN

Name:

The Villain is the master manipulator, possibly the Big Bad of the whole season...

☐ Narrow Eyes ☐ Cruel Smile ☐ Wearing Black

Notes:

O How were they wronged in the past?

O Who is the spy they have among us?

OTHER

Name:

Notes:

OTHER

Name:

Notes:

