

**SOLO ROLEPLAY
MADE SIMPLE**

DIVE INTO SOLO ROLEPLAYING AND COMPLETE YOUR FIRST ADVENTURE

- Are you looking to get started with Solo Roleplaying, but aren't sure where to begin?
- Are you feeling overwhelmed by the complicated rules and countless systems?
- Do you spend a lot of time prepping, but struggle to actually start playing?

This game is designed to make it as easy as possible for you to dive into solo roleplaying, and complete your first adventure. It is a storytelling system that will help you master the art of solo roleplaying, storytelling, and inventing creative ideas in an easy, fun, non-overwhelming way.

In seven steps, you will complete your first mini-adventure. Start roleplaying in minutes, finish the game quickly, and see how simple and straightforward solo roleplaying can be.

As you play, you'll learn a simple, novice-friendly, zero-prep, step-by-step framework for improvising fun storytelling-focused adventures, one 10-minute scene at a time.

Then, you will learn more advanced frameworks that make it easy to create a series of longer adventures and campaigns:

- Learn how to turn a series of simple scenes into a mission-driven adventure.
- Learn a simple process for improvising mysteries from scratch, with no preparation.
- Use this game as a creative tool to discover weird, absurd, and interesting ideas as you play. Invent fun characters and build an imaginary world as you journey through it.

You should try this game if:

- You're new to solo roleplaying, and it feels complex and overwhelming.
- You get bogged down in worldbuilding and character creation, you prep a lot, but struggle to dive in and actually start roleplaying.
- You struggle with "paradox of choice" and "analysis paralysis" - you read many rulesets and supplements, but can't choose one. You're looking for a simple game to help you get started.
- You like games focused on storytelling, roleplay, and making up creative ideas (rather than crunchy mechanics).
- You're busy and want a simple way to stretch your creative muscles by playing short 5-10 minute games.

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How to Play

◦ GAMEPLAY FORMAT ◦

As you play, you'll mentally switch between the two modes: **Narrator** and **Hero**.

- ♦ As a **Narrator**, you will describe the world around the hero, narrate the consequences of their actions, introduce challenges, and play the roles of the non-player characters.
- ♦ As a **Hero**, you will play the role of the main character of the story - describe their actions, pursue their goals, creatively overcome obstacles on their path.

You can play entirely in your imagination, but it's best to leave a record of your adventures:

- ♦ **Journaling**: Describe your story using regular prose (much like a writer would).
- ♦ **Bullet points**: Concise "log" summarizing the key events of your adventures.
- ♦ **Audio**: Improvise the story out loud, record it using an audio recording app.
- ♦ Video, a series of drawings, comics, screenplay - any format you can imagine.

◦ CREATE YOUR CHARACTER ◦

- ♦ Come up with the main hero of your story (name, personality, occupation, appearance).

Dany, relentlessly optimistic kobold inventor.
Felix, charming and daring space pirate.
Torek, naive half-mammoth barbarian.
Salazar, devious skeleton wizard.

- ♦ Make a special ability (magic power, sci-fi gadget, special item, skill, ally).

Wand of telekinesis, hologram-generator, grappling hook, hoverboard, invisibility potion, fire bow, pet familiar, disguise kit, bag of gold, super-strength, sharp-shooting, forgery, political connections.

◦ GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW ◦

Your goal is to improvise a micro-adventure: a single, self-contained, 10-minute scene.

You do that by following these steps (described in detail on the next page):

1. LOCATION	2. CHARACTER
Where does the scene take place?	Who do you meet in this scene?
3. OBJECTIVE	4. OBSTACLE
What does the hero want, what are they actively trying to accomplish in this scene?	What makes it difficult to get what they want, what challenges or obstacles stand in their way?
5. ACTION	6. RESOLUTION
How does the hero attempt to overcome the obstacle to achieve their objective?	What are the consequences of their actions, do they succeed or fail and suffer a setback?

Once you understand how this gameplay works, you can repeat it to create a series of scenes that add up to longer adventures and campaigns.

1. LOCATION

- ♦ **Define the location** where the scene takes place (**adjective + noun**).

Old Shipwreck, Underground Lab, Spooky Mansion, Steampunk Castle, Orc Camp, Space Station.

- ♦ **Describe the location** in a single sentence.

The Spooky Mansion looms in the moonlight, its windows dark and its walls covered in creeping vines.

2. CHARACTER

- ♦ **Make a character** whom you meet in this location (**adjective + occupation**).

Rowdy Pirate, Jolly Goblin, Mad Scientist, Runaway Princess, Folksy Robot, Sad Orc, Spider Queen.

This character may be a helpful ally, an antagonist, or someone in need of help.

- ♦ **Describe meeting this character** in one sentence, and say the **first line of dialogue** between you and them. The purpose of the dialogue line is to add some context to the scene (establish the reason the characters are here, what they're doing, or the relationship between them), and to make you dive into roleplaying as early as possible.

At the web-covered entrance to the mansion, Torek the Barbarian (the player character) faces off against the Spider Queen, a sinister figure with an aura of menace and eight faintly glowing eyes.

"So, we meet again, Spider Queen," Torek says, gripping his spear tightly. "This place reeks of your dark magic."

3. OBJECTIVE

- ♦ **Come up with an objective** your hero will actively pursue during this scene - a goal they want to achieve, or a problem they need to solve.

Think small - it should be a task you can succeed or fail at by the end of the scene, not a long-term goal that requires complex planning.

It can be something the hero wants from the other character, something the other character prevents them from getting, or something the other character needs help with.

- ♦ When in doubt, use a McGuffin - an **Object**, **Person**, **Creature**, or **Information** the hero wants to obtain, that is kept at this location, and guarded by the other character.

Object: Obtain treasure, retrieve a stolen gadget, steal a vehicle, destroy a cursed portal.

Person: Rescue a captive, liberate a prisoner, arrest an outlaw, defeat a rogue wizard.

Creature: Capture a runaway pet, tame a wild beast, defeat a monster, exorcise a ghost.

Information: Location of a lair, secret potion recipe, clue to a mystery, a battle plan.

- ♦ **Introduce the objective** the hero will pursue during this scene using dialogue or description.

"I know The Orb of Shadows is hidden within this mansion," Torek says, determination in his eyes. "I need it to save my village from the eternal night your curse has brought upon us."

The Spider Queen hisses, her eyes narrowing. "You'll never find it, Barbarian. The darkness will consume you first."

4. OBSTACLE

- ♦ **Introduce an obstacle** that stands in the way of the hero getting what they want, a challenge they need to overcome.

Action: Defeat someone, chase or escape someone, sneak past someone.

Environmental: Explore, journey to, enter, or escape a dangerous or guarded place.

Social: Get what you want through persuasion, deception, intimidation, interrogation, trade.

- ♦ **Describe how the hero encounters the obstacle.**

Before the Spider Queen can react, Torek dashes past her, bursting through a side door into a web-covered hallway. He encounters giant spiders skittering about, blocking his path. "Your minions won't stop me," Torek growls, swinging his axe to clear the way.

5. ACTION

- ♦ **Decide how the hero will attempt to overcome the obstacle** to achieve their objective. This is the core of the scene, where you use creative problem solving to improvise fun action or roleplaying moments.
- ♦ **Describe what the hero says and does** to get what they want.

"There's no end to them," Torek mutters, realizing brute force won't be enough. "I need to find another way." He spots a chandelier above the hallway and decides to cut it down to crush the spiders. With a powerful throw, he severs the chain, and the chandelier crashes down.

6. RESOLUTION

- ♦ **Decide whether the hero succeeds.** You can just make a choice, or determine it by rolling the dice: set the difficulty number you need to beat based on how likely you think the character is to succeed (5 - easy, 10 - medium, 15 - hard), and roll the dice (d20).
- ♦ **Describe what happens as a result:**
 - ♦ If the hero **succeeds**, they get what they want, resolving the scene (go to the next step).
 - ♦ If they **fail**, they face a setback or a complication that escalates the conflict, making their problem worse, making their goal more difficult to achieve. You can make another attempt by trying a different strategy (go to the previous step), or decide that the scene ends in hero's failure (go to the next step).

Rolling a 15 on the dice, the chandelier crashes down, crushing the spiders and clearing the path. "Finally, a clear path," Torek says, panting. "Now, to find the Orb of Shadows."

7. CLIFFHANGER

- ♦ **End the scene on a cliffhanger** that leads the hero into the next scene: the character sets out on a journey to a new location, has to deal with the consequences of failure, or gets what they want, which creates a new problem/challenge/desire.

As Torek reaches the mansion's inner sanctum, he sees the Orb of Shadows on a pedestal. Just as he reaches for it, the Spider Queen appears, her many eyes burning with anger. "You may have defeated my minions, but you'll never leave here alive," she snarls, raising her hands to cast a spell. Torek, realizing he can't defeat her in a fair fight, grabs the orb and turns to run.

FANTASY GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE

◦ PLAYER CHARACTER ◦

Sir Loren, an enthusiastic novice knight in shining armor.

Special ability: Indestructible shield.

◦ 1. LOCATION ◦

The enormous Old Tower stands tall and crumbling, with ivy winding around its stones, creaking in the wind.

◦ 2. CHARACTER ◦

Sir Loren smiles broadly at Alric, the Wise Old Wizard he hired to assist him.

"Alric, this place is incredible! I can't believe we finally made it."

◦ 3. OBJECTIVE ◦

"The Phoenix Amulet is said to be hidden at the top of this tower," Alric says, stroking his beard. "But many have tried and failed to retrieve it. Are you sure you're up for the challenge?"

Sir Loren clenches his fist with determination. "I am more than ready. Let's find that Amulet!"

◦ 4. OBSTACLE ◦

As they climb the winding stairs of the Old Tower, Sir Loren and Alric hear the growl of a beast. A massive, fire-breathing dragon, with glowing runes on its scales, blocks their path.

"We've got company," the Sir Loren whispers, drawing his sword.

◦ 5. ACTION ◦

"Wait," Alric says, examining the runes. "These runes are clearly binding it here against its will. If we can break the spell, the dragon will be free."

"How do we break the runes?" the Sir Loren asks.

"A counterspell should do it," the Alric replies, beginning to chant. "Just keep it occupied for a moment!" Sir Loren leaps into action, trying to distract the dragon.

◦ 6. RESOLUTION ◦

Rolling a 12 on the dice, Sir Loren successfully deflects the fire with his shield. He occupies dragon's attention long enough to give Alric the time to complete his counterspell. The runes on the dragon's scales fade away. The dragon, now free, looks at them gratefully before spreading its wings and flying out of the tower.

"It worked!" the Sir Loren exclaims. "Now, to find the Amulet!"

◦ 7. CLIFFHANGER ◦

As they reach the top of the tower, they find an old chest with the Amulet inside. Just as Sir Loren reaches out to take it, Alric grabs the Amulet. "I need this for my own plans," Alric sneers, stepping back. Sir Loren looks at him in shock. "What are you doing?"

"This is where we part ways," Alric replies, a sinister gleam in his eye, casts the entanglement spell on Sir Loren, and walks away, as Sir Loren struggles against the vines.

SCI FI GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE

○ PLAYER CHARACTER ○

Captain Vex, a cunning and charismatic space pirate.

Special ability: Holographic disguise projector.

○ 1. LOCATION ○

The bustling docking bay of the Nebula Outpost is filled with spacecraft of various sizes, surrounded by swirling cosmic gases that cast eerie lights across the metal surfaces.

○ 2. CHARACTER ○

Captain Vex approaches the outpost commander, Commander Zara, who is inspecting cargo and taking notes on the inventory.

Vex, disguised as a well-known merchant, greets her with a smooth tone.

"Commander Zara, a pleasure to see you. How's the trade in the outer sectors?"

○ 3. OBJECTIVE ○

Zara nods, slightly distracted. "Busy as always. What brings you here?"

Vex, still in disguise: "I'm here to purchase a rare mineral sample you've recently acquired. I believe it could benefit my enterprises greatly."

Zara raises an eyebrow. "It's stored in our high-security vault. Quite a valuable piece."

○ 4. OBSTACLE ○

Zara seems skeptical and hints at the strict security measures around the vault.

"It's a delicate matter, and only those with the highest clearance have access. Even with your reputation, it's not a simple request."

○ 5. ACTION ○

After parting ways with Zara, Vex finds a secluded spot and switches his holographic disguise to that of a high-ranking official known to have the necessary clearance.

He then confidently walks back towards the vault, where the security droids scan and recognize the high-ranking insignia. "Just here for a routine check," Vex announces authoritatively.

○ 6. RESOLUTION ○

Rolling an 11 on the dice, Vex manages to bypass the security systems with his disguise intact and accesses the vault. Inside, he swiftly locates and secures the rare mineral.

"Exactly what I came for," he whispers, pocketing the item securely.

○ 7. CLIFFHANGER ○

As Vex exits the vault, alarms suddenly blare throughout the outpost - someone has noticed the unauthorized access. With the outpost on high alert, Vex must think quickly.

Spotting an unguarded service hatch leading to a series of maintenance tunnels, he makes a dash for it, knowing his escape from the outpost just became much more complicated.

"Time to disappear," he mutters, disappearing into the shadows of the tunnels.

MISSION-FOCUSED ADVENTURES

MISSIONS

To play adventures that are longer than a single scene, you can simply repeat the steps described above to create a series of scenes that add up to a story. But you can also take on **Missions** - overarching Objectives that take multiple scenes to complete.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Begin with an Adventure Hook - a scene that introduces the Mission that the hero will strive to achieve by the end of the story, and draws them into action.

Define the **Location** where the adventure begins, and encounter a non-player **Character** who has a problem you need to go on a Mission to solve. When in doubt, your Mission is to go to another Location and obtain a McGuffin, guarded by the Antagonist.

Location: Ancient Anubis temple in the middle of an Egypt-themed fantasy city.

Character: A meek, elderly priest charged with taking care of the temple.

Mission: Retrieve the Scorpion Amulet (McGuffin) that has been stolen from this temple by the Evil Cultists (Antagonists), they're taking it to the Pyramid (your Destination) to resurrect their evil leader.

CHALLENGES

Formulate a 3-5 step plan for completing your Mission. Play one scene for each step:

- **Location** is the place you must go to in order to take the next step.
- **Objective** for each scene is to complete the next step of the plan.
- **Obstacle** is a challenge that makes taking the next step difficult.

To come up with a plan and obstacles for your first adventure, choose 3 steps from this list:

♦ Obtain the things you need to succeed at your quest.

Transportation, map, aid, weapon that can slay the antagonist, information about the location of the McGuffin or the Antagonist's weakness, witness who holds a clue to McGuffin's disappearance.

♦ Journey to the Location where McGuffin is kept.

Survive the journey, deal with environmental obstacles, dangerous creatures, or enemy patrols.

♦ Deal with an unexpected setback or complication during the mission.

Injury, equipment failure, betrayal, misinformation, ambushes, natural disasters, antagonist's actions.

♦ Enter the Location where McGuffin is kept, and find where it is.

Discover the entrance, overcome the minions, security system, traps, sneak in without being noticed.

♦ Overcome the Guardian to obtain the McGuffin.

Defeat them in combat, persuade them to give you what you want, sneak past them, trick them.

♦ Escape, return home to deliver the McGuffin.

Escape the collapsing lair, escape from the pursuit in a chase scene, protect the McGuffin from danger.

CLIMAX

Overcoming the last challenge will be the story's climax (a scene where the final, most difficult challenge determines whether you succeed at your Mission).

MISSION GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE

○ PLAYER CHARACTER ○

Milo, a nerdy and curious aspiring mage, wizard's apprentice.

Special ability: A wand of telekinesis.

○ ADVENTURE HOOK ○

Location: While traveling through the desert, Milo passes an oasis with a waterfall.

Character: Milo hears sad roars coming from the cave behind the waterfall. There, he finds Kimba, a lonely child dragon.

Mission: Kimba says that the evil warriors have attacked and captured his mom. Milo agrees to help and rescue her.

○ CHALLENGE 1 ○

Challenge: Journey to the location where the big mama dragon is kept.

Milo follows the tracks left by the warriors transporting a large incapacitated dragon. To cross the desert, he has to overcome sandstorms and gigantic sand worms on his way.

○ CHALLENGE 2 ○

Challenge: Enter the fortified location.

Milo arrives at a desert city surrounded by tall white walls. Guards at the gate only allow the citizens to pass.

Milo finds a carriage full of wine barrels being transported into the city, and manages to sneak in by hiding in one of the barrels.

○ CHALLENGE 3 ○

Challenge: Find the big mama dragon.

Exploring the city, Milo discovers crowds of people standing in line to enter a Colosseum.

He learns that the local princess sends her warriors to capture magical beasts, and forces them fight each other for the public's entertainment. He learns that some gladiator prisoners are being forced to fight the creatures as well.

To enter the Colosseum, Milo pretends to steal something in front of the guards, who send him to the gladiator prisons under the coliseum, where he meets a group of gladiator prisoners getting ready to fight the beasts.

○ CLIMAX ○

Challenge: Liberate the dragon.

Entering the arena, Milo faces off with the mama dragon. He manages to convince the raging dragon that he's here to help.

The dragon has an enchanted chain around her neck, that prevents her from leaving. The arena is observed by the princess, and her wizard advisor, whose magic powers the chain.

Milo uses his Wand of Telekinesis to levitate the wizard into the arena, where, horrified of the dragon, he loses concentration on the spell. Milo breaks the dragon's chain, liberates the dragon, convinces her to spare the lives of the people watching from the audience, hops on her back, and flies away to freedom.

MYSTERY-FOCUSED ADVENTURES

HOOK

Describe where the hero is and what they are doing when they encounter the mystery.
Introduce the first clue the hero encounters (something weird or unusual in the scene).

Clue prompts: Unusual Affliction, Visions or Sensations, Tracks or Remains, Unexplained Event, Strange Artifact, Weird Sample or Specimen, Technology or Devices, Anomalous Structure, Cryptic Message, Stories and Myths, Documents or Records, Customs and Rituals, Unnatural Landforms, Weird Nature, Disappearance, Surveillance Intel, Weird Transformation, Unusual Creature, Strange Behavior, Unexpected Discovery, Mysterious Sighting, Drawings or Blueprints, Witness Testimony, Unusual Crime, Hidden Place, Marks and Symbols, Physical Evidence.

Pose a question about the clue, the core mystery you want to investigate.

SPECULATE

After each scene, make up a theory - a possible explanation for the mystery, a guess about what's going on, why is it happening, who or what is behind it, and what their endgame is.

Every time you discover a new clue, you'll update your theory (modify it to explain as many clues you've observed as possible).

INVESTIGATE

- ◆ Describe what hero does to investigate the mystery - where you go to, how do you search for clues, what do you hope to learn about the mystery.
- ◆ Introduce an obstacle that makes the investigation difficult. If the hero successfully overcomes the obstacle, they discover the next clue.
- ◆ Before introducing a clue, roll the number of dice (d20) equal to the amount of clues you have discovered, and take the highest result. If it's above 15, introduce a clue that supports your current theory. Otherwise, introduce a clue that contradicts your current theory.

Start with the clues that are vague and mysterious, and make them progressively clearer and more specific, gradually make it more obvious what's going on.

REVEAL

Repeat the investigation scenes until you have enough clues (3-5) and are you're ready to reveal the truth, explain what's going on, and establish the location where the climax of the story takes place.

Describe how the main character discovers the solution to the mystery.

CLIMAX

Once the truth is revealed, the investigation story turns into a mission-based save-the-day scenario. If there's a culprit, their evil scheme is nearly complete. If there's a victim, they're in grave danger. The cause of the weirdness may need to be contained, protected, it may need help to escape or to stay hidden.

The hero rushes to confront the culprit, help the person in need, solve the problem at the root of the mystery, or have some other dramatic resolution. Come up with the final obstacle the hero must overcome in order to succeed.

MYSTERY GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE

○ PLAYER CHARACTER ○

Dash, a teenage post-apocalyptic survivor traveling the wastelands.

Special ability: A hand-held computer he uses to interact with pre-war technology.

○ HOOK ○

Location: Dash encounters an old, abandoned, wild-west-style town.

Clue: An old rusty robot with a beard sits leaning against the wall of the saloon. An empty bottle of motor oil is in his hand. He's half-buried in sand, clearly inactive for a long time.

Mystery Question: What is this robot doing here, and what happened to it?

○ SPECULATE ○

Initial theory: Dash hypothesizes that the robot is a remnant of a bygone era when such machines served the town's inhabitants. Maybe a robot prospector?

○ INVESTIGATE ○

Investigation: Dash uses his computer to activate the robot and inspect it more closely.

Obstacle: The robot refuses to answer any questions until Dash fetches him a drink.

Dash enters the saloon, but the saloon is inhabited by the giant insectoid critters.

Clue (*rolled low on the dice, so the clue contradicts the current theory*): After a drink, the robot stirs to life and starts muttering about a shelter underneath the town, and a map hidden in the mayor's office.

○ SPECULATE ○

Updated theory: Maybe this town was built on top of a fallout shelter, and the robot was meant to protect the town's inhabitants?

○ INVESTIGATE ○

Investigation: Dash explores the mayor's office looking for a map.

Obstacle: A bandit gang occupies the mayor's office. Dash manages to lure them out of the building with a distraction, and steals the map.

Clue (*roll high, the clue confirms the theory*): Dash follows the map to an abandoned shelter beneath the town, where he discovers documents describing the town's history.

○ REVEAL ○

The documents found in the shelter reveal that the shelter was built in case of a nuclear war, and the robot was a part of a security system, programmed to protect the inhabitants and help them rebuild civilization after they exit the shelter.

○ CLIMAX ○

In the shelter, Dash finds spare parts he can use to fix the robot. Pursued by the bandits who have realized they've been tricked, he rushes to the robot and repairs him.

The robot's eyes brighten, and it stands upright, ready to assist. He defeats and arrests the bandits, thanks Dash for restoring him to life, and start rebuilding the town.

CREATIVE EXPLORATION ADVENTURES

◦ CREATIVE EXPLORATION ◦

Instead of focusing on the plot (the hero overcoming obstacles in pursuit of an objective), you can focus your scenes on creating and exploring weird, interesting, and creative ideas. Journey to discover strange and unusual locations, surprising characters, absurd situations.

◦ SET UP THE SCENE ◦

Describe visiting a new location, meeting a new character, and the first dialogue line. Don't make it too unusual yet - just establish the normal world and expectations.

◦ DISCOVER THE UNUSUAL PREMISE ◦

Use one of these methods to come up with a weird, unusual, unexpected idea:

SUBVERT EXPECTATIONS	OUT OF PLACE
What do I expect to see in this scene? Change it to something very different and unexpected.	Introduce someone or something that doesn't belong in this situation, an out of place detail.
WILDLY INAPPROPRIATE RESPONSE	UNUSUAL CHARACTER TRAITS
What is the least appropriate dialogue, behavior, or emotion in this situation? Weirdest thing to say or do?	Character's personality, behavior, beliefs, details, occupation, appearance are unexpected, weird, exaggerated, or create an internal contradiction.

Use dialogue or description to introduce one unusual/unexpected element into the scene.

◦ DEVELOP THE PREMISE ◦

Use the following methods, one at a time, to build on top of the unusual premise:

JUSTIFY	HEIGHTEN
Justify the weird idea, explain how it came to be, describe its backstory, make it make sense.	Exaggerate what's unusual about the idea, make it even more unusual, specific, and weird.
EXPLORE	ADD DETAIL
Explore the implications and consequences. If this is true, then what else is true in this world?	Add a detail that reveals more about this world - a character, a location, an event, etc.
PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY	DESCRIBE
State a problem the premise may cause, or an opportunity it may present to the adventurers.	Describe what the premise looks like, how it behaves, what does it do, how does it work.

Play the scene until you feel that the premise is explored.

◦ CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY ◦

Describe your journey to the next location.

Keep traveling the world to discover more unusual people and places.

EXPLORATION GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE

◦ EXAMPLE 1 ◦

Setup: Ester, a nerdy witch-in-training (our hero), enters The Drunken Dragon tavern. The bartender nods, "What'll it be?"

Unusual Premise (*Out of Place*): A group of fish, each half-submerged in its own aquarium, sit around the table, playing cards.

Develop (*Justify*): The bartender sighs, "Merfolk diplomats. They're here for the underwater kingdom summit."

Develop (*Explore*): Ester overhears the fish discussing underwater real estate prices, seaweed farming regulations, and the dolphins' plans to unionize.

Develop (*Describe*): The fish diplomats wear fancy top-hats, and smoke cigars as they use their fins to hold cards and push chips. Their aquariums are equipped with drinking straws, and the drinks are poured right into the water when they ask for a refill.

Develop (*Problem*): A waiter accidentally bumps into a fish tank, tipping it over. The fish diplomat flops on the floor, gasping for air: "This is an outrage! Is this how you treat your guests? Perhaps the peace treaty between our kingdoms isn't such a good idea after all!"

◦ EXAMPLE 2 ◦

Setup: Cliff, a wild west sheriff, nervously watches a famous bandit gang arrive in town.

Unusual Premise (*Subvert Expectations*): I expect the feared leader of the bandit gang to look badass and dangerous, but it turns out to be a tiny old lady with a warm smile.

Develop (*Justify*): "Oh, don't let the wrinkles fool you, dear. I've been raiding towns longer than you've been alive. We might be old, but we've got more experience and spunk than all of you young whippersnappers put together!"

Develop (*Heighten*): After a meticulously executed bank heist, the gang makes an extremely slow getaway, yet somehow they always manage to evade capture due to their cunning use of distractions and decoys.

Develop (*Detail*): When a fight breaks out, a tiny elderly man uses his dentures as a devastating weapon of tremendous destruction, and the walker doubles as a high-speed getaway vehicle complete with smoke bombs and oil slicks.

◦ EXAMPLE 3 ◦

Setup: Guz, a half-orc barbarian, joins a pirate crew and sets sail.

Unusual Premise (*Character Traits*): Pirates are usually rowdy and dangerous, but these are the tamest, most polite pirates possible, every crime they suggest is super low-stakes.

Develop (*Justify*): The crew members are former aristocrats, noble lords with a lot of progressive ideas, who follow strict rules of etiquette.

Develop (*Heighten*): They board the ship, and hand the captain a strongly-worded letter about how it would be nice of them to surrender.

Develop (*Heighten more*): They have a firm yet respectful debate over tea and crumpets, talking to the captain about the philosophical merits of anarchy, until he's so exasperated with their arguments he just gives up.

LONG-TERM CAMPAIGN

◦ EPISODIC ADVENTURES ◦

Think of each individual adventure as an episode of a TV show, and a campaign is like a season. Come up with a job for your character that fits well with episodic adventures.

McGuffin of the week: Artifact collector, creature tamer (Indiana Jones, Pokemon).

Monster of the week: Monster/vampire/bounty hunter (Buffy, Charmed, Ghostbusters).

Case of the week: Special agent, cop, anomaly investigators (X-Files, Gravity Falls, Sherlock, SCP).

Heist of the week: Thief, criminal, pirate, smuggler, hacker (Firefly, Leverage, Inception).

World of the week: Space explorer, delivery service (Star Trek, Rick and Morty, Futurama).

Focus on a single adventure type, or experiment with multiple types.

◦ OVERARCHING GOAL ◦

Think of a long-term motivation your hero may pursue during the campaign.

Get strong enough to defeat a villain (Harry Potter, Avatar: The Last Airbender).

Obtain ingredients to build something (Factorio).

Journey to a remote place (Lord of the Rings).

Fix anomalies to prevent a disaster (Fringe).

Overthrow an oppressive regime (Firefly).

Find a long-lost person (Fallout).

Unravel a big mystery (X-Files).

Find a way home (Sliders).

Every episode is focused on completing an “objective of the week”, and, as a reward, your character gains something that enables them to take a step closer to their long-term goal.

◦ RECURRING CHARACTERS AND LOCATIONS ◦

Come up with an antagonist that will be a recurring part of your story, let the long-term conflict with them drive the plot of many adventures.

Create a campaign document where you keep track of the characters you meet and the locations you visit. Explore your relationships with the characters, and add more details to the locations as you adventure.

◦ CHARACTER PROGRESSION ◦

Your hero can become more powerful by gaining new special abilities at the end of each adventure. Find a valuable item, receive a quest reward, learn a magic spell, come up with a new invention, make an ally - anything that makes you stronger and can help on future adventures.

To avoid accumulating too many game-breakingly powerful abilities, clearly define the powers, costs, and limitations for each new ability you gain.

GAMEPLAY TIPS AND ADVICE

○ DON'T OVERTHINK ○

Don't treat this game as a serious project like writing a novel, approach it as a stream-of-consciousness improv scene:

Don't plan, play to find out what happens. Don't edit, don't pause, don't try to write well, don't worry about the plot holes or the quality of your ideas. Use tropes and cliches, liberally steal ideas from the stories you like. Don't take it seriously. Try really stupid and absurd ideas (the stupider - the better!)

Remember, you don't have to commit to any of the ideas for longer than a 10-minute scene.

○ IN MEDIAS RES ○

Start the scenes in the middle of action, when something interesting has just happened (or is just about to happen). End the scenes as soon as the most interesting part is over.

○ DEVELOP YOUR HERO ○

When you're getting started, keep your hero simple - name, adjective, and occupation is all you need. But as you adventure, start thinking about their motivations, long-term goals, backstory, flaws. Why do they adventure? What do they want from life? Let the stories organically emerge from that.

○ COMPANIONS ○

Create a companion for your hero - that gives them someone to talk to during the scenes when there are no other non-player characters around. Companions can join you organically, as you meet them on your adventures, or you can hire them to help you on your quest.

○ SWITCH CHARACTERS ○

Every new scene, you have an option to switch your protagonist - instead of continuing as the hero you started out with, you can play as one of the characters they've met.

It's a great way to experiment with roleplaying as different characters, and it will help you avoid overthinking and perfectionism at the character creation step - you can start with any random character, knowing you can switch any time if you get bored of them, or when you discover a better idea.

○ WORLDBUILDING ○

To use this game as a worldbuilding tool, use Creative Exploration Adventures.

Don't worry about the plot, goals, or obstacles. Just focus on describing the locations you visit, characters you meet, and your journey between the locations. Travel from place to place, create and explore the world as you play, without planning anything in advance.

You can also play a series of unrelated self-contained scenes that take place in the same world. Come up with a location and two new characters for each scene, and play as one of the characters.

○ EXPLORE RULESETS ○

This framework is a great way to learn and experiment with multiple different systems. Try playing each scene with a new ruleset you want to learn or a new mechanic you want to try out. That is a great way to choose your favorite system when you're struggling to pick one.

FANTASY PROMPTS

	LOCATION	CHARACTER	OBJECTIVE	OBSTACLE
1	Abandoned Tower	Eccentric Sage	Obtain item	Watchful guardian
2	Haunted Castle	Arrogant Spirit	Destroy item	Dangerous creature
3	Research Camp	Old Goblin	Defeat villain	Evil minions
4	Swamp Hut	Creepy Witch	Capture person	Untrustworthy ally
5	Mountain Lair	Curious Creature	Rescue captive	Authority figure
6	Desert Temple	Zealous Cultist	Steal information	Environmental hazard
7	Prehistoric Jungle	Cunning Thief	Escort person	Natural disaster
8	Underground Lab	Secretive Inventor	Liberate location	Blocked path
9	Hidden Lair	Wealthy Merchant	Create device	Trap or ambush
10	Pirate Ship	Humble Peasant	Escape enemy	Dangerous terrain
11	Spooky Manor	Reckless Warrior	Sabotage project	Cursed artifact
12	Flooded Tunnels	Scary Monster	Persuade person	Innocent bystanders
13	Steampunk Factory	Rowdy Bandits	Tame creature	Antagonist's action
14	Tropical Island	Corrupted Priest	Repair vehicle	Unwanted attention
15	Overgrown Town	Famous Actor	Capture creature	Security system
16	Animal Nest	Naive Child	Defeat monster	Distrustful locals
17	Bustling Tavern	Primitive Savage	Smuggle item	Poisonous plants
18	Infested Colony	Mysterious Vagrant	Intercept delivery	Magic spells
19	Deadly Swamp	Ruthless Leader	Spy on person	Equipment failure
20	Large Aircraft	Peaceful Monk	Infiltrate location	Sabotage
21	Bottomless Abyss	Impulsive Hunter	Heal creature	Unstable structure
22	Forbidden Citadel	Misguided Hero	Destroy location	Rampaging creature
23	Peaceful Farm	Long-lost Pirate	Find treasure	Sudden attack
24	Forgotten Ruins	Sneaky Ninja	Conceal creature	Angry mob
25	Old Battlefield	Odd Wizard	Negotiate deal	Ancient device
26	Sacred Cave	Secret Agent	Journey to location	Unknown disease
27	Government Building	Lonely Soldier	Spy on person	Blackmail

SciFi Prompts

	LOCATION	CHARACTER	OBJECTIVE	OBSTACLE
1	Space Station	Rogue Android	Steal data	Security lockdown
2	Alien Wasteland	Lost Astronaut	Signal rescue	Radiation storms
3	Interstellar Ark	Cult Leader	Sabotage engine	Crew mutiny
4	Galactic Embassy	Diplomatic Envoy	Negotiate deal	Political assassination
5	Junkyard Planet	Resourceful Engineer	Build vehicle	Scavenger gangs
6	Crumbling Spaceport	Wounded Pilot	Deliver message	Rampaging creature
7	Overgrown Colony	Desperate Scientist	Retrieve sample	Toxic flora
8	Futuristic Metropolis	Corrupt Official	Secure documents	Political sabotage
9	Derelict Starship	Rogue Mechanic	Repair engine	Power outage
10	Black Market	Shady Dealer	Acquire gadget	Police raid
11	Subterranean Bunker	Fearful Survivor	Escape confinement	Collapsing tunnels
12	Orbital Platform	Greedy Smuggler	Smuggle contraband	Security inspection
13	War-Torn City	Resolute Soldier	Protect civilians	Enemy ambush
14	Sand Planet	Local Peasant	Journey to location	Dangerous terrain
15	Alien Jungle	Space Tourist	Repair vehicle	Hostile wildlife
16	Megastructure	Fugitive Spy	Deliver secrets	Bounty hunters
17	Deserted Outpost	Cynical Mercenary	Rescue captive	Enemy patrol
18	High-Tech Fortress	Ruthless Warlord	Steal plans	Security system
19	Floating City	Smuggler Captain	Deliver package	Undercover agents
20	Cyberpunk Slum	Streetwise Informant	Gather intel	Gang interference
21	Underwater Dome	Marine Biologist	Study creature	Structural damage
22	Secret Laboratory	Mad Scientist	Destroy experiment	Rogue AI
23	Dusty Spaceport	Wary Trader	Trade resources	Local officials
24	Rebel Hideout	Charismatic Leader	Persuade group	Spy infiltration
25	Automated Factory	Fearless Explorer	Liberate robots	Local unrest
26	Polluted Cityscape	Fugitive Cyborg	Escape pursuit	Law enforcement
27	Ancient Starship	Veteran Pilot	Deliver supplies	Malfunctioning tech

MORE AWESOME STUFF

TOOLS AND GAME SYSTEMS

Once you're comfortable with the basic storytelling mechanics, you can experiment with more tools and systems to add more depth and mechanics to your gameplay:

Mirage • <https://rpgadventures.io/mirage>

Mirage is a one-page, storytelling-focused roleplaying game for people who enjoy the creative aspects of roleplaying games, and want to improvise stories without the intricate rules getting in their way. Use it to add just enough mechanics to your adventures, while still keeping things simple and rules-lite.

Strangeville Files • <https://rpgadventures.io/strangeville-files>

Strangeville Files a lighthearted, storytelling-focused game where you'll improvise supernatural mysteries in the style of Gravity Falls, Scooby Doo, Inside Job, X-Files, Men in Black, SCP Foundation. It is a great collection of card-based prompts for mystery-focused adventures.

Story Deck • <https://rpgadventures.io/story-deck>

Story Deck a collection of many hundreds of prompts you can use to inspire Locations, Characters, and Objectives for your stories.

Free Pre-Made Adventures • <https://rpgadventures.io/browse>

Visit our website for a collection of free pre-made adventures you can use in your games.

Adventure Writers' Room • <https://rpgadventures.io/writers-room>

This is a collaborative storytelling game about creating adventures for other roleplaying games. By playing this game you will brainstorm creative ideas, develop them into an exciting story, and create an adventure you can add to your campaign, run as a one-shot, or publish.

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

Want to become a better roleplayer, storyteller, and improviser?

Want to find other friendly and creative people to play with?

Want to follow this project, and other cool stuff I create?

Come join our Discord community: <https://rpgadventures.io/discord>

GET IN TOUCH

Do you have any questions, need any help or advice?

Do you have any feedback or ideas on how I could make this game better?

Do you want to just chat about roleplaying and creativity?

Don't hesitate to reach out!

- My Discord: **lumenwrites**
- My Email: **lumenwrites@gmail.com**

