

# Introduction

There was only one sure thing I knew when starting HS. That was that this thing would go batshit insane in ways I couldn't begin to imagine. In fact, it was practically the mission statement.

- Andrew Hussie

This is a story-telling game in the vein of Homestuck and the other MS Paint Adventures comics. If you haven't read at least some of Homestuck or Problem Sleuth, put this game down until you have. They can be found at [www.mspaintadventures.com](http://www.mspaintadventures.com).

This is a game for four people. Three or five might work - give it a try if you want to. All the players will have similar roles. All of you will have to come up with stuff and ideas; dare to be a little creative. Don't worry if you feel you're boring - as long as you can produce something when requested, no matter how obvious, that will suffice.

[Introduction](#)

[Starting the game](#)

[Updates](#)

[Commands](#)

[Overview](#)

[So what happens?](#)

[Summary](#)

[Pesterlogs \(dialogue\)](#)

[Summary](#)

[Exposé](#)

[Summary](#)

[Flash](#)

[Preparation](#)

[Hitting Play](#)

[Quickly describing a visual](#)

[Tips for when you're stuck](#)

[Using the music](#)

[Summary](#)

[Speculation](#)

[Types of questions](#)

[Claiming a question](#)

[Summary](#)

## [Settings](#)

[Changing settings](#)

[Death](#)

[Shipping](#)

[Meta](#)

[Doom](#)

## [Resolving uncertainty or conflict](#)

[The Karma deck](#)

[What's in the deck?](#)

## [Making shit up](#)

[Inspirational lists](#)

[Things that may or may not work like in HS](#)

## [Appendix: Lists and stuff](#)

[Creating the Kids](#)

[Interests, intellectual](#)

[Interests, practical](#)

[Visual impressions](#)

[Family](#)

[Other people](#)

[The Game](#)

[Gameplay](#)

[Appearance](#)

[Advanced Game Theory](#)

[New character sets](#)

## [Starting Karma deck cards](#)

## [Rules summary](#)

## [The museum](#)

[Pushing \(Microscope's solution\)](#)

# Starting the game

The game starts with the four Kids. They might be three or five, true, but four is a better number of players. Every player has their own Kid. "Has" does not mean you have full control over all their actions. However, since you do get to introduce your Kid you control their appearance, room, interests and so on. You will also portray them in dialogue, so their thoughts and voice will always be yours. When you create your Kid, fill in the character sheet and place it in front of you.

The Kids need not necessarily be Kids. They are named thus because

they fulfil the same role of those in Homestuck. If you decide to try to play Problem Sleuth, they'll probably not be very young. This game is written from the assumption that you want to play something close to Homestuck, so it provides inspiration for entering a full-immersion game, with locations, obstacles, metaphysics and so on thereafter. If you want to play something else, you'll have to come up with such inspiration yourselves - but the rules for updates, speculation and uncertainty resolution would go unchanged.

As the game progresses, new characters will appear. When they are, write them down and leave them in the middle of the table. Try to make them come in sets - preferably sets of four, just like the Exiles and the Midnight Crew in the comic.

## Updates

In this game, everything that happens happens in the form of updates. Updates are contributions to the story, dialogue, descriptions of what happens - the meat of a role-playing session. However, updates are always one of the following types:

- Commands or command sequences
- Exposé sequences
- Pesterlog (dialogue)
- Flash updates

After each update, go around the table starting with the player to the right of the one who suggested the previous update. When the turn comes to you, you may decide what update is played next. If you don't know what to suggest, you may pass. If everyone passes, including the player who suggested the last update, give everyone a minute to think about it. If no-one comes up with anything, use the Karma deck.

There can be some discussion about what's to be seen next, like "I'd like to see what John is up to - would you like to give some commands?" or "I want to resolve the whole mexican troll standoff, but I don't know if that's a Flash or an Exposé, what do you think?" However, don't feel the need to run everything by everyone else.

Each type of update has its own rules for who says what.

## **Introductions**

A new character is introduced. The player who suggested the update, or someone else if everyone agrees, introduces the new character. You know how this goes. Take a look at the inspirational lists at the end of this game text beforehand if you want to.

During the introduction, one player is doing the talking, but that player has one tool to either help them out when they start drawing blanks, or injecting something unexpected into the character. They can, mid-sentence, point at another player who must then fill in exactly one word of the presentation.

## **Commands**

When doing a Command update, you proceed in the vein of the early Homestuck, which is also the same style that returns as soon as there's a new interesting environment to explore. The common case of this is the introduction of a new kid, starting with "You are now X" and finishing with "What do you do?" However, single commands pop up now and then in the comic, directed at pretty much anything or anyone. Commands are in many ways the standard update format, both in the comic and in this game.

## **Overview**

The command update starts with one player giving a command to a character. For the Kids, you may not give a command to another player's Kid without them approving the command. For simplicity it is recommended that you give commands to your own Kid, at least until you get to know the others'. If you simply want to see another Kid progress, you can nudge their player saying "I think it's time for a command update with Dave". All other characters are fair game for any player.

The update can be as short as one command, but it can be a much longer sequence of commands. However, a single update only concerns one active character. If the character is one of the Kids, then it will probably have the same active player for most of the commands, too. If it's someone else, you can all throw commands in there - just like when the comic was run by the suggestion box! If you want to switch to another character after a while, that's a new update. If

you need to have a lot of interlocking actions, make it an exposé or a flash update.

## **So what happens?**

When someone makes a command to a character, any other player can describe the results of that command. You're free to describe anything you like, except stuff that's off-limits by other rules (for example, there are rules about death further down). All descriptions are in the second person, directed to the commanded character. Keep your descriptions short, one or two sentences before you stop. Then if the command isn't fully resolved, someone else gets the chance to keep going. If no-one else does, you can do so yourself, but keep giving other players the chance to jump in.

Sooner or later, someone will give a new command. This might happen sooner than you think: you were just half done with your description of what the imps do, but someone want the character to interrupt them and gives that command. Often it happens when it feels appropriate: the results of the previous command were finished, and it was time for another one. Simply saying "Next" (the voiced version of "==" from Homestuck), prompting someone to keep going, is a valid command.

## **Summary**

- A player gives a command to a character. Any other player starts describing the results, in the second person.
- Description of results continue, leaving other players room to jump in, until someone gives a new command.
- All subsequent commands within the update must be to the same character, but may be from different players.
- The update ends after a command when one player suggests it to end and no-one disagrees.

## **Pesterlogs (dialogue)**

A pesterlog update is an update consisting completely of dialogue between two or more characters. It might not be through Pesterchum - you could have a real dialogue if the characters are close to each other, or even a long-time correspondence where you read out the contents of a snail-mail conversation. Or you might just be using a different IM solution.

Every player obviously plays their own Kid. Every other character

included has to be given to someone who doesn't have their Kid present in the conversation. The player who decided that the update would be a pesterlog should have suggestions ready for who should play whom. Place the character's sheet in front of their player for now, and return it to the middle afterwards.

As a character gets more and more screentime, they will develop a certain style. There is nothing wrong at that stage to keep giving that character to the same player - it will probably only benefit the consistency in style. In this way, some characters end up becoming "that player's character", but remember that this is only true for pesterlog updates.

Whenever one of the characters goes afk, logs out, is banned or something like that, any player can decide that the update is over. Any player not in the conversation can also cut the conversation short in one of two ways. One is to declare some circumstance that prevents it from going on: "You lose power, so your computer turns off". The other is to summarize the remained or the conversation and leave it at that: "You both proceed to have the worst rap-off in the history of paradox space".

## **Summary**

- Two or more characters communicate with each other. No action is shown.
- The Kids are played by their owners.
- Any other characters are played by anyone. The initiator for the update is responsible for suggestion players.
- The update ends with one of the following:
  - One party leaves, and someone wants the update to end
  - Someone not in the conversation narrates an interruption
  - Someone not in the conversation summarizes the ending

## **Exposé**

In an Exposé update, the scope of narration is increased, and the freedom to jump around in time and space increases. Exposé updates are those with a lot of images, no commands, and not very much accompanying text. Often they do big reveals or really get to the bottom with something. When someone decides that the next update should be an exposé, they must specify what it is about, e.g. "Exposé about what happens to Earth after they all enter the medium" or

"Exposé about Lil' Cal".

All players then start going around the table, starting from the one to the right of the initiating player, describing things that are shown during the exposé. What's said should be in brief sentences, often simply describing what would be seen. There are no flashy quick sequences - if there turns out to be, end the exposé and continue through commands or a flash update instead. Characters' speech is never repeated verbatim.

When someone thinks you've reached a good point to end the update, they pass their next turn. Everyone else then gets a chance to do one more contribution, or pass. When the turn reaches the player who passed first, the update is over.

## Summary

- One player sets the topic for the exposé
- The player to their right starts describing a panel
- Going round the table, everyone describes a panel each
- Keep going until someone first passes their turn. The update ends before that player's next turn.

## Flash

Sometimes, the still-frame medium of the comic doesn't do the story justice. You might need a lot of things to happen at once. You might have an epic moment that simply needs the movement - and the music. At those times, you use the Flash update. Good moments are the climaxes of major plotlines, a Kid entering, a Kid hitting god-tier, or any big fight.

## Preparation

Don't do a flash update haphazardly. You should come into it prepared. First, decide one of you to be the **Director**. This defaults to the one who suggested a flash update. The director then gives brief reminders of things that might show up in the flash. This does not mean naming stuff they want to see. If someone says "Ooh, Dave cutting the chain to Derse off with his sword!" the surprise is spoiled. The decision to do a flash is a signal to keep your little ideas to yourself for just a minute.

What the Director should do is remind people of stuff we already

know, especially things on the form "we last saw Dave trying to reach the egg". Especially remind everyone of the current Cliffhangers you've written down, since those can't be answered other than by a flash.

Then, the flash needs music. Pull up Youtube or Soundcloud, start playing something fitting for what the group has in mind. Everyone should be able to hear it. Chiptunes and orchestral music might work well, anything epic and instrumental. If nothing else comes to mind, go to BandCamp and start picking from the official Homestuck music.

Finally, the Director names the flash update. It can be a regular command, but also something completely different.

### **Hitting Play**

As soon as the music starts playing, the director points towards someone. They quickly describe a visual. The Director keeps doing this, pointing to people at appropriate times in the music (usually sudden change-ups in the melody or at each repetition of a measure), and they continue the story by describing what's "on screen" at that time.

If the director has a clear vision in mind, they're allowed to speak a word when pointing to a new person. That's the limit though, one word. They might use this to cross-cut between two events, saying "John", pointing at someone, saying "Dave", pointing at someone else, and then repeating those two.

### **Quickly describing a visual**

We stress that the description has to be quick. Don't take thirty seconds to say the perfect thing. Don't even take ten or five seconds to say a good thing. Take one or two seconds to say a passable thing. Yeah, you might've come up with something better if you took some extra time to think, but achieving the full effect means keeping up the unrelenting momentum, grabbing the story by the throat and not letting go until the end. You can think a bit beforehand, especially for starting shots, but you have to think on your feet to adapt to what the other players say.

We also stress that what is to be described is a "visual". Don't describe what's happening; describe *what we see*. Nobody speaks during a flash, so words are limited to one at a time, with a description of



where they're seen. No-one making a flash has the patience to *animate*, so you don't get any more complicated movements than a few frames cycled to show someone running. Go with one clearly visible event: someone's running, someone's crying, something's falling, someone hits. Often you don't even need to have anything moving in the frame at all, because the camera itself might pan over the image. Saying just "Pan over hundreds of dead bodies" is a great visual.

### **Tips for when you're stuck**

- Revisit something someone else brought up, either showing it from a different angle or refocusing it. If someone said "John crying" before, you could say "John's tears falling".
- Just blurt out something random. Honestly, even if half of you are only doing this it will still probably make just as much sense as your average Homestuck flash.
- If you really have nothing and the clock is ticking, just say "Pass." and the director will move on.

### **Using the music**

After a bit you'll start to get a feel for where the music is headed; follow it. When the music starts escalating, kick things into high gear. When it hits the chorus, revisit what you showed last time it came around. When it hits the bridge, switch to something completely different. You get the idea. This might take practice to get the hang of.

If the song ends, the flash ends. The director can end it prematurely, too. If you find yourselves having to continue after the song has ended, you can either start treating it as an exposé, or the director can start a new song.

### **Summary**

- One player is made Director, and reminds the others of things that might show up during the flash.
- Everyone thinks about what they might want to put into the flash while the director find the right music and title.
- When the music plays, the director points at someone and they describe what we see. The director may give a one-word instruction when he points to a new player.
- When the music ends, or when the director says so, the update ends.

# Speculation

When contributing to the fiction, you can include most anything. There are exceptions, of course. The Settings declares some things off-limits - like being too Meta, or killing off important characters. Otherwise, you're free to decide as much or as little as you want to about the mysteries and convolutions that is your Homestuck.

However, sometimes there's a thing you don't want decided. Or maybe you have the perfect idea, but you don't want to reveal it just yet. Or maybe you genuinely wonder about how the hell this thing is going to fit together, and don't have any good ideas.

Then you can take a thing and write it down as a **Question**. There should be a list in the middle of the table for this purpose. When you write down a question, you decide that the answer to this question is interesting. At least you will be interested to see it revealed, and hopefully the other players too.

All speculation takes place between updates.

## Types of questions

There are two main types of questions. The first one is the **Cliffhanger**. A Cliffhanger is simply the question "How will it go down?" The answer is imminent: just one more "Next"-command, and the whole situation would be resolved, for better or for worse. Cliffhangers have an important rule: they **can only be answered in a flash update**. However, one can skip ahead to after its resolution and keep it vague how it turned out, so that it can be revisited later.

All other questions you write down are **True nature** questions. These are questions about the true nature of someone or something, "Who is Lord English?" or "How did Jack end up in the Troll session?" True nature questions don't by themselves impose restrictions on when and how they're answered, but the players can do so later. Here's how:

- A player can say "**I really wonder** who Lord English is..." and put down their initial and a question mark next to the question. This bars them from answering that question - someone else must answer it. If all but one player do this with the same question,

that player obviously cannot.

- A player can say "**I know** who Lord English is!" They write their answer down on a slip of paper, fold it up carefully, write their initial on the outside of it and place it next to the question. That player is then the authority on Lord English's identity. A single player cannot have a secret answer down for more than one question at a time.

## **Claiming a question**

The last option above lets you claim a question for yourself, binding the story to your answer. Do not do this lightly. If you have an idea for something, just hold onto it and chances are you'll get to introduce it eventually anyway. That way, the door is still open to other players' ideas.

So when do you claim a question? What the game gains from deciding on one answer and then keeping it secret, is the **consistency of foreshadowing** and the **wonder of revelation**. The consistency means that you can start dropping references to the future answer early on, because that answer won't change. The wonder is that when you reveal the answer, the others have had their chance to honestly guess it beforehand and are genuinely interested to find out.

Claiming a question this way means you have the right to veto elements that contradict your answer. Before you do so, however, think once more about the new contribution and your answer. Is there any conceivable way they could work together? If there is, make them. If it's really contradictory, say "no", reach out and gently tap the folded paper with your initial on, showing that the secret answer in there goes against what they just said.

## **Summary**

- Between updates, anyone can write down a question. It is classified as either a Cliffhanger or a True nature question.
- Cliffhangers can only be answered by flash updates.
- You can declare that you really wonder about a true nature question. This bars you from answering it.
- You can declare that you know the answer to a true nature question. This bars everyone else from answering it.

# Settings

(Note: this section is only ideas. I have no idea if any of this works, or adds anything to the game.)

Like any computer game worth its cartridge, this game has a menu of settings the players can access. This menu looks as follows:

- Death (**Disabled** / Non-final / Enabled)
- Shipping (**Disabled** / Enabled)
- Meta (**Disabled** / Enabled)
- Doom (**None** / Earth / Session / Everything)

The bolded options are the default settings. The different items' options and their impact on the game are listed below.

## Changing settings

Settings can change by unanimous player decision, with one exception: the Doom setting cannot be returned to a previous state this way. Settings can also be changed by a Karma card that says so. Some of the settings also change when certain events occur in the story, as detailed.

## Death

When Death is **Disabled**, characters cannot die. The tone is light-hearted. The first time someone is shown to be wounded, however, it is automatically switched to **Non-final**, meaning characters can die. However, no character can be removed from the story by death. Someone may die in a flashback to reveal that they are a ghost. Someone may die and ascend to god-tier. Someone's alternate self from a doomed timeline may die, leaving the real one behind. But all introduced characters stay in the story.

When set to **Enabled**, however, the gloves are off. Now anyone can die. This option is automatically activated once twenty characters have been introduced, or the **Doom** setting is set to **Everything**, whichever happens first.

## Shipping

This setting is pretty straight-forward. When **Disabled**, romantic sub-plots are ignored for the time being, and no new ones are started. When **Enabled**, everyone is encouraged to think about who should be paired with whom, and who their character thinks should be paired with whom.

When the tenth character is introduced, shipping is set to **Enabled**. If it is subsequently disabled, it is Enabled again after ten more characters.

## Meta

This one is also self-explanatory. It mostly serves to make sure that there is a way to turn the meta down if you want to - set it to **Disabled** until the story gets somewhere. When enabled, feel free to jump between narrators, including yourself, and say that the reason for something that happened was "otherwise it would have gotten too silly".

## Doom

Everything starts off not being doomed. However, as soon as the first player has entered Sburp, the **Doom** setting is set to **Earth**. If it is subsequently set to **Session**, it means the session is, barring radically changed conditions, doomed. If it is upped again, to **Everything**, it means that there is something the characters know about that threatens the multiverse, or existence as we know it, or the ability of everyone in all real and fictional universes to give a shit.

## Resolving uncertainty or conflict

If, for any reason at all, someone does something and there's a pause where no-one speaks up, that's uncertainty.

It could be for any reason. Maybe everyone's running out of creative

steam. Maybe what you want to do is just so ass-crazy that no-one is really sure what will come of it. Whatever the cause, something's got to happen and no-one's sure what.

There's one thing you can always do: take a five-minute break and try again with fresh eyes. This can be done regularly but sparingly. The other thing to do is to call for resolution by Karma.

## **The Karma deck**

The Karma Deck is a deck of index cards, at least thirty or so, with interesting and provocative things written on them. They can be stuff like "Physical strength prevails here" or "There is one thing everyone forgets" or "Cut away to something else immediately" etc. The effects should be broad, but they need not fit all conceivable scenarios. Everyone should have a hand of three cards at all times.

Whenever you cannot decide what happens next, a card will decide for you. It can be something purely inside the fiction, like "It's the trolls' fault". Or it could be something that affects the mechanics, like "The situation escalates: the next update must be a flash update". Anyone can interpret what happens and describe it - first come, first serve.

When **everyone's drawing a blank**, flip a card from the pile. That card will guide the outcome. Try to fit it into the current situation. If it plain doesn't work, that means everyone's still drawing a blank. Flip another card accordingly.

When **two or more players don't agree** on what should happen, everyone who cares places a card in the middle, face down. The face-down cards are shuffled, and one is revealed. That card's effect guides the outcome of the situation.

Afterwards, everyone draws a card, so that you have the right amount of cards in hand. All the cards that were used are placed in a discard pile. If a player has been holding on to the same card for ages, the others may allow them to discard it and re-draw.

## **What's in the deck?**

There's a list of cards to use for a starting Karma deck in the end of these rules. Any card can be removed by unanimous decision. After

each update in which the deck was used, each player may add a card to the deck, reshuffling it. These may be new cards that the player made, or it may be cards from the discard pile. Should the deck run out, reshuffle the discard pile.

What makes a good card? It should be able to resolve some sort of situations, or no-one will ever play it. It's okay to put in-jokes and recurring gags on the cards, but remember what kind of situation they are used in. The kind of joke that always comes as a response to a certain event doesn't need to be a card: it will spring up at those times anyway.

## **Making shit up**

Homestuck is highly formulaic, in a way. It doesn't follow any formula we know from other works in the same genre. However it does create its own formula, and for example by the time the trolls are introduced we know exactly how the "You are now X" introduction screen goes.

What makes it hard to mimic is that it creates its own formula, and then uses it. This requires that when you establish how something works, make sure that those workings allow for much room to explore. As an example: when the Kernelprite is introduced in the comic, it is established that it can be prototyped with anything at all, twice (or less). This leaves a lot of options open, while still giving the reader some kind of answer as to how it works, instead of just keeping it mysterious.

Here are some questions regarding what happens when a player enters the Game. These should all ideally be answered with "It depends on X", where there are a lot of different possibilities for X.

- What kind of guide do you get?
- What kind of place do you end up in?
- What kind of things do you have to do?
- What kind of things are you able to do?

## **Inspirational lists**

At the end of this game there's a bunch of lists of stuff you can draw inspiration from. If you want to use them, print them and place

them where everyone can reach them. Feel free to add to them as well.

## **Things that may or may not work like in HS**

Entering the game, the cruxtruder, alchemy, prototyping, the apocalypse, the dream selves, the planets, the battlefield, the Genesis frog, god tiers, ectobiology

This list is to keep you reminded that you needn't keep anything.

# **Appendix: Lists and stuff**

## **Creating the Kids**

### **Interests, intellectual**

Biology: trees, insects, landscapes, animals, in space, undersea, in fiction, magic, in mythology, gods

Engineering: mechanical devices, using a certain material, electrical, architecture, social, uncivil, non-euclidean, fictional, alien

Physics: optics, mechanics, ftl-travel, teleportation, meta, black hole, time

Laws: civil, economic, of physics, of magic, of the Fey, unbreakable, breakable, game, martial

History: ancient, medieval, alternate, future, archaeology, alien, apocryphal

### **Interests, practical**

Arts: music, painting, dj, theatre, fanfiction, poetry, singer, in a band, webcomics, dA, crafting, sewing, filmmaking

Weaponry: pistols, swords, spears, unwieldy, explosive, rifles, bows, axes, knives, elaborate, crossbows, crafting, ancient, high-tech, improvised

Skills: cooking, brewing, building, languages, math, hacking,



programming, gaming, memory

Kids' games: video games, role-playing games, a treehouse, a pillow fort, a secret path, a secret mission, larp, wands, steeds, houses, armies

Entertainment: movies, rap music, classical music, board games, comics, video games, podcasts, animation

## **Visual impressions**

Style: cool, nerdy, dorky, lazy, hipster, punk, hardcore, grown-up, silly, deadly, fucked-up, jock, fat, skinny, mysterious, unkempt

Appearance: shining, silhouette, dark, blue, purple, multicoloured, all over the place, striped, shady, spiky, rounded, hidden-

Room: cramped, huge, complex, mechanised, three-dimensional, lots of windows, no windows, nonstandard walls, shared, barren, overstuffed

Objects: books, dolls, paintings, clothes, ropes, posters, old electronics, figurines, stamps, pets, pillows, snow globes, dead animals, statues, souvenirs

## **Family**

Relation: parent, sibling, twin, cousin, uncle, aunt, adoptive, child, grandparent, overseer, mentor

Relationship: strained, we don't talk, they're away, I'm hidden from them, I'm hidden by them, they leave me be, adversarial, attack hugs, mandatory tea-time, I'm afraid of them, strict, balance of terror

Circumstance: large inheritance, royal line, normal family, secluded family, family business, family secret, adoptive parents

## **Other people**

Starting relationship:

1. You hate them for something they've done
2. You hate them for what they are
3. You met them once, long ago
4. You've talked a lot but never met
5. They're your bff forever

6. You have a crush on them
7. They obviously like you
8. You did something important together
9. You're related or grew up together
10. Well, everybody knows them
11. Well, everybody knows you
12. Yeah, that guy, seriously, what's their deal

Disposition: cheery, gloomy, mysterious, snooty, joking, ignorant, feigning ignorance, innocent, wannabe, bad boy, grown-up, hateful, manipulative

## **The Game**

### **Gameplay**

Genre: FPS, hexcrawl, RTS, the Sims, turn-based fighting, hack'n'slash, world map + location maps, puzzle game, massively multiplayer, board game, tabletop role-playing game

Subsystems: inventory management, resource acquisition, travelling, fighting, diplomacy, building, stealth, stats and HP, class and level

Travelling: portals, vehicles, trains, tubes, dreams, teleporting, virtual reality, alternate universe, time travel, paths, maps

Powers: elements, magic, time manipulation, teleportation, transmutation, size and mass manipulation, game constructs, invisibility, unaffected by \_\_, mind control, seeing and knowing

### **Appearance**

Creatures: elephants, salamanders, dogs, angels, snakes, cats, imps, centaurs, weasels, sprites, ghosts, larvae, butterflies, dolls, clowns, golems, birds, dinosaurs, monsters, cars, programs, cyborgs, robots, acrobats, sheep, idiots, fantasy races

Landscapes: rivers, walls, underbrush, lava, lakes, marshes, floating, plains, reefs, jungles, forests, snow, ravines, mist, sand, steppes, cliffs, mazes, pillars, rails, cities, giant building

Contraptions: bamboo tech, sleek futuristic stuff, steampunk, weird puzzle shit, old school computers, cables, social systems, ropes and

levers, viewports, telecommunications, illegible scrawlings, rube goldberg machine

## **Advanced Game Theory**

People: souls, backup minds, true names, AI, aliens, game constructs

Purpose: new worlds, debugging, uplifting, experiments, harvesting, weapons, averting catastrophe, entertainment, prophecy, training

Motifs: deck of cards, chess, pool, board games, elements, castes, mythology, pantheon, theatre, feudalism, military, zodiac, tarot, four temperaments

## **New character sets**

Situation: the far future, inside the game, left outside the game, the far past, alternate world, antagonists, affected by the Kids' actions, no visible connection at all

Style: same as the kids, violent bastards, nice civilians, automata, higher cause, bored meddlers, genre fiction (western, fantasy, noir, Christie, blockbuster action)

Appearance: mostly human, stylized human, constantly shifting, ethereal, animal, robot, hidden, humanoid, ambiguous, varied, alien race, mythological creature

Also see the Creating the Kids->Other people lists as well as the Game->Gameplay->Powers and Game->Appearance->Motifs.

## **Starting Karma deck cards**

### Does it succeed?

1. Incredible success - something else goes well in the process!
2. Not only does it fail, something unrelated also fails.
3. It fails, but there's a silver lining.
4. It succeeds, but at a cost.
5. It succeeds, but something else goes horribly wrong.
6. You realise help is needed. You will succeed when you get it.

### How should we think?

7. The obvious thing happens.
8. Everyone names one possible outcome. The next suggested outcome different from those, happens.
9. Deus Ex Machina - It's lame, it's contrived, but you're saved!
10. You are being too rational.
11. Grab a book. Look at the last line on a random page.

#### Who would win?

12. Quick thinking prevails.
13. Physical strength prevails.
14. Incompetence prevails.
15. Yes, he/she is just that cool.
16. The answer to a True nature question guides the outcome.

#### What format to present it in?

17. This is so cool - make it a flash.
18. Incredibly unimportant, but it's a flash nonetheless!
19. The consequences are far-reaching: have an exposé update after this one.
20. Cut away, and recap it in a Pesterlog update.
21. Maybe it's time to talk this out - work through the problem in a Pesterlog with someone unexpected.

#### Don't show the end

22. This is incredibly silly - cut away at once.
23. Psyche! Write this situation down as a Cliffhanger.
24. It just keeps doing that. Summarise and cut away.
25. Show the horrible consequences, then Go back (back-track one command)

#### Circumstances change

26. Flip the Meta setting to Enabled.
27. Flip the Shipping setting to Enabled.
28. Increase the Doom setting one step.
29. Increase the Death setting one step.

#### We need something to work with

30. Introduce a new character.
31. Engage a new subsystem.
32. Crank something up to 11.
33. Some sort of inane puzzle or contraption is revealed.
34. Who would have ever expected that TUBA to come in handy!
35. Mysterious forces intervene.

36. You didn't love them anyway - something horrible happens to an NPC

### Unclassified

37. Something precious is on fire.
38. Hit the books - walkthroughs, newspaper articles, ancient myths... there must be something out there to tell you more.
39. Implement a solution that could never have been thought up in-character.

## Rules summary

- Everyone has a **Kid character**. All other characters are shared.
- The game progresses through **updates** and **speculation**.
- Updates are of one of these types:
  - a. **Command update**: give commands to one character. Everyone but the one who gave the command describe the results. Ends after a command when everyone's okay with it.
  - b. **Pesterlog update**: the characters talk to each other. Kids are portrayed by their owners, other characters by whomever. Ends when someone leaves, circumstances dictate, or someone summarises the ending.
  - c. **Exposé update**: the player who suggested it names a topic. Starting with the player to their right, players take turns describing one still frame. As soon as one player passes, the update ends right before that player's next turn.
  - d. **Flash update**: appoint a director, who chooses music and brings the others up to speed on all threads. When the music starts, the director points at other players, optionally saying one word. When the director points at you, quickly describe a visual. Ends when the song does, or by the director.
- Speculation means writing down **questions** you find interesting.
  - If a question concerns how something will go down, it is a Cliffhanger. It cannot be answered except in a flash update.
  - Otherwise it is a True nature question.
  - You can declare that you really wonder about a true nature question. You may not answer that question.

- You can declare that you know the answer to a true nature question. Write the answer down, fold it up and place it next to the question. Only you may answer that question.
- There are **settings**, restricting what can occur.
  - There are settings for Death, Shipping, Meta and Doom. Review the current settings before you introduce elements of those types.
- There is a **Karma deck**, from which you play cards to resolve uncertainty. Everyone should have **three cards** from it on hand.
  - When everyone's drawing a blank, flip a card from the top of the deck.
  - When there's a conflict, everyone who cares chooses a card from their hand to place in the middle, face-down. They are shuffled and one is revealed.
  - Anyone may interpret the card to guide the outcome.
  - After an update that used the deck, you may shuffle one card from the discard pile back into the deck.

## The museum

This is where I put material that was cut from the text, but I want to keep either for referencing the actual text, or because it held comments of value to the writing:

- Any other player then gets to describe what happens as a result.

## Pushing (Microscope's solution)

When you're sure that you want your suggestion to happen *instead* of the other player's (that is, it won't be enough to let them speak and then build on it), you declare that you're **Pushing** for your outcome. Often you won't have to, because in making sure that the suggestions are contrary to each other you give the other player a chance to reconsider. If they like your idea better, they can simply say so and there's no disagreement.

When a Push happens, all players get a chance to suggest how things are going to go. The player who made the original contribution that was disagreed with starts, and then the player who Pushed. Then

everyone else (including the active player) who has a substantially different suggestion throws theirs out, too.

When all players have had a chance to suggest what happens, you all vote. Voting is done as follows: everyone points with one hand towards the player whose suggestion they want to see come true. The number of outstretched fingers on the pointing hand is the strength of the vote. The player with the most fingers pointing in their direction wins, and their suggestion is played out.

When suggesting something during a Push, keep it brief.