

Play Right!

© 2006 by Michael S. Miller

An entry for the 2006 Game Chef contest.
Time Constraint: 10 sessions of 1 hour each
Ingredients: glass, emotion, committee

Blurb: You've got tired, worn-out stories. You're surrounded with them. The same-old, same-old. But, you and your fellow committee members will learn how to *Play Right!* with those old ideas and make them as new, vibrant and cool as a newly-minted game!

If you're reading this, you're within the reach of the 21st century American cultural sphere. Which probably means that, like me, you're swamped with media: movies, the Internet, TV, books, newspapers, comics, magazines, games bombard us constantly. Some offer food for thought, insightful commentary, soul-elevating pathos, or spirit-lifting humor. But those are few and far between. Most simply steal hours of our lives away, leaving us emptier than when we began.

Isn't it about time to reclaim some meaning from those lost hours?

This game will show you how to do that in exactly ten hours, one hour at a time. To play, you'll need a number of glass beads in multiple colors, a pack of index cards, and a bunch of standard, six-sided dice. Gather a group of committee members together to reinvigorate a story. Call your meeting to order. Pick a story you're all more-or-less familiar with. It could be from folklore, the newspaper, a movie or anything else. All that matters is that it excites the imaginations of *everyone* in the committee. Talk briefly about what was wrong—what you didn't like. This segues perfectly in **Phase 1** of gameplay:

Phase 1: Map the Situation

Start with a commonly-known story. The story can be broken down into a number of elements, individual bits of story-stuff. There are few different types of story-stuff:

- ?? Characters: Imagined people (or personified creatures) that do stuff in the story
- ?? Emotions: Strong feelings that will drive characters to dramatic action. Emotions *must* be assigned to a specific character.
- ?? Relationships: Two or more characters have a predetermined relationship to one another
- ?? Backstory: Events of the past that will still have an effect on the story as it goes forward.
- ?? Events: Plot points that will occur in the story.
- ?? Items: Objects that have real dramatic potential to change the shape of the story in meaningful ways.

Decide the committee chair for this phase by any means you like. Starting with the chair, take turns describing each element. Write the elements on index cards in the middle of

the table. Some of them will come from the source story and some will reflect the things you want to change to make the source story more cool.

Grace: Hey, guys, we've been drafted to be the example characters in *Play Right!*. Let's play.

Nate: Do we have a choice?

Stephen: Certainly. We could play without *you* if we wanted.

Nate: That'd be the only way you'd have a chance of winning, Stevie-boy.

Deanna: Men! <*sighs and rolls eyes*> How do we start the game, Grace?

Grace: Well, as story committee members, the first thing we do is select a story that we're going to remake. Or make better, I suppose.

Nate: Did I ever tell you about the time I caught a fish *this* big?

Grace: YES! You did. But it's not that kind of story.

Stephen: Why not? I mean, we've all heard Nate's fish story a dozen times.

And I, for one, could certainly tell it better than Nate does!

Nate: Hey!

Grace: Well, we *could* retell the fish story, but it's only got two characters: Nate and the fish. And I'm not interested in playing either of them. No offense, Nate. The one and only guideline it does give in the game is "All that matters is that it excites the imaginations of *everyone* in the group." I'd be more excited by something less ... aquatic.

Deanna: Well, I like so many stories, I'd have trouble picking a favorite.

Grace: It doesn't have to be your favorite. The game even implies that it might work better if it's a story that you *didn't* like and want to improve upon.

Stephen: Can we rewrite the *Star Wars* prequels?

Grace: We certainly *could* if this were an actual game. But since it's just an example of play, we should steer clear of anything copyrighted or trademarked. What good stories do we know that are in the public domain?

Deanna: Fairy tales are in the public domain. We could do Cinderella.

Nate: Cinderella? But that has all girl characters—Cinderella, the stepsisters, the stepmother, the faerie godmother.

Deanna: You forgot Prince Charming.

Nate: Well, yeah, but then who's Steve going to play?

Stephen: I've got no problem playing a female character. Or several. I'm good to go with Cinderella.

Deanna: So, who gets to be Cinderella? Do we roll for it?

Nate: You can use my dice. The blue ones tend to roll high.

Grace: You're getting a bit ahead of the game here. The next thing we're supposed to do is "map the situation, taking turns naming characters, emotions, goals, relationships, backstory elements, and the like." Lovely vague text there. All these things are called "elements." I guess I'll be the committee chair, so I'll start. Cinderella's a character in this story. <*writes "Character: Cinderella" on an index card*> Now, since I made this, I place one of my green glass beads on the card, to show that I have one point of

investment in Cinderella. Then, the turn passes to my left. Nate, you can add one of your beads to Cinderella, or name a new element of the Situation.

Nate: Okay, well there's the Prince. <writes "Character: Prince Charming" on an index card> He is *so* mine. <loudly plunks navy blue bead onto index card>

Deanna: Is that what we're doing, Grace? Laying claim to these elements?

Grace: Not exactly. You're putting your beads on elements that you want to see in the story. If it doesn't have a bead on it, it won't really matter in the way the story comes out.

Deanna: Oh, I see. Well, then I know there's got to be a ball. Can an event be an element? <Grace nods> Awesome! <writes "Event: A series of grand balls" on an index card, and places a daisy-colored bead on it>

Stephen: What about something about the setting?

Grace: Like what?

Stephen: Well, I've already read a couple translations of Cinderella, and seen a number of movie versions. If this is supposed to be *our* retelling of the story, how do we set it apart? I mean, can we do a space opera Cinderella?

Nate: Dude, you've got Lucas on the brain!

Grace: Um, we could do something like that, if *everyone* was interested in it. All creations need to be unanimously approved and I think Nate would veto the space opera Cinderella.

Nate: I never said that! All I said was just that Stephen's a little obsessed.

But, I'm a geek, too, so I'm a little obsessed, too. I'm cool with space opera, as long as I get to be a prince with a star cruiser!

Grace: Then you'll have to spend a bead on it. Deanna, are you all right with space opera?

Deanna: Sure. Only, no aliens, okay? They always look silly to me.

Stephen: Fine. I'm sure we can manage that. Now, how to I make that into an element?

Grace: Since you've gotten approval from the entire table for the setting issue, you can create an element that directly comes from space opera. You could give the prince a starship, like Nate suggested. You could make a robotic godmother.

Stephen: You also said a piece of backstory could be an element, right?

Grace: Yes, but only if you think it could make the new story more interesting.

Stephen: Cool. Cinderella's dead mother was the leader of a revolution against Prince Charming's oppressive interstellar kingdom!

Nate: See? Obsessed, I tell you.

Grace: That's an awful lot to put into a single element. Each element can only be about *one* thing to start with. You need to choose whether it's about her being a revolutionary or the kingdom being oppressive.

Stephen: Okay. It's about her being a revolutionary. If it later turns out that she was a revolutionary against a good and righteous kingdom, that'll be cool, too. <writes "Backstory: Cinderella's mother was a revolutionary" on an index card and places a silver glass bead on it>

Grace: Back to me. I want to play with these other types of elements. I'm going to give Cinderella an emotion. Let's call it "longing for a better life."
<writes "Emotion: longing for a better life" on the Cinderella index card and places a green bead on it>

Nate: Right. My prince has a star cruiser! <writes "Item: star cruiser" on the Prince Charming index card and places a navy blue glass bead on it>

Grace: He's not "your" prince yet.

Nate: Only a matter of time, Grace.

Deanna: How do we know when we're done, Grace?

Grace: When everybody passes.

Deanna: Okay. Well, I'm going to make a relationship element. Cinderella has a strained relationship with her stepmother.

Stephen: That's a bit of an understatement, don't you think?

Deanna: Well, this is just the beginning of the story, right, Grace? <Grace nods> So this relationship is bound to get much, much worse. <writes "Relationship: Cinderella & stepmother, strained" on an index card and places a daisy-colored glass bead on it>

The four players continue until they have each passed because they have no more to add.

Phase 2: Investment

Now's the time when each player gets to say what they think is cool about what everyone else contributed to the map of the situation. Everyone gets twice as many beads as there are players. The chair for Phase 2 is the player to the left of chair from Phase 1. Starting with the chair, take turns placing these on elements you want to see in play.

Grace: Now that we've created the situation, we invest in it. Since there are four of us playing, we each get 8 beads. Starting with me and moving to my left, we each take a turn placing beads on elements that we like.

Nate: Oh, so whoever has the most beads on a certain element wins it.

Grace: Not really, Nate. Just place the beads on the elements that you like. You can place more than one bead on elements that you really like, but you'll have to do it over multiple turns. I want to see these grand balls come to pass. <places green bead on "Event: A series of grand balls">

Phase 3: Choosing primary characters.

The chair for Phase 3 is the player to the left of chair from Phase 2. Starting with the chair, pick a character as your own. It must have at least two different color beads on it. The number of beads convert to that character's core dice. Whoever has beads on that character beside the person who picked it scores endgame points equal to the number of beads.

Grace: Now that we've all invested in the elements that we want to see in the story, we take turns choosing a main character. This character will be focus of each of our scenes, so choose somebody you like. There's a few more

guidelines, as well. First, you can only pick a character. Second, you can only pick a character that has multiple-colored beads on it. Third, whoever has those beads scores Endgame Points.

Nate: So we *must* give other players these endgame points?

Grace: Yup.

Nate: Who starts?

Grace: I started Phase 1 and you started Phase 2, which means Deanna starts Phase 3.

Deanna: I should probably choose Prince Charming.

Nate: No way! He's mine.

Deanna: But that would give you the most endgame points, right?

Nate: Um, yeah. But I was hoping I wouldn't have to play a girl.

Deanna: I was just teasing you. I'm picking Cinderella. *<slides the Cinderella card in front of her>* That means all three of you score endgame points, right?

Grace: Yes. Stephen and I get two apiece because we each have two beads on Cinderella. Nate gets one point because he's got one bead on her.

Nate: Wait a minute! Grace, one of your beads is on Cinderella and one is on her "Emotion: Longing." Deanna picked the character, but not the emotion.

Grace: Emotions must belong to characters. Therefore they travel with the characters. *<marks down two endgame points>* Alright, Stephen, your turn to choose a character.

Stephen: As tempting as it is to swipe the Prince away from Nate, I'm really liking the robotic godmother. *<slides the Robotic Godmother card in front of him>* That's an endgame point for Grace and for Nate. Your turn, Gracie.

Grace: Look at all those juicy beads on the stepmother. And now they're all mine! *<slides Stepmother card in front of her>* Score one for everybody!

Nate: Excellent! The prince is *so* mine! *<slides Prince Charming card in front of him>* That's one point for each of you—and a cool star cruiser for me!

Grace: Good. Now that you all have characters, the number of beads on them become their core dice—the number of dice they'll always roll. For characters like Cinderella that have emotions that belong to them, the beads on those emotions also convert to core dice, but keep them separate from Cinderella's main dice, because they'll come into play separately.

Deanna: Does it matter whose beads they are?

Grace: No. All beads convert equally to core dice. *<They all get rid of the beads on their chosen characters' cards and replace them with dice>*

Phase 4: Playing the game!

The first chair for Phase 4 is the player to the left of chair from Phase 3. Starting with the chair, each player will get a turn to start a scene. During your turn, you do these things:

?? **Phase 4a:** Refill your pool.

Refill your pool of beads to twice the number of players.

?? **Phase 4b:** Start a conflict

Set up a conflict featuring your main character. There's got to be something about the situation as it stands that you want to change. There's got to be something opposing it, too. What do you want to change and who wants to stop you?

The opposition can be one of the elements in the middle of the table, or it can be a character belonging to another player. If the opposition belongs to another player, then they play that character and roll the dice for their side. If the opposition is one of the elements in the middle of the table, then whoever has the most beads on the opposing element rolls plays that element and rolls for it. In the case of a tie, it goes to the one with the fewest beads currently in their pool. If it's still a tie, the one closest to the right of player whose turn it is. However, a player may never oppose himself, so it would go to the next player in line according to the rules above.

?? **Phase 4c:** Play the conflict

Role play out the conflict. As you do, take turns (starting with the active player) bringing story elements over to your side. When ever you describe something happening in the scene that *shows* how a certain element will help the change you're trying to make in the scene, you can slide that element over toward you. However, any uninvolved players may veto your decision to bring a story element to your side. In this case, you must continue playing the scene in order to show more reason why this helps your cause. This continues until each side is ready to roll.

NOTE: There is no passing. If a player does not bring an element to his side of the conflict when it's his turn to do so, he is declaring that he's ready to roll. His opponent may not bring over more elements, because it is not the opponent's turn.

?? **Phase 4d:** Roll the dice

Once the players are ready to roll, they take their core dice, plus one die for each bead on their side. Both players roll all their dice and compare their highest single die. If the highest single dice are tied, those two are ignored and the next highest are compared. Whichever side has the higher single roll wins the conflict. The number of individual dice that they rolled that are higher than their opponent's highest die is the number of successes they scored.

Each success can do one thing from the following list:

- ?? Enhance an element: Add a permanent die to an element, if it's owned by a player
- ?? Reduce an element: Subtract a permanent die from an element, if it's owned by a player.
- ?? Add an element: Create a new story element in the middle of the table. It automatically starts with one bead of the winning player's color.
- ?? Delete an element: Remove one of the story elements from the middle of the table. This costs a number of success equal to the number of beads currently on it. The owners of those beads score one endgame point apiece.
- ?? Change an element: Change the wording of any element involved in the conflict.

?? **Phase 4e:** Distribute endgame points

Whichever of the two main players rolled fewer dice receives as many endgame points as they the dice they rolled. The other side receives half that. The rest of the players receive one point for each element that was involved on either side of the conflict that had any beads on it, and they remove one of their beads from each of these elements.

The winning player also removes one of their beads from each element on the winning side, since winning decreases tension.

?? **Phase 4f:** Reinvest

Starting with the player on the active player's left, each player takes a turn placing beads from their pool onto elements that they'd like to see more of in the story. A player may place his beads only on elements belonging to other players, or those in the middle of the table, *not* his own.

Once the chair has finished Phase 4, the chairmanship passes to the left, and the new chair starts their own Phase 4.

Nate: Are we ready to play yet? Our hour is nearly up.

Grace: Impatient much? We've all got our characters. We've got a table full of story elements. We've got a pile of dice and stack of index cards. Since this is Phase 4, Stephen's going to start us off. But first, since there are four of us playing, everyone takes 8 beads of their color from the bank.

Deanna: Cool! This game sure uses a lot of beads.

Grace: It certainly does. Now, Stephen is going to set up a scene where something about the Robotic Godmother comes into conflict with another story element on the table. Either the Robotic Godmother is trying to change the other element or the other element is trying to change her ... er, I mean "it."

Stephen: Well, since we're doing Cinderella, we ought to show Cinderella in the first scene, don't you think? *<Grace nods>* I think the Robotic Godmother has come to see the Stepmother, but the scene is really about her chatting with Cinderella and giving her hope.

Grace: Sounds like a good scene. Let me explain how the scene's going to develop rules-wise and then you can play it out. Since you chose another player's character as your opposition, Deanna is going to be playing her character. If you had chosen an element on the table, whoever had the most beads on that element would have played it. At the climax of the scene, each of you is going to roll a number of dice equal to your core dice plus whatever other elements you've brought into the scene to support your cause. You need to take turns in bringing things in, starting with Stephen, because it's his scene. Clear?

Deanna: I think so. We'll get the hang of it as we play. Let's get started. Now, you said that your Robotic Godmother is sent from the artificial intelligence that controls the power, water and stuff for the whole planet, right?

Stephen: Yes. It's a very important computer and a great honor to have one of its emissary robots pay a visit.

Deanna: Well then, I come to the door, all dressed in ragged servant clothes. "Welcome, Emissary." Um, do we have a name for the Stepmother?

Grace: Not yet. Let's go with Lady Lucille. She received the title by marrying Cinderella's father.

Stephen: Is that a new piece of backstory?

Grace: Yes, but I'll pay for it later. The example should address one thing at a time, to keep things clear.

Deanna: Right. "Welcome, Emissary. Please come in. Lady Lucille will be down shortly to see you. Can I get you anything?" Cinderella's standing all meek and servant-like.

Stephen: I think she's standing in front of a holographic portrait of her father. "No thank you, my dear. I am quite self-sufficient. Tell me, who is that a portrait of? He has a most noble bearing." <slides the "Relationship: Cinderella loved her father" index card toward him>

Deanna: "That portrait is ... is of the late lord of the house, Emissary. A very noble man. Lord Roland de Boys. <She looks around for approval about the name. Everyone nods> He was renowned throughout the kingdom for his bravery and his justice!" She's standing up straighter now, the spitting image of her father. Can I take the "Cinderella loved her father" card away from Stephen? I mean, I think it will help her resist whatever suggestions this robot makes.

Grace: You can, but then Stephen will get to choose two elements in a row, since you've essentially cancelled his first choice. He can use one of those choices to take the card back, but it's got to be backed up with new and different role-playing.

Deanna: That's okay. <slides the "Relationship: Cinderella loved her father" index card away from Stephen and toward her> Cinderella stands proud and tall in front of the portrait.

Stephen: A wide grin plays across the mechanical face of the robot. "Yes, I can certainly see the nobility in his bearing. Any member of his gene pool should certainly be entitled to respectful and honored treatment. At least, in any civilized place, they would." <slides the "Relationship: Cinderella & Stepmother, strained" index card toward him> "Why that's just the sort of person the Prince is looking to entice to his Grand Balls." <slides the "Event: A series of grand balls" index card>

Deanna: "Grand Balls?"

Stephen: "Oh, yes. I'm here to extend the invitation to Lady Lucille and her daughters. The king remembers the bravery of Lord Roland and wouldn't dream of throwing a festival for his son without Lord Roland's gene pool in attendance."

Deanna: Cinderella's looking all hopeful at the robot's words. <pause> Drat. I want more dice, but this "Emotion: Longing" works in the Godmother's favor and not mine.

Grace: You could invite my Stepmother into the scene.

Deanna: Oh, how do I do that?

Grace: Just describe me entering the scene. Since I control the Stepmother, I get to decide which side her dice will help. But we both know she wants to keep Cinderella in her place.

Deanna: As I'm standing there, hanging on every word the robot says, my Stepmother enters through a side door, so I don't notice her at first.

Grace: I glare at Cinderella. I don't like that pretty little face one bit. "Ahem." I put on my best fake smile. "Welcome to my humble abode, Emissary. I am Lady Lucille. I'm sure that Ella has done everything she can to make you comfortable, like the good helper she is." *<slides the Stepmother's core dice over to Deanna>*

Stephen: "What a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Lady Lucille. Ella here has welcomed me quite warmly. With such a welcome, I look forward to the day when I am a guest in her very own home." *<reaches across and takes the dice from Deanna's card that are next to the "Emotion: Longing for a better life" element>*

Deanna: Is that it? Stephen's got a lot more dice than I do.

Grace: It seems that we're rolling to see just how Cinderella reacts to this news of the grand balls. So this is the time to roll. For each bead on your side, you roll one die, plus your core dice.

Nate: Here, Deanna. Roll my blue dice. They're lucky.

Deanna: Thanks, Nate. *<both Deanna and Stephen roll a handful of dice>*

Grace: Great. Now, what's your highest single die?

Deanna: Six!

Stephen: Also six.

Grace: Those are ties, so they get thrown out. What's your next highest die?

Stephen: I've got another six. Do all sixes get thrown out, or just the first one?

Grace: Just the first one. So your highest is a six. Deanna, what's yours?

Deanna: Only a four. So much for the lucky blues.

Nate: Sorry. They usually roll good for me.

Grace: Fine. Stephen, how many dice did you roll that beat a four?

Stephen: Not counting the first six that got thrown out, I've got one six and two fives. That makes a total of three dice.

Grace: Excellent. So you win, and you get to add, delete, or change three elements that were affected by this scene.

Stephen: Great. I'm going to spend one to increase Cinderella's "Emotion: Longing" element, making it stronger. I'm going to add a "Relationship: Cinderella & Robot Godmother, mutual respect." And I'm going to change the Relationship of Cinderella and her Stepmother from "strained" to "resentful."

Grace: Fine. That will mean that you get to put one of your beads directly from the bank onto each of those relationships. Since the "Emotion: Longing" belongs to Deanna's character, it converts directly to another die for that element. Let's play out the end of the scene, and then we'll split up the endgame points.

Deanna: Right. Well, having been dismissed, but hearing the Emissary's praise of her father and his "gene pool," Cinderella will curtsy, but stay in the room. "The Emissary has come to speak to *all* of Lord Roland's gene pool, my lady."

Grace: Oh, I'm outraged by that! "Yes, Ella, I know why the Emissary has honored us with its presence. Now return to your chores, girl!"

Deanna: Cinderella stalks off, fuming.

Grace: That was a great scene. Let's split up our endgame points, do our investment, and start the next scene. For endgame points, look at the number of dice you actually rolled.

Stephen: I rolled ten dice.

Deanna: I rolled eight dice.

Grace: Deanna, since you rolled fewer dice, you get that many endgame points. So, eight for you. Stephen, you get half that many. So, four for you.

Stephen: But I won the roll!

Grace: Of course you did. You had a lot more dice. And for winning the roll you got to rewrite those elements. But Deanna was the underdog here, so she gets more endgame points. Nate and I get one endgame point for each element that we had a bead on, but that bead gets removed. That's two for me and two for Nate.

Nate: Cool! I get points and I didn't even have to do anything.

Grace: Stephen and Deanna also need to remove one bead from each element that was on the winning side. Winning releases tension, so there should be less beads.

Stephen: Does that include the core dice for my Robotic Godmother?

Grace: No. A character's core dice can only change as the result of a conflict, never for just plain maintenance. *<Everyone adjusts the beads accordingly>* The last thing we do is reinvest some of our beads into the story elements. You can place as many or as few beads as you like, but you can't place them on your own character. And your beads will only refresh at the start of your next turn. So Stephen has eight beads now, but he won't get any more until after Nate, Deanna and I have our turns.

Nate: What are we placing them on again?

Grace: We're putting them on story elements that we want to see more of in the future. Stuff we think is cool. The reinvestment starts to the left of the person who just had a turn, so I start. Since I'm going to refresh to a full eight as soon as my turn starts, I'm going to spend all of them right now. First, as promised, I'm going to spend two to make a new element: "Backstory: Lady Lucille was born common" One of those beads goes away to pay for the new element, and the other goes onto the element. I'm going to put three into the relationship between Cinderella and her Stepmother. Plus another two into the backstory about her real mother being a filthy revolutionary. That leaves one for ... *<surveys table>* Prince Charming's star cruiser. Nate's going to make that pretty cool.

Nate: Thanks, Grace. Does that become a die right away, like Deanna's "Emotion: Longing" did?

Grace: No. It only becomes a die right away when it's the result of a conflict, not during reinvestment. That bead will go away after the star cruiser comes into a conflict. Nate, it's your turn to reinvest.

<all four players reinvest, then Grace begins her turn. Play continues. Fun is had by all.>

A Series of Sessions

Once all players have held the chair, a single session of the committee is done. As this is a committee dedicated to upholding and enhancing the ancient art of stories, the age-old truism that “An hour is golden” must be upheld. Therefore, each session of the committee ought to take about an hour. A particularly swift committee may finish the first three phases in a single session, as well as an entire round of phase 4, while a slower committee might just do the first three phases in their first session, and save phase 4 for their second session.

However the committee organizes its time, it must complete the story in exactly ten sessions (due to budgetary constraints). To this end, at the end of the eighth session, each member of the committee *must* create a new element called a Climax. The climax is like an event, except that it is the event that will bring the story to a close. Each climax starts with one bead of its creator’s color from the bank.

During the committee’s ninth session, the climaxes may have beads added to them in during Reinvestment phase, but may not be made the opposing element of any conflict. Climaxes pay double endgame points.

During the tenth and final session of the committee, each player *must* choose one of the climaxes for their opposing element during their turn. These climaxes play triple endgame points.

At the close of the tenth session, whichever committee member has achieved the highest total endgame points will have the people’s ovation and fame forever.

Designer’s Notes

Play Right! draws its inspiration from many sources. The title was suggested by Kat Miller. Using an existing work as a basis for improvement was inspired by William Shakespeare. The guideline of “An hour is golden” is taken from Jonathan Tynes’ inspiring *Puppetland*. Listing each element on index cards, breaking the game into turns, and having the players create them at the table, and the way conflicts are resolved, allowing elements to change are drawn from Ralph Mazza and Mike Holmes’ excellent *Universalis*. Giving each player a single viewpoint character, while also holding to RPG convention, was particularly inspired by a particularly enjoyable session of *Universalis* that I played with Brennan Taylor and Kat Miller. Having each scene center on a single conflict, and the endgame requirement is taken from Paul Czege’s amazing *My Life with Master*. The dice resolution system comes directly from Ron Edwards’ excellent *Sorcerer*. Allowing players to reinvest after every scene is inspired by the Fan Mail system in Matt Wilson’s *Prime Time Adventures*. The way that the number of beads on an element draw players to focus on that element is taken from the role-choice rules in Andreas Seyfarth’s fine board game *Puerto Rico*. Allowing only the underdog to score endgame points, and the way that encourages people to find fit opposition for their characters is taken from a post by Vincent Baker on his exceedingly clever weblog, *anyway*.