THE HANDY RPG

Picture this: you find yourself in a social setting with your coworkers. The alcohol has loosened everyone's tongues and eventually, the conversation turns to people's hobbies and past-times. It's not long before your turn to share comes. At this juncture, three options are laid before you:

A. Smile and nod as you pretend to enjoy yoga, football, climbing, or any other currently in-vogue hobby you deem to be sufficiently "normal". What are you doing? Haven't you got the memo? This isn't the 90s anymore. Geeks are cool now.

B. Proudly proclaim your affection for roleplaying. You are asked to elaborate, and you launch into the same carefully-practiced spiel for the thousandth time: "*You see, a roleplaying game is like a collaborative storytelling activity, a shared narrative. One player usually is the 'game master' or 'GM', who sets the stage, while other players take on the role of different characters...*". After five minutes, you stop to catch your breath. Your coworkers smile politely and are put off roleplaying forever.

C. Run a quick roleplaying scenario for them right then and there. Good idea! But what system to use? You certainly wouldn't want to free-form it, not for first-time players. At the same time, you'd like for them to create characters, but is there time for that? And where are you going to find dice at *this* hour?

If you go with option C, THE HANDY RPG is here for you. It features an intuitive way to create characters on the go and a simple rock-paper-scissors resolution mechanic. This means that you can play it anywhere, anytime using just your hands, making it perfect for introducing roleplaying to anyone (including but not limited to coworkers, parents, and assorted non-gamer friends).

CHARACTER CREATION

Characters in THE HANDY RPG are described by a short blurb as follows.

[CHARACTER NAME] is an [ADJECTIVE] [CONCEPT] with [TALENT] and [FLAW].

An example follows:

REX DANGERFIELD is an ATHLETIC ARCHAEOLOGIST with A SILVER TONGUE and A FEAR OF HEIGHTS.

A character's concept doesn't necessarily have to be their job, although it often is; it's *who* they are. The adjective preciding the character's occupation reflects *what* they are: rich, brave, stunning, empathetic... A character's talent, on the other hand, tells us about a specific thing they have a knack for that might not be immediately obvious from their concept, from public speaking to basket weaving. Finally, the mark of any great character is their flaw; an imperfection that makes life difficult for them, ranging from a bad hip to a loose tongue.

As always (and doubly so for an ultra-light roleplaying game such as this one), the GM is encouraged to exercise common sense. Traits shouldn't be too specific or too broad, and flaws should be meaningful (*fear of water* isn't really a flaw if the story is set in the desert).

GAMEPLAY

Gameplay in THE HANDY RPG follows the traditional format of most roleplaying games: the GM sets the stage, the players describe their actions, and the GM narrates what happens. As always, when there is little risk involved in the characters' actions, the GM should let them succeed. However, when there is some uncertainty involved, then the player and the GM play a game of rock-paper-scissors to determine the outcome, which also depends on the difficulty of the task at hand.

	Task is...		
Player...	*Easy*	*Tough*	*Severe*
...wins	success	success	success at a cost
...ties	success	success at a cost	failure
...loses	success at a cost	failure	failure

As a general guide, a success at a cost introduces a complication that increases the difficulty of certain tasks for a scene by one stage (making severe tasks impossible). For instance, a character that convinces a bouncer to let them through "at a cost" will find it more difficult to flaunt their clout in the club for that night, and a character that tries to jump across a cliff may sprain their ankle, making it more difficult to run.

Finally, if a character has a trait in their blurb that they could benefit from, they throw twice against the GM and take the *best* result. Conversely, if a trait might work against them, they throw twice against the GM and take the *worst* result.

These are the basic rules of the game. In the Handy Supplement, you will find more examples, advanced rules, and GM advice. Have fun!

Game design: Sotirios Karamitsos, 2021