# DUST PAN GAMES
presents:

PHASE ABANDON

DM-less ● Universal

A Role Playing Game by Mark van Vlack

PHASE ABANDON

DM–less ● Universal

Third Edition

Foreword from the Editor

"Editor" is a big word here, as I merely threw this together as a little present for a friend. I think I read *Phase Abandon* for the first time about one and a half years ago and I thought, what a great little gem of a game. Totally forgot about it and it wasn't until a few weeks ago that I remembered and set my mind to reading it again. The version I had back then got lost a few computers ago, so I asked Mark for it again. He said something to the effect of "You can do with this what you want. Print it and leave it in toilets around Leipzig, if that's what you have in mind!". I won't do that just yet, but I'd like to show this to people and since Mark's version never was meant for publication, I thought I could try my hand at something like this, throw some public domain art in it, rearrange the text a bit and here I am writing the frickin' foreword, too ...

Phase Abandon is a great game of DM-less and collaborative story telling. You can choose your own campaign (it even has some light rules for setting creation!) and there are some competitive elements to keep it interesting and give it momentum. It's been played for years, too. So I hope this helps getting it into lots of hands and brings people some joy. I left almost all the original text and just rearranged and corrected it. All the mistakes you'll find in this book are mine.

Have fun!

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Jens Durke
October 2016

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Core Mechanics

Phase Abandon is exclusively played with six sided dice, also referred to as D6. Up to 5 dice can be rolled at one time during play. Some times as the characters get more powerful the player will be able to re-roll some dice in an attempt to get more successes.

Resolving Actions

After the player declares what his character is going to do the player has to decide what skill if any the character will use in the attempt. The player can then roll a number of six sided dice equal to the appropriate skills Action level.

Every roll of 1, 2 or 3 is a failure.

Every roll of a 4, 5 or 6 is a success.

1. If the player rolls more failures than successes his action fails and the player with the lowest number of betting chips gets to narrate the failure. No challenge is removed from the scene. The player who failed must pass a betting chip to the player who has the least chips and is about to narrate the results of the failed action.

2. If the player rolls more successes than failures his action is successful and he gets to narrate the result. The scribe then subtracts the number of successes the player rolled off of the total challenge in the scene.

3. If the Successes vs. Failures result in a tie: The Player with the lowest number of betting chips gets to narrate the

result but at least nothing bad happens to the character. This result is called a "break even". If two players are tied for who has the least chips, then 1D6 is rolled and the player who rolls highest gets to narrate the results of a failed action. A player may never narrate his or her own failed action regardless of how few chips she may have.

Narration of a Successful Action

When a player is successful with an action, the player can narrate a number of actions for his character up to the number of successes rolled. Once that is done the narration goes back to the player with the most betting chips.

An Example of a Successful Action:

Darius is debating the price to ride on a transport barge with the slimy barge master. He has haggling as a skill at an action level of 3. He rolls 3D6 in an attempt to get the barge master to lower his price. The roll comes up 3, 4, 5: 1 failure, 2 successes.
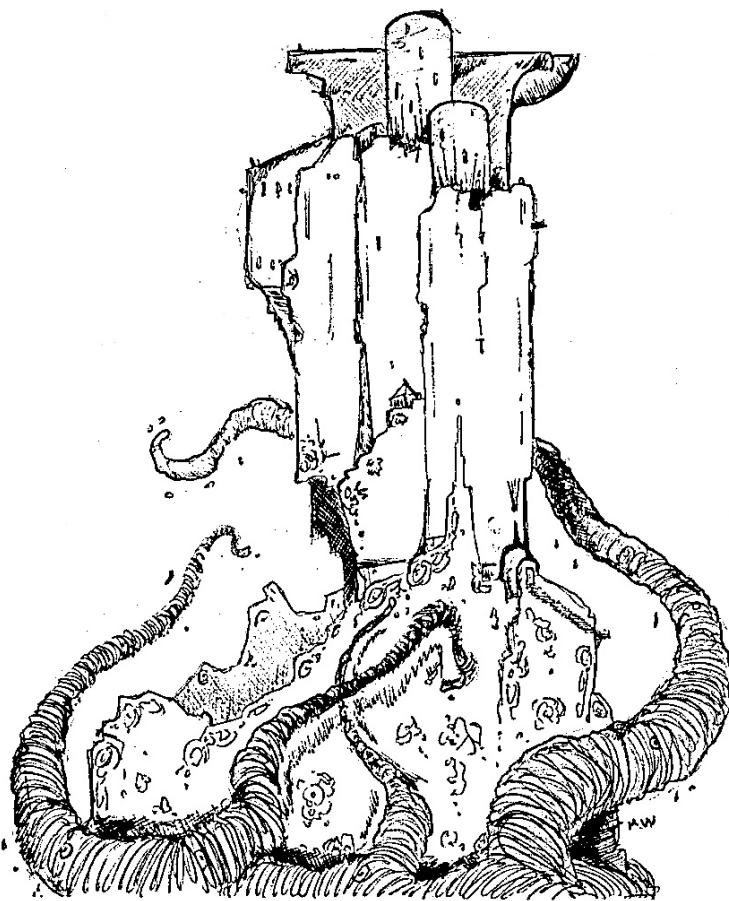
The player now narrates his 2 successes in the scene: "Darius tells the barge master that he knew his father and that he was a fair man (1 action). While Darius is saying this he flashes the hand sign for the underground rebel group he know the barge captains family in involved in (second action)."

It is up to the players to keep track of narrations that cover a lot of actions, simply count them off as the player speaks, and once they have hit their limit say "Stop."

The Game in a Nutshell

Declaring actions and rolling D6s gives a player, when successful, the right to take over the narration of the game. This is the meat of *Phase Abandon*. Just remember: Declare, Roll, Control.

Complete Guide to Characters

Step 1: Discussion

The first step in creating characters is actually a good discussion with your game group. In this discussion you can trade character ideas and learn a bit about the game that the group wants to run. If a player has planned an adventure in a desert area, it will effect the flavor of the character you make. An Eskimo warrior though cool would just not fit in that well. This is a good time to glean inspiration from the ideas of your group and for your group to learn about your vision of the game world and perhaps take some inspiration from that. At the same time it is a good opportunity for all the players to think about how their characters are going to work together.

Step 2: Story "Blurbs"

Each player should write three descriptive blurbs about his or her character. The blurbs could be anything from a simple description like: *Always wears a trench coat and fedora*. Or the blurbs could be background information such as:

Fights with his grandfather's sword.
Mountain of a man.
Bearded and brooding.

Think of the three blurbs as a way to define the character as more than just a stat block. A good way of judging character blurbs is:

If you were to describe your character concept to another

polayer what three things would you most like them to take out of it?

Step 3: HEART

This is a measure of the characters ability to keep going even after he or she has been badly wounded. Heart can not be improved through the use of character improvement points.

Each player starts with a Heart of 5.

Step 4: LUCK

Luck is a catch-all attribute that is used by the game when simply nothing else applies to the situation. Think of it as the characters link to the cosmos, his or her good karma, kismet, or what ever best fits the character. Skills can never be linked to luck, luck can not be improved through the use of character improvement points. To figure luck use the following rule.

Luck Roll: Luck is rolled at the beginning of every game. Luck is equal to 1D6. Any luck that is not spent at the end of the game is added to the characters improvement chips.

Step 5: Skills

Skills represent what a character knows how to do. While any character can attempt anything in the course of a game, having a skill greatly increases the characters chance of success. In Phase Abandon there is no massive list of skills. Players give their characters the skills they should have and decide for themselves how each skill works for the character.

Character-skills should make sense within the context of the character's backstory.

A starting character gets 15 starting skill points.

Buying Skill Ranks: Each skill is named and described by the player and given a starting rank between 0 and 5. 0 means you have a passing knowledge of the skill, but are interested in learning more. 5 means your character is very well trained in the skill.

Each rank you give the skill costs 1 skill point. For example if Jay wants his character Rik to have a skill called, "dagger throwing" at a starting rank of 5, he would have to spend 5 skill points to do so.

Skill rank is the measure of how much knowledge the character has in a skill. This number will go up over time due to character improvement. It is also the score that players use to determine how many dice he or she rolls when resolving actions in the game. Any temporary bonuses or penalties given during the game will be accessed to this number.

Describing skills: In order to maintain some consistency while playing the game, a player who creates a character and defines his/her skills and spells, must write a brief description of that skill or spell. The skill descriptions will define how it will used in the game.

Skill descriptions should be shared with the other players, if there are any glaring problems or obvious exploits written into a players skills, the group can point out the skill to the

player and he or she can plead their case and their logic for the design of the skill.
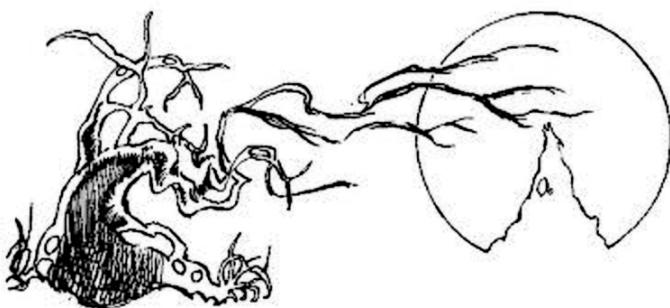
Basic skill format:

1. Skill name
2. Bonus granted for success
3. Results of critical failure
4. Notes

A basic healing spell may look like this:

1. Healing Touch (name of the skill)
2. Character can heal damage to a single skill for one target ally (= to the number of successes rolled.)
3. On a critical failure caster takes damage equal to the critical failures roll to the Healing touch skill.
4. Must be able to touch the target and have a calm moment to concentrate.

The more complicated a spell or skill is in play the more extensive a description it should have.

A simple weapon skill may have a descriptions as follows:

1. I Hit Things With My Hammer
2. Character attacks with a hammer doing damage equal to successes.
3. Character takes damage to his hammer skill for each critical failure.

Step 6: Guiding Principles

Each player must declare and define *3 Guiding Principles* for his or her character.

Guiding principles are sets of rules that help define the character. The principles could be any thing from simple statements like, "He always tells the truth." to something more complicated like, "When he gets in a fight he relies on his father's sword, but vowed never to take a life with it."

During play if the player can logically link the actions of his character to one of the character's guiding principles the character will be able to perform extraordinarily heroic feats.

Step 7: Triggers

The way players can logically link the guiding principle to an action is through a trigger. A trigger is a set of conditions that must be met in order to gain a bonus from the guiding principle. When the player can link an action back to that principle his character will get a bonus to roll for the action. The bonus is 1 to 3 dice, and should be approved by the

group before play. However if the character breaks on of his or her Guiding Principles, then a 3 die penalty is put on the skill.

Guiding Principles and Triggers In Play: The solid rule is each Guiding Principle must be linked to a skill. Each time the Guiding Principle is broken the player suffers a penalty of 3 dice to the skill.

These penalties must be removed through the resolution of goals he sets to lift said penalty.

An Example of a Guiding Principle with a Trigger:

Guiding Principle – "Thelonius will not attack an unarmed opponent with his sword."

Trigger – Thelonius is attacked by an unarmed opponent +3 dice if he fights the opponent with anything BUT his sword. If he breaks his Guiding Principle, he'll receive -3 dice penalty on using his sword until he can remove the penalty via quest.

Players should track how many times their characters break their Guiding Principles. The first time the principle is broke a 50-point goal is created: "Resolve my guiding principles ( )". Once that quest is completed the player can remove the penalty by either narrating a way in which he has resolved his breaking of the guiding principle or by narrating the moment that represents a changing of the principle.

This narration should reflect the character's new growth and outlook. If the principle is broken again before the goal is re-

solved the goal's value goes up to 75 and if it is broken a third time the value of the goal goes up to and stays at 100 points.
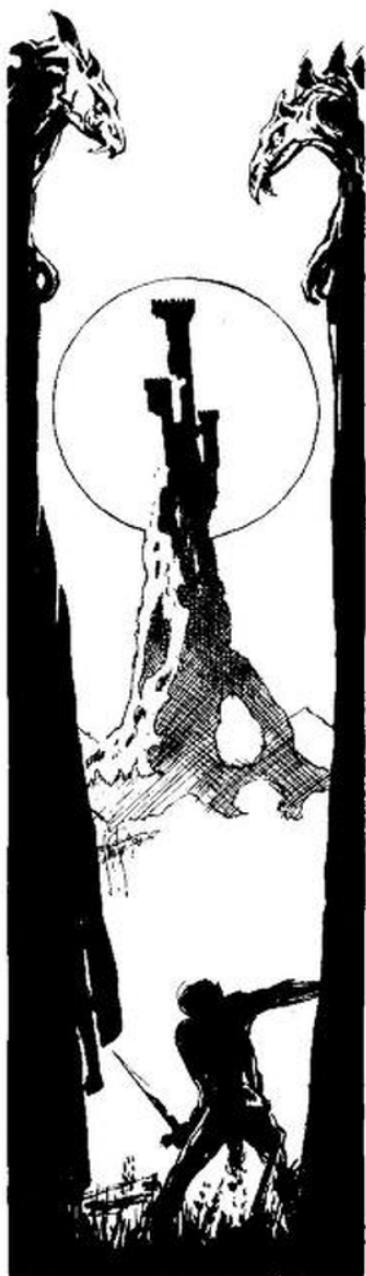
Another Example of a Guiding Principle in play :

The character Gerd has the Guiding Principle: "When he gets in a fight he relies on his father's sword, but vowed never to take a life with it."

In a tough fight he is pushed to his limits and has to kill or be killed. The player looks at his sheet and sees that Guiding Principle is linked to his swordsmanship skill of 6, so from here on out Gerd must use his swordsmanship skill at a level 3 because of his guilt relating to breaking his guiding principle.

The only way he can fix this is to resolve a 50-point goal called something like: "Make things right with the spirit of my father's sword."

After a game or two the player who runs Gerd has resolved the 50-point goal and narrates a scene about going back to the family of the warrior he had killed and making

amends even taking the warrior's son in as his knight apprentice. With goal cleared he may now go back to using his swordsmanship skill at the full 5 dice.

Step 8: GOALS

Goals represent things the player would very much like to see his character achieve while adventuring.

Each player can create up to three goals.

The three Starting goals begin with a *total value of 300 points*, if the player deems a goal harder or easier to achieve in the game setting being played he may adjust them accordingly. For example if a player puts "The elimination of the vampire race" as one of his goals the other players in the group might (A) tell the player it is impossible and think again or (B) assign a simply astronomical goal value.

The higher the number the more difficult the goal is going to be to achieve. During play characters will lower these numbers by wrapping up scenes, and in effect move themselves closer to their goals. When a goal's value reaches 0 it is considered "finished" and achieved. The player may narrate a scene showing how the goal is completed, what effect it has on the character and create a new goal.

Goals are how characters grow and change over time.

Gaining new skills through goals: By using goals a character can gain new skills. The player should decide on a new skill he thinks his character could learn, write it up, and present it to the group. If the group agrees that the

character should have that skill, then the player adds a 100 point goal to his character sheet stating something like: "I will convince Commander Thad Green to teach me how to pilot the X9" or any goal that would be appropriate to the skill. Players should aim to resolve those goals during the game.

Once that goal is completed the player can narrate a scene where the character learns the new skill. The starting Action Level for a new skill is always 1 die. New skills improve in the same manner as any other skill.

Skill improvement: Characters improve their skills through using them in play. Every time a character uses a skill and rolls a natural 6 he gets one point towards improving that skill. Once he has accumulated twice as many points as his skills Action rank that skill's level increases by 1 and the Action Rank can be recalculated.

Step 9: Equipment, Mundane and Special

What the characters carry with them is determined by the characters' descriptions and general logic.

Once the character is created the groups should take a quick glance, just so none of the players try to slip a Giant Red Howitzer into their characters' nap sack.

Special items of power: Items of power should be bought and described exactly like skills. And will have their own Action Levels. An example would be a magic item or a special gun.

An Example Magical Item:

Carthains Dagger of Wings: When thrown it transforms into a flock of ravens who all attack the target viciously!
Dagger of wings: Skill level 5
Linked: Magic
Bonus granted for success: For each success the target takes damage.
Results of critical failure: for each 1 rolled the ravens attack the thrower in their frenzy for 1 point of heart damage. The dagger recharges each day but if it ever reaches a skill level of 0 it breaks and can not be reforged.

It will be to everyone's benefit that the item is a fair item and the powers of the item are clearly defined just as a skill would be. Each of the items powers cost skill points in exactly the same manner as character skills.

Step 10: Connections

Connections are an in game way of tracking the people the characters know and how well they know them.

Any non-player character the player character meet can be

added to a player's list of connections. It is up to the players what connections they wish to nurture and which ones they wish to let go unused. Each new connection starts out with a value of 1, this is a loose connection, simply an acquaintance.

Characters calling on connections: During any non-challenge scene a player may choose to call on one of his connections. When he calls on his connection the player should narrate how he is going about it and what he needs. Then the player rolls as many dice from the connection as he would like to risk.

If the roll is a success the player can narrate how the connection helps the character. If the roll is a failure then the player with the fewest chips at the table can describe how and/or why the player's connection fails to help. The player who failed the roll must then give the player at the table with the least number of betting chips a chip for his or her trouble.

Rolling a 1 on a connection check reduces the total number of dice available in that connection. The player who narrates the result of the roll should include some aspect of the interaction that would harm the relationship. The total number of dice in a connection may not fall below 1.

Rolling 6s on a connection check strengthen the connection by 1. The player who narrates the result of the roll should include some aspect of the interaction that would nurture the relationship.

Connections calling on the player-character: If the situation is appropriate the player at the table with the

highest number of chips may have any other player character's connection call on that other character by giving them one chip and narrating the request. The player who gave the chip then rolls a number of D6 equal to the value of the other character's connection.

Any successes rolled become the strength of the request. If the requested player can not fulfill or refuses to fulfill the request these points will be lost form the connection. If the requested player does fulfill the request that player may add a number of points to the connection equal to the strength of the request.

Example of connections in play:

Herik the viking has a connection to the local blacksmith Yargert with a strength of 4D6. Herick has been contracted to hunt down a beast that has been haunting the local forest. For this quest he wants a special sword, a sword beyond Yargert's skill but he might know who can forge such a weapon, so Herik decides to ask.

The player rolls 4D6 getting a 5, 4, 4, 1. A successful roll! However, a 1 was rolled so Herik's connection with the blacksmith is now only 3D6. The player decides that he asks Yargert, who tells him of an old sword smith that trained him, he may be dead by now but he once lived in Winterforge high in the mountains.

However the old man was slightly insulted that Herik did not ask him to attempt forging the blade.

Later as the party gets ready to set off toward the mountains

the player at the table with the most chips gives Herik's player a chip and rolls 3D6 based on Herik's relationship with the black smith. The player rolls 2, 3, 5. The player then narrates: "As you are leaving old Yargert stops Herik. 'Boy, since you and your friends hunt a mystic beast, bring me back one of its fangs and I will forge ye a sword, even better than any you can get from my old teacher.'"

If Herik does not bring back the fang, his relationship with the blacksmith will fall to 2D6. If he does bring back the fang the relationship will grow back to 4D6.

Setting up a Campaign

Unlike many other games, Phase Abandon does not have an official setting or genre.

The game is meant to be flexible and to allow a group of players to add as much or as little to the system as needed to capture the style and flavor of game the group wants to play. It is highly suggested that before any characters are made the players sit around the table and talk about the setting. The setting of a game can dedicate such details as where the characters live, what time period, what kind of technology do the characters have access to.

The game can support many many ideas, however it will only work if all the players are on board and buy into the setting. If the group wants to run a historic Roman legion fighting in the British isles, and one of the players is super psyched about creating a cyborg character, the genre and the players vision clash. Though that example is a bit extreme that type of clash needs to be worked out before the game starts.

On the fly Setting Creation

1. Each player starts with 5 chips (we will use them again later).

2. The players have to agree on some standard genre.

3. The players spend chips to add details to the setting.

4. The number of chips spent on each element determine how unchangeable that element is.

A Quick Setting Example:

Russ says: "I really want our city to be a fortress city from which we as knights rule the lands around us! I spend 3 of my five chips for that."
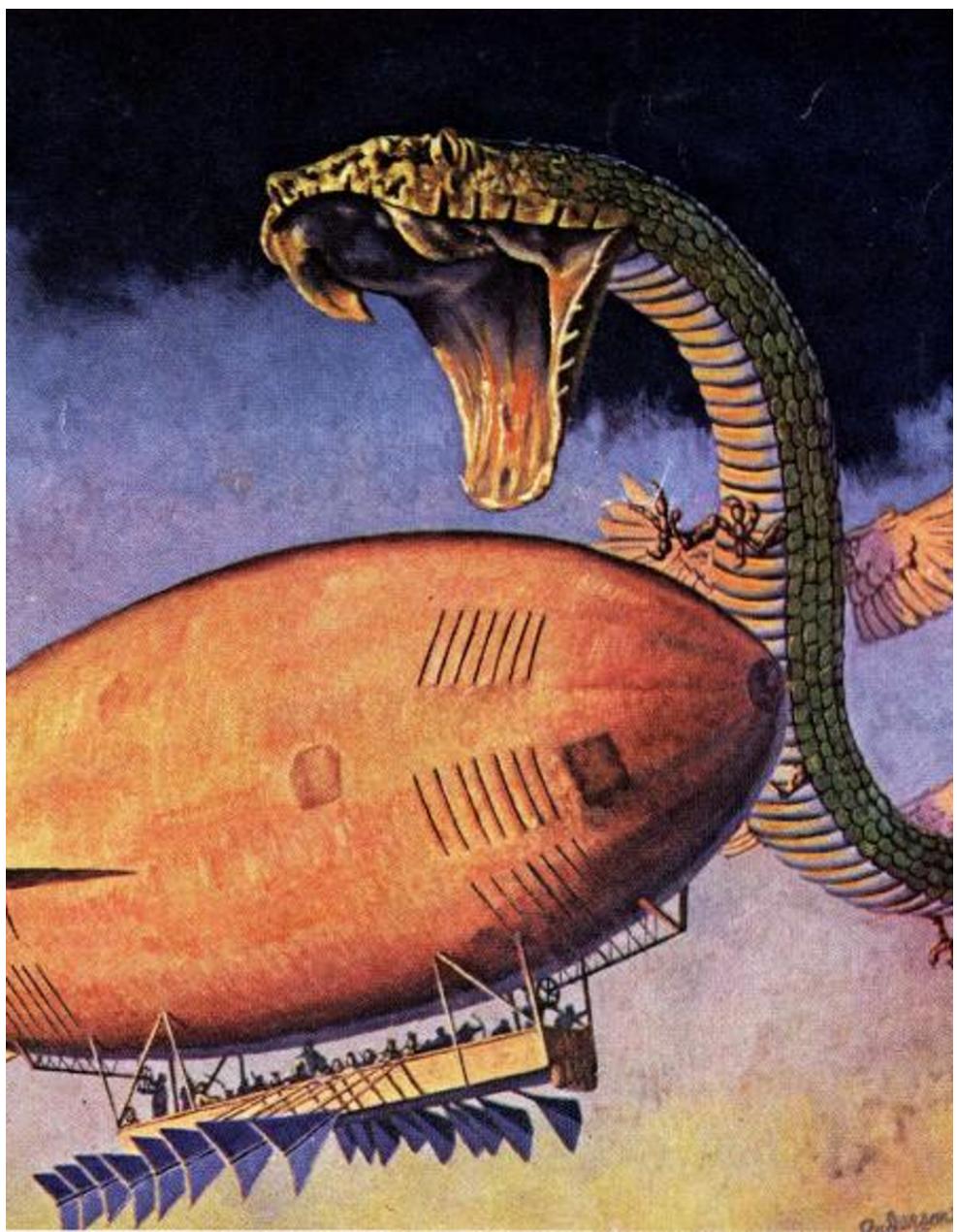
Anyone can add other details but if they want to modify the first idea they have to spend at least 3 chips to do so.

Next Jay says: "Yeah and as of late there have been barbarians raiding our lands ... People are starting to doubt our ability to keep the peace!" and he spends 2 chips.

If Mark were to say next: "Our Fortress city floats 100 feet off the ground on a magical island ..." Well, because it modifies Russ' original idea he would have to spend at least 3 chips on it.

In this way players end with an option to make 5 smaller more easily changed details or fewer more concrete additions to the quick setting.

Remember it is about making an interesting setting to create a story, quickly. This section does not go into a lengthy discussion of setting, and the rules for quickly creating a setting are left light, because It is not the games intention to build stunning settings from the get go. It quickly becomes apparent that the players are creating a world that their characters are strongly intertwined with. The games intention is to introduce the players to a new place, with just enough information to get moving, then let the setting naturally grow around their story.

Detailed Dice Mechanics

1. Critical Success!

The player can roll the die again in an attempt to get yet another success. As long as the player rolls consecutive 6s the player can keep rolling and adding to his or her successes.

On the first 6 rolled the player can add a +1 to the Skill level of the skill used. Once this count equals the current skill level the player can raise his skill level by 1 permanently!

Also whenever a natural 6 is rolled on a player's initial throw add a chip into the party pool which at the end of the game is used to improve the characters (see Player Pool, p. 29).

2. Critical Failure!

Even if the over all result of the action is a success, if a die comes up a 1 the player must subtract 1 from whatever action rank he was using, and take one point away from the character heart in the case of combat scenes.

If the overall action was a success, the player must include some injury to himself in his narration. If the action was a failure the narration is done by the player with the least number of betting chips.

3. Critical Failures and Critical Successes (Expanded)

Critical failures 1s can never be re-rolled they are automatically set aside. A roll of 6 gets rerolled purely to get more

successes. A natural 6 can be traded to eliminate a roll of 1, the critical rolls in effect cancelling each other out. This is optional for the player.

When this is done the success is lost from the 6 and the failure is lost from the 1. The character is spared from damage. No token is placed in the party pool for the roll of 6 – it is as if neither roll ever happened. This is the only way to eliminate your own roll of 1.

4. Rolling More Than 5 Dice

If a character's skill level is greater than 5, he gets free rerolls on his actions or the option to split the dice up amongst actions.

An Example:

If a characters skill level is 7 he can initially roll 5 dice, look at the result and then re-roll up to 2 dice in an attempt to better his results (unless the initial rolls come up as 1 or 6, see below).

The draw-back to this is that once a player re-rolls a die he or she has to live with the result, if a second roll of 1 comes up the character still takes damage. A player can not re-roll a die and then opt to "go back" to the old result.

Another Example:

Jen with a skill Level of 7 rolls 5 dice, (results of 4, 5, 2, 2, 3: two successes and three failures.) Her action thus far has failed. Jen decides to put the 4 and the 5 aside and re-roll

the both of the 2s. She rolls the dice (results are 4 and a 6: two successes, one of which is a six that she can roll again to get even more successes) and now has 4, 5, 4, 6, 3 or four successes and one failure. The action is now a success.

Skill levels top out at 15 which provides 3 re-rolls of all 5 dice. The Object is to get the best group of five dice with re-rolls and then re-roll any 6s to add on even more successes.

Once a player decides to set aside a die as a final result that die can not be rerolled again.

5. Splitting up Dice for More Actions

If a player has more than 5 in a skill they can choose to split their dice into more than one action. The rules are as follows: the dice must be split into groups of 5 first the then remain-

der can be used for other actions. If a character has a skill of 7 he may choose to do one action rolling 5 dice, then another action rolling 2 dice. He may not do one action with 4 dice and another with 3 dice.

A character with a skill of 12 could have two 5 die actions and one 2 die action.

6. Holding out Dice

A player at any time can opt not to roll any number of dice, this is called holding out dice. The reason a character may hold dice is that it limits the number of 1's that might be rolled and therefore limits the number of damage a player can do to his or her own character. This is useful if the player has had a spate of bad rolls, and is low on health or has an important skill that is nearly depleted.

At its base this is a game of betting to get control of the stories narrative. Some times it's not worth risking rolling a bunch of 1s and holding back a few dice is a good tactical choice.

7. The Player Pool

Every time a 6 is rolled on an initial roll (not a roll of a previously rolled 6) 1 token is placed into the party pool. These tokens can be used in two ways:

1. Tokens can be be taken from the pool and spent to eliminate another player's roll of 1 in an emergency. When this is done the player spending the token interjects into the narrative to say how his character is saving the other character. Or, if the characters are separated, what happens in the scene to help the other players' character.

If there are left over tokens at the end of the game, they are split evenly among the players to be used for character improvement.

8. Results of Damage

Each time a player rolls a 1 a point is subtracted from the Action Rank they were using. The number of dice rolled while using that skill is also reduced.

After a skill is reduced to 1 any time that skill is used any failure (results of 3 or lower) rolled will cause 1 point of damage to the character's HEART attribute. Regardless of the situation. When the characters HEART attribute hits 0, the character falls unconscious or is otherwise eliminated from the scene.

This damage is temporary and does not reflect permanent modifications to the character. The damage can be cured ingame.

9. Skill Penalties for Critical Failures or rolling a 6

When the character uses a skill that has been penalized through critical failures (rolling 1s) in the future any 6's rolled will erase one point of the penalties. All of the penalties must be canceled before bonuses can be used to improve a skill.

An Example of Skill Penalties for Critical Failures:

Agent 005 has an Electronics skill of 5. While hacking another agents wifi signal he rolls 3 ones! His Electronics skill is now at -3 (only 2 dice left).

On his next action agent 005 scores 2 natural 6s. Now his electronics skill is only at -1 (4 dice) because the 2 6s have erased 2 points of his penalties.

The next time he uses electronics he scores another 2 natural 6s! Now his skill is back up to full strength of 5 dice and he has a +1 point towards making his Action Rank one level higher.

10. Heart Damage from Combat

Any roll of 1 in combat causes damage to the skill being used AND the HEART attribute. For example, 2 characters are sword fighting and a character rolls a 1 then his sword fighting skill and his Heart are reduced by 1.

11. DEATH

When a character's heart falls to 0 that character is techni-

cally dead. When this occurs the player whose character has died chooses whether to allow the character to die as part of the story and remove him or her from the game or to subject the character to being incapacitated, but able to recover. Only the player who owns a character can permanently remove a character from the game's narrative.

12. Skill Checks

At times any player may ask the narrating player to make a skill check. Usually this will happen when the narrator says his character does something and there is some question whether or not the character could fail.

The player asking for the skill check gives one betting chip to the player who is narrating and asks him to check a skill that is applicable to the situation. The player who asked for the check will say what skill to base the check on. The player *narrating* will then roll the proper number of dice based on that skill.

If the character has no applicable skill then the player will use their

current Luck Value as the number of dice rolled. If the player rolls enough successes the action is successful and the game continues with the successful player narrating the result.

Remember the successful player ALWAYS gets to describe the results of their actions. If the roll is a failure the player who asked for the check will narrate the failure and take over the narration.

An Example of a Skill Check:

Bill the warrior has a Common Sense of 3. Bill is running down a street, chasing a spy. He rounds the corner into a busy vendors street and the spy is gone! He must be hiding.

Another player says he would like Bill's player to roll a Common Sense check to see if he can figure out where the guy hid. Bill's player rolls 3 dice and scores 2 successes, that was enough. Now the rolling player continues, "I see a door half way down the street swinging on its hinges. He must have dove into that house."

The player of Bill the Warrior has also just earned an extra betting chip for the next round.

Had the player failed the roll, the player who asked for the check would have told him that he rounded the corner and just saw a busy street of vendors, the spy had vanished.

12a. Helping Dice

A player can declare that they want their character to help another player's character in an action. To do this the player

must give the other player a betting chip per D6 that the helping player wants to roll, and declare what skill his character is going to use to help out.

When the skill roll is made the helping player may roll 1D6 per betting chip given and add any successes rolled to the result of the roll and any failures are taken from the roll. All normal resolution rules apply except natural 6s on helping dice are not rerolled and rolls of 1 do not cause damage to anyone. If the roll succeeds or fails the player's attempt to help should be taken into account in the narration.

Playing the Game

The Main Concept

Phase Abandon has to be flexible, loose, fun and story-based. Learn the rules about Successes vs Failures, how skills work and how to treat rolls of 1 and rolls of 6. Once you have those rules down, take some betting chips and start playing.

In the beginning of the game each player starts with *5 Betting Chips*. These chips will be used to determine who gets to set and run scenes in the game and how much Challenge there will be in a Conflict. There will be more about the Betting Chips further below.

Phase Abandon is also broken into scenes not unlike a movie. The normal flow of events goes something like:

Set Up – Descriptions – Action – Conflict

Set Up

The set up part of a scene is a simple overview of why the characters are where they are. If it is the first scene in a game then this is the time to fill in back story. It is also an excellent time for players to introduce their characters to the rest of the gaming party.

The role of a player at this stage is to set the table and letting the other players know why they are in the scene they are in. The scribe should do any necessary book keeping, as in writing down NPC names and taking notes of their goals and motivations.

Get Moving

Once the scene is set and all the players know where the characters are, each player rolls 2d6. The player with the highest roll must narrate a scene that gets the story moving toward the first group goal (see "Group Goals" below).

An Example of Getting it Moving:

The players are all located in a pub in down town New York City, each character has introduced themselves and everyone has rolled 2d6. Jeff rolled an 11 so he has to get the story moving. The first group goal is "Locate the kidnapped police chief".

Jeff says: "We are all sitting in the bar having a beer and talking about the chief disappearing, when suddenly we hear screeching tires out side then a dull THUD, as we jump up to see what's going on, a Pick-up can be seen speeding away. A man with a hood over his head, all tied up and badly beaten, lays at the door of the bar. It's not the chief, but I bet it's related."

At this point the players can go in many directions. Try to catch the license plate on the truck? Jump in the car and chase him? Talk to the dumped man? At least things are moving towards the first goal.

Group Goals

At the beginning of each game the group should discuss one or more goals they would like to achieve during the game. Each goal is given a challenge number. This number repre-

sents how difficult each goal will be to achieve, the higher the number the more difficult the goal. Group Goals can be anything within the story and may be of any challenge rating value. It is a good idea to balance the challenge ratings based on how much time you have to play, how many players you have and how important the goal is to your story. Try a few different values and see what works best for your group.

An Example:

Three goals might be:

1. Get an audience with the duke (20),
2. Find the missing ambassador (30) and
3. Defeat the kidnapper (20).
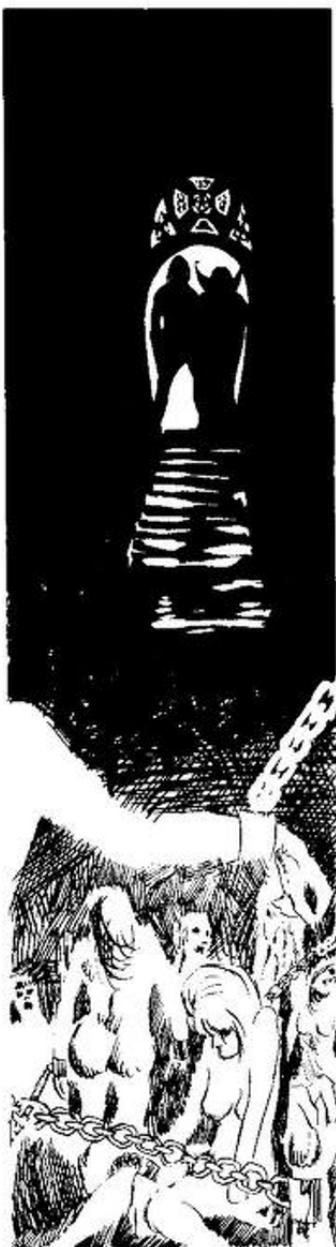
This set up would yield a game with some negotiations in the beginning, some investigation, and perhaps some combat in the end, depending on how the story plays out.

Resolving Group Goals

Goals are resolved by rolling successes. Every skill check or action roll made by a player is considered to be an effort to move towards completing a goal. Each time a player rolls a skill check and is successful those successes are subtracted from the current group goal. Whichever player rolls the success that brings a group goal down to zero, gets to wrap up the goal and narrates how the goal is resolved.

Group Goals should be resolved in order. Working on one goal at a time preserves a story structure laid out at the beginning of the game. If at any point in the game the story

veers off in an odd direction and the players want to adjust, eliminate or add a new Group Goal, feel free to do so. It's your story.

Challenge Scenes and Group Goals

On the surface the fastest way to resolve a group goal would be to declare a challenge scene, start the bidding process and play out the scene. This is true. The group rolls the most dice and scores the most successes during challenge scenes. But during a Challenge Scene only naturally rolled 6s are subtracted from the value of the group goal. This allows a Challenge Scene to be of greater difficulty to overcome than the Group Goal and still helps the group move towards their goal, without every challenge automatically resulting in a resolved goal.

An Example of Group Goals in a Challenge Scene (continuing the scene above):

The group is working on their third goal, (defeat the Kidnapper.) The Group Goal still has 10 points left until the goal is resolved. One of the

character's attempts to sneak past a set of guards in the kid-nappers hide-out, a skill check is called, the character fails and a challenge is called for. After everyone at the table has done his bids, the scene ends up with a 14 Challenge Rating for fighting off the guards.

Through the course of the challenge scene 14 successes are eventually rolled, only 4 of them are on natural 6s. At the end of the challenge the guards have been overcome and the Group Goal has been reduced to 6.

The Wrap it Up Reward

The player whose action removes the last amount of Challenge from a scene or Group Goal gets to "Wrap it up". This player also gets to break the limit of 1 action per rolled success and fully narrate the end of the scene. If, for example, the characters had just been involved in a verbal dispute with a dishonest aristocrat, the player who Wraps Up the scene could narrate the end of the scene in several ways. The aristocrat could storm off swearing vengeance for this humiliation or he could come forward and shake hands with the characters in a show of respect and new alliance, he could skulk off abjectly humiliated in front of his peers or he could boldly challenge the character to a duel. The important thing to remember is when a player Wraps it Up, the result of the scene is up to the player narrating.

The player who gets to Wrap Up the scene also gets to sub-tract the total challenge value of the scene from one of his or her goals. Moving them closer to reaching the character's personal goal.

Descriptions

Another important aspect of setting the scene is to describe the details of the world around the characters. When a player sets the scene it is like a director in a movie the player has ample opportunity to set the mood and the tenor of any scene through description. We expect characters to act differently if presented with the following descriptions:

"At the end of the street you see before you a door way, it is covered by a colorful carpet hung from a gilded curtain rod bolted near the ceiling. As the sun illuminates the walls you can see an apothecary's shop keeper emblem painted along the door frame. The smell of strong spices like saffron and bay greet your nose as you get closer, if you listen carefully you can hear humming coming from inside the building."

Compared to their reaction to the following description:

"At the end of the street you reach a decrepit, blackened oak door. After brushing a pile of trash away you see a trail of ancient runes running along the length and width of the door frame. As your party gets closer, clouds cover the sun, the shadows deepen to darkness, a communal chill runs through the air. Standing before the door there is no noise, and the smell of trash all but hides a hint of greater decay seeping from around the dark iron hinges."

Conflict

At some point most scenes will rise to some form of Conflict. The player narrations can naturally lead to conflict or if things are getting slow another player can give the character

narrating 1 Betting Chip and declare a conflict. If a player declares a conflict that player must immediately narrate what the nature of the conflict is.

Conflict can be any point in the game where the players want their characters to manipulate the story and the setting around them. It does not have to be a fight, it can be anything, a debate with a corrupt village alderman, a game of darts with money on the line, a battle of wills with an evil mage or, naturally, a fight with an attacking horde of angry goblins.

THE BID

When a conflict is declared each player will take a number of betting chips into their hand. When every one is ready they will declare the number of chips risked to the rest of the group.

The Challenge Roll

Each player then rolls 1d6 for each chip risked in the bet. The player who rolls the highest total gets to control the scene, in effect that player gets to set the scene and begin the conflict narrations. That player also wins all the Betting Chips that were bid.

Challenge in Conflict

To determine the amount of Challenge in the scene, all of the dice rolls from the bid are totaled. As the Challenge in the scene is reduced, the players should modify descriptions of the scene to match the actions of the group. Though success-

ful characters get to narrate their own actions it is the job of the group as a whole to maintain a line of narrative from action to action and from scene to scene.

Example of a Conflict Set Up:

Jay narrates that his character "tries to push his way past the guards".

Russ tosses a betting chip towards Jay: "Nope that's too easy, this is a conflict."

Jay takes 3 betting chips into his hand and Russ takes 2. When they are both ready they put the chips down on the table. Jay rolls 3d6 getting a 6, a 2 and a 1, respectively for a total of 9. Russ rolls 2d6 rolling a 4 and a 6 giving him a total of 10.

Russ wins the 5 betting chips that were on the table and also gets to set the scene and continue the narration. The total Challenge Rating of the scene is 19.

Notes on Challenge Rating

Challenge Rating is a narrative tool. It represents an abstract measure of how important the conflict is in your over all story. The players could describe a very powerful foe in a low challenge scene. Then the player narrating could have the enemy fight a brief battle, show his power and flee the characters. Or the players could describe a relatively weak group of enemies that have a high challenge if the enemy is highly motivated, backed into a corner or for whatever reason an important part of the narrative.
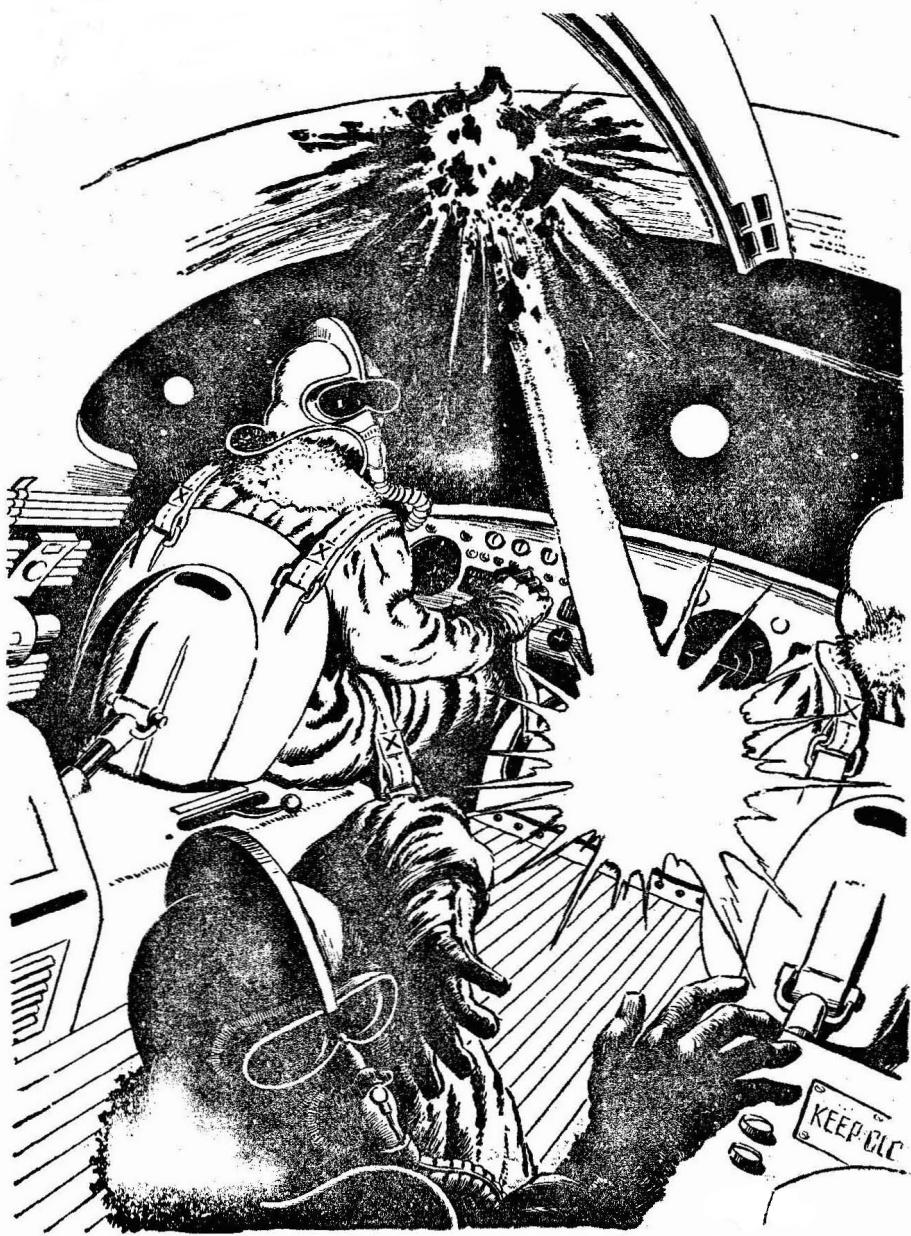
Players should use Challenges as a tool to dictate the pace of the game and to reinforce the story by manipulating how long the group is forced to deal with certain resistant elements of the story. If the players are chasing a thief through a city, a player can ask for an action scene and make the chase itself have a challenge rating and so on.

Final Thoughts

Always try to remember: let the story determine the challenge. And let the story fuel the game.

Summary 1: General Flow of the Game

1.   A player who wins the "get moving roll" sets the scene giving descriptions of the environment and what's going on in it.

2.   The players state what they are doing in order of highest betting chips to lowest.

3.   The players can ask for dice checks if the scene requires them.

4.   Results of successful dice checks are described by the player who made the check. But:

a) If a dice check is a failure the player with the least number of betting chips describes the result. The player who failed gives a betting chip to the player doing the describing.

b) Once the player with the lowest number of chips finishes narrating a failure, control of the narration goes to the player with the most chips, ties are broken by a 1d6 roll, highest roller narrates.

c) The successes from these rolls are taken off the current group goal value.

5.   The players continue the narrative in this way until a conflict arises.

6.   CONFLICT: Each player places a number of betting chip in front of them. When every one is ready they declare how many chips they are betting. This is called the BID and it resolves as follows:

a) Each player rolls 1d6 per Betting Chip bid. The player who rolls highest gets to set the conflict scene. This player describes the environment, the situation and the nature of the conflict to the players are in a way that they can make good decisions about their actions moving forward.

b) The highest rolling player gets to keep all of the betting chips that were bid.

c) The total value of all the dice rolled will be the challenge for the scene.

7. Players use skills and abilities to face what ever challenge is in front of them.

8. When a player's roll is a success the player gets to narrate the result. Narrating 1 action per success rolled (within the limits of the scene).

9. When the player's roll is a failure the player with the least current betting chips gets to narrate the result. After the narration of a failure control of the narration returns to the player with the most chips.

10. All effects from damage to the players or to the enemy are applied immediately before the next player or enemy acts.

11. The players reduce a challenge in a scene by subtracting the number of successes earned by each players actions.

BUT: Only rolls of 6 reduce the value of a Group Goal during a Challenge scene.

12. When all the scene's challenge is used up the player who eliminated the last point challenge is rewarded a number of points equal to the total challenge in the scene to put towards one of their goals. That player also gets to WRAP IT UP. In other words, he's allowed to narrate the end of the scene.

13. If a player or group goal has been completed that player can take a moment to narrate a scene that says how the goal has been resolved.

14. The player wraps up the scene and who ever currently has the highest number of Betting chips begins the next scene.

15. Play continues with a new scene being set by the player with the most chips.

Summary 2: Betting Chips and their uses

Betting Chips move around the table freely in *Phase Abandon*. There are several times during the game that the number of chips a player has determines what he can or can not effect in the game:

1. Challenge Bid - As stated earlier, whenever a conflict arises the players bid Betting Chips to determine who gets to set the scene and the overall challenge in that scene.

2. Failure Narration - When a player fails a roll, the player with the least number of Betting Chips narrates the result.

3. Failure Pay-Off - When a player fails a roll that player must give the player with the *least* number of betting chips, 1 betting chip.

4. Lull Rule - When a scene comes to its natural end, the story is then picked up by whatever player has the most betting chips. This is called The Lull Rule and applies whenever the steam seems to have run out.

5. Skill Check - If during narration a player declares an action that may result in his character's failure, another player may give them a Betting Chip and ask them to make a skill or an skill check.

Furthermore if the narrating player wants another player to make a check, that narrator may give that player a chip and ask for a skill check.

6. Extra Difficulty - If a skill check is declared, an extra chip can be given to the player making the check, this extra chip makes the roll harder, removing 1 rolled success.

7. Helping Dice - If a player wishes to help another player's character, he can do so but must give 1 betting chip per helping d6 that player plans to roll.

8. A Player's Connection Calls On Them - The player with the most chips may invoke another player's connection and have them request something from the other player.
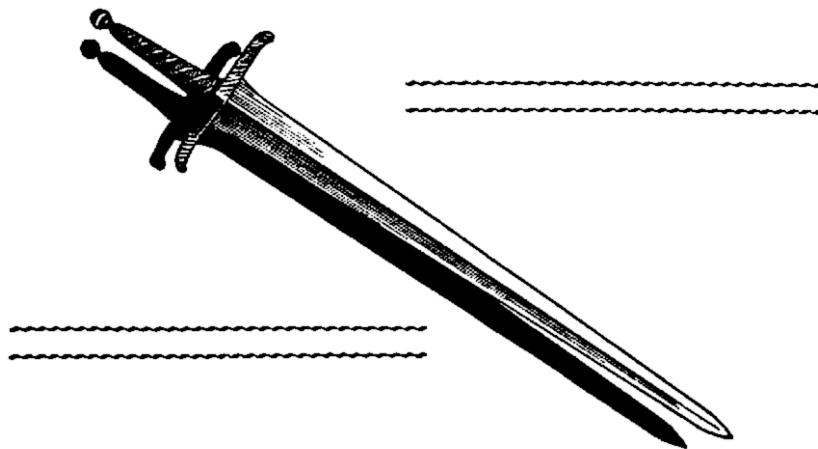
Summary 3: How Narrative Control moves around the table

1. At the beginning of the game, after the setting has been determined and at least one group goal has been agreed upon, the "Get Moving"-roll is made on 2d6. The player who rolls the highest sets the first scene and begins narrating the story.

2. During the narration a player will be asked to make a skill check.

3. The narrator might give a chip to another player and request a check.

4. Another player may give the narrator a chip and request the narrators character attempt a skill check ...

5. OR the narrator ends his narration and asks each player what their characters are doing starting with the player with the lowest number of chips. At this point the narrator can ask for skill checks and the like, based on the other players actions.

6. Once a skill check is requested, a roll is made, success of failure is determined. If successfull, the player narrates one action per success rolled, then the successful player continues the narration. If the roll is a failure, the player with the lowest number of chips takes one chip from the rolling player and narrates the failure.

7. Once a failure narration is complete, the player with the highest number of chips picks up the narration.

8. Any ties in the number of chips possessed by players is resolved by rolling 1d6, highest roll wins.

9. "Wrap it Up"- and "Goal Completion"- Narrations exist outside of this system. In these situations the player gets to narrate until they are done, explaining how the goal or the scene was resolved. They earned it.

Q&A:

Q: What is *Phase Abandon* best at?

A: *Phase Abandon* is best used to run games that involve over the top action and personal tales. The Phase game is not about exact figures and plus vs. minus statistical choices. The game is built on the concept of interpretive challenge points, which can represent any thing from a group of bandits, to negotiating with an arms dealer. It does not focus on exact statistics and effectiveness of troops, weapons, swords or the average speed of a tank. A group will get more satisfaction from the game if it is played to its strengths.

Q: Magic and Luck really does not fit into our game do we have to use them?

A: The short answer is "No".

If your group is playing a modern style game where magic has no place simply leave it out. Furthermore if your group is playing a fantasy game but would like Magic to work in a non-conventional way, by all means leave it out. The same goes for Luck. If the group wants a grittier game where luck and the re-rolls have no place, leave it out. Remember: once you start playing the game is yours to play as you like.

Q: Why is the number of actions a Player gets to nar-rate after a successful roll so controlled? Why not just let them say what ever?

A: One of the very basic concepts in PA is when players succeed they get to narrate what goes on with their characters. The more successful the action the more the player gets to say. The reward for good rolls is control of the scene. The better the roll, the more control.

Q: You mentioned "The Scribe" once in the text, what the hell is that?

A: In a game of *Phase Abandon*, a ton of things are going to happen. It is my suggestion that everyone keeps notes, however it is always a good idea to get one player to be "The Scribe" or the person keeping the official notes, just in case another player (like me) is horrible at it.

Character Sheet

Name:	

Blurb 1:	Notes/Equipment/Connections
Blurb 2:	
Blurb 3:	

Losses

Heart		
Luck		

Skills

Skill Name	Action Value	Description	Plus/Minus

Guiding Principles

Principle 1	
Principle 2	
Principle 3	

Goals

Plus/Minus

Goal 1		
Goal 2		
Goal 3		