

Reel Adventures
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A Giant Brain Production

Anything in red is a note for this version of the game.

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Overview of the Game

This is a bit dry just now but will be jazzed up later on
Players take on the role of **heroes** in a film. They establish a **synopsis** of the plot to guide the game and then take it in turn to shoot **scenes** involving their hero, his **allies** or the **nemesis** of the story.

Impact is gained through players trying to achieve their character's drives and triumphing and overcome the many **pitfalls** they will face. This impacts is used to flesh out the heroes, giving them a **background** and **allies**. As the story is told the **momentum** of the plot increases and heroes must do their best not to be swept away.

Replace background with history for 0.4.

Resources need for play

Before you get started playing a game of 'Reel Adventures', one of the players should read through the book from cover to cover: so one of you has a good idea of the rules of the game.

You will also need about 10 six sided dice, hence referred to as d6, some pencils, a script for the film and one character sheet for each player. Both these resources can be found at the back of the book for you to photocopy.

Act 1 – Coming this Summer

Before we start playing we need to establish a **synopsis** of the film: what is the basic story, who are the heroes and who are their enemies. At the back of the book you will find a script sheet that includes a treatment page for writing down all this information.

Tone

The players should cover the sort of game they want to play. Are they going to go for a light-hearted feel to the film or something more serious? Will the film carry a message or will it just be action for actions sake? Whatever the decision the players should keep it in mind when it comes to telling the story.

Content

A quick discussion of content is also advisable. This allows each player to state anything that they would be uncomfortable with other players narrating: violence, scenes of a sexual nature, gore etc. This gives your film a rating of sorts and means no one is going to be upset by another player's narration.

Setting

Where and when is the story taking place? Is it going to be a space opera, a western or set in the present day? This can be as specific or as general as you like, and the group should feel free to add more detail to the setting as the story progresses.

Synopsis

The player's decide together the basic story they are going to tell, giving a broad view of how the heroes come to be together and who their nemesis is going to be. The players should avoid 'spoiling' anything: giving detail so specific that it cannot be changed at a later date.

The synopsis should provide the kind of information that you might find in a cinema guide or on the back of a DVD case.

Example:

The plot is divided up into 5 acts, 4 normal acts and then the finale, and the players should decide the basics of what is going to happen in at least the first act. This is known as the **focus** of the act and will help us know when

the act is over. In a typical adventure film, the general layout of acts may be something like this:

- Action Act 1: *Opening Scene and set-up*, introducing the heroes and putting them on the course of their adventure.
- Act 2: *The heroes fight back*, in which the heroes seem to have the upper hand before...
- Act 3: *The enemy revealed*, in which the heroes take a beating and all seems lost.
- Act 4: *The stage is set*, in which both sides reveal their hand before...
- Finale: *The nemesis is defeated* and everyone lives happily ever after, perhaps.

Heroes

Naturally we need some heroes to do some daring do and take on the bad guys. Every player will take on the role of one of the heroes in the story and will need to be able to describe them in terms that are relevant to the game. At the start of the game all we need is a hero's **name** and **archetype**.

Name

This can be anything at all but should be appropriate to the setting.

Archetype

This is just a two or three word description of the hero, the sort of impression they give the audience within the scene they are introduced.

Example: Will Turner in 'Pirates of the Caribbean' could be labelled simply 'Hero'. A better description might be 'Reluctant Hero'.

Qualities

Every hero has 3 **qualities** that are used throughout the game to decide whether or not they triumph over evil. These qualities are:

- Brains** How clever does the hero seem to the audience: can they barely count to 10 without help or can they recite Pi to 100 decimal places.
- Body** How physical is the hero: do they throw themselves off tall buildings or do they cower in the background.
- Emotion** How much emotion does the hero display on screen: do they make people in the audience cry with the power of their acting or are they as emotional as a stone.

At the start of the story all these qualities are at 1. Each player gets a 3 point pool to improve their qualities. This pool is marked on the character sheet and is spent during play.

Drive

Every hero will need a drive as well, the reason their character is part of the story. This does not need to be decided now but should be defined within the first 2 acts. Players should form an idea of what they want it to be early on.

Example: Will's drive would be 'Win Elizabeth's heart' whilst Jack Sparrow's is 'Get the Black Pearl back'.

Skeleton in the Closet

As well as a drive, each hero may have a **skeleton in their closet** that they may face during the course of the story. This will be referred to simply as a hero's **skeleton** for the rest of the rules. This is a piece of their past that they must come to terms with by the end of the story. Like other details this can be filled out during play.

Example: Will Turner's skeleton would be 'His father was a pirate', whereas Jack's would be the same as the plot in Barbosa.

Anchor Value (better term?)

This shows how connected your hero is to the current story. It is the sum of your **background, connections** and **qualities** and is set at 3 at the start of any story.

Act 2 – Shooting the Film

So we have pitched our story, we know the basic plot and who the good guys and bad guys are. Roll film!

Acts & Shooting Scene

As discussed in the previous chapter, the story is split into four distinct acts leading up the finale. Each of these acts is further divided into a series of scenes described by the players.

Impact

As we tell our tale of epic deeds and heroic action, it is useful to regulate each player's influence on the plot. We measure this influence through the use of **impact**, a pool of points that is recorded on the character sheet. Impact is gained through overcoming pitfalls and framing certain scenes in certain acts (p.xx).

Who goes first?

When you begin telling your story you will need to choose one player who will begin. This can be the player who is most familiar with the game or you can decide it by any method you feel appropriate. The player who is currently telling the story is always referred to as the **narrator**.

Turn Sequence

When it comes to a player's turn to be **narrator**, they take the following actions:

- 1) Gain Momentum
- 2) Frame Scene
 - a. What is the Focus?
 - b. Other details of the scene
- 3) Shoot Scene
- 4) Wrap Scene

Gain Momentum

At the start of any scene the current narrator gains a certain amount of **momentum**. This represents the plot moving forwards, no matter what the heroes do. If their momentum is ever greater than their anchor value, then a hero may risk being **swept away** (p.xx). The amount of momentum gained in a given scene depends on the act the scene is taking place in:

Act 1:	1 Momentum
Act 2:	1 Momentum
Act 3:	2 Momentum

Act 4: 3 Momentum
Finale: 3 Momentum

Framing a Scene

The first thing a player does when they get their turn to tell a piece of the story is to set, or **frame**, the scene. This consists of giving the scene the following elements:

Focus

This is by far the most important part of framing a scene. Before talking about the details of the scene a player needs to declare what they intend to get from the scene.

Do they want it to be a high action scene, to reveal a dark secret or to meet some new allies. The focus of the scene will be used to decide when the scene is over and it is the next player's turn to narrate.

Location

Where is the scene taking place?

Soundtrack

What sort of music, if any, would be playing in this scene? Remember that overuse of music can be just as bad as under using it.

Music can obviously change during a scene as well, and a player should feel free to describe any alteration in score he feels appropriate.

Cast

Who is there? The scene must include the player's hero, the nemesis, or one of the hero's allies.

A player may invent, or reintroduce, characters as they wish, inviting other players to take on other roles in order to flesh out a scene. Any characters, outside of our heroes, should be written down on the script.

Shoot a Scene

Once a scene is framed we can go on to fleshing it out: giving it the characters, action and story that any dynamic scene requires. This is referred to as **shooting** the scene.

What do I do during a scene?

Simply put, you tell your hero's story, rounding out their **background, connections**, creating and overcoming pitfalls and confronting their **nemesis**.

A player can either **direct** a scene, describing it as things like 'My character does...', or act in it, telling a story from their character's view point like 'I do...'. A player may switch between these two narrative styles as much as they wish during a scene.

Taking advice

When it comes your turn to frame a scene it may be that you cannot articulate exactly what you want to happen. That is fine. Talk to the other players and see if they have any suggestions.

Telling this story is a collaborative effort and you should all exchange ideas as to what should happen next. Just remember that the current narrator always has the final say.

Wrapping the Scene

A scene ends when the narrator achieves the **focus** of the scene, or has managed to narrate himself into a position where he cannot possibly achieve it at the moment. A scene only ever wraps by consensus of all the players.

Actions during a Scene

Every time your hero is in a scene, even one you are not narrating, you can take as many of the following actions as you wish.

Create or Alter Drive

At some point during a story a hero must be given a drive, something that ties him to the plot and gives him purpose. They do this by framing a scene where their drive is either heavily implied or just said out loud.

Once a hero has a drive it may be altered. It may be that the reason for the hero's drive has changed, or been completely resolved. This should only happen once really during a story as most action films are not really long enough to cover many changes in a character's life.

Example:

Create, alter or overcome your skeleton

You can create, add detail to or alter your skeleton during any scene your hero is in. You can choose to overcome your skeleton in any scene after you have been swept away. When you do overcome your skeleton you gain 3 impact.

Example:

Create Background

A player can spend impact to narrate a piece of their character's background, either through *flashback* or some other method. The player tells their piece of story and then spends as much impact as the desired level of background:

- Level 1: Basic part of your past
- Level 2: An important part of your past
- Level 3: A fundamental part of your past

Example:

Weaken Background

You can not remove or reduce any background that you have. Background is a part of your character and once created remains part of them until they shuffle of this mortal coil. Choose wisely.

Create Ally

A player can similarly spend impact to narrate an ally for their hero. The player narrates how they came to meet that ally, or merely a piece of story featuring them.

The player then spends an amount of impact points equal to the level of the ally they wish to add:

- Level 1: An acquaintance
- Level 2: A good friend
- Level 3: Someone you have a strong connection to, love or family for instance.

Should allies also be rated according to how much time they spend with the hero during the story?

Also thinking about changing allies to resources so that players can have allies and gear.

Example:

Weaken Allies

A player can shoot a scene where they reduce the level of an ally or complete remove it from their hero. They may do this from their hero's or his ally's viewpoint. The player then reduces the level of that ally by any amount, gaining that amount of impact.

Example:

Create or deepen a Pitfall

A player can **create a pitfall** in the plot, something that will obstruct the heroes from achieving their goals. Now you may be wondering why you want to create anything that will get in the way of your hero achieving their goals, but without conflict we are going to be describing a very boring film.

Whenever you create a pitfall you give it a level depending on how much of a hindrance it is going to be:

- Level 1: Minor
- Level 2: Difficult
- Level 3: Major
- Level 4: Heroic
- Level 5: Epic

Examples needed.

When you create a pitfall you add it to the current act on the script sheet.

A player may also **deepen a pitfall**, increasing the level of the pitfall.

Example:

Overcome a Pitfall

Once a pitfall is created a hero may try and overcome it, either on their own or by enlisting the help of their fellow heroes. A hero must engage in a piece of **action** to overcome a pitfall (p.xx).

Example:

Self sacrifice

A player may narrate the death of their hero. This should only be done at a dramatically appropriate moment. They gain an amount of impact equal to their heroes anchor value that they can distribute amongst the remaining players as

they see fit. This player may not create another hero in this film, but may still take on the roles of other characters as normal.

Example:

Introduce Plot Device

Any player can introduce a **plot device** when they are the narrator. Plot devices should be tied directly to the progress of the story and are principally used to defeat the nemesis at the end of the story. A plot device may not be introduced in the 4th act or the finale.

Example:

Know your enemy!

As well as the actions above, during the course of the story, players should fill out details about the nemesis. This may be detail of background, connections or qualities just as for a hero. Any scene of this nature is called a **nemesis scene**.

Instead of spending a pool of points players can spend their momentum to add detail to the nemesis. This has the effect of making things easier in the short term but more difficult in the end.

Nemesis Qualities

Unlike for a hero, where you need to shoot a scene that includes a piece of action, the player can just spend the appropriate amount of momentum to raise the nemesis' qualities. A nemesis' qualities cannot be higher than 3 and start at 0.

Nemesis Background & Weakness

Background can be added to a Nemesis as for a hero, but it should be relevant to the current direction of the plot.

You should also use background to describe his weaknesses, which every nemesis has. This may be overconfidence, pride or something more supernatural. You can then use this weakness to narrate his defeat later on.

Nemesis Allies

A nemesis can have allies just like a hero, but can also have henchmen. Henchmen are level 4+ connections that are characters in their own right, representing threats that the players must overcome in the final act, see p.xx.

For the purposes of narrating one of these scenes the player may become the nemesis or narrate the evildoer from the point of view of his allies or his enemies.

Example:

Involving the Team

If you wish whenever you frame a scene you can ask other player's to involve their hero, or to take on the role of another cast member in the scene. This allows all players to be involved with a scene should the narrator so wish.

However an invited player controls their hero, or the character they are given by the narrator, as they wish. The narrator may still outline the basics of the character, his purpose, attitude towards certain things etc. but the actual detail of how the character will behave in the scene is up to the controlling player.

Improvisation and Blocking

When several players are involved in the narration of a scene everyone must be careful of blocking another player's story. Most of the time players should let the others narrate how they wish. Only if the story being told is completely barmy and/or inappropriate should the other players **block** the current narrator.

There are two ways to block a piece of story:

- 1) A player may call a vote to block another player's narration. Everyone votes openly with first those for and then those against. The narrating player may not vote. If a draw is declared then the narrating player wins.
- 2) A hero may block another hero for narrative reasons. They may only do those by entering the scene, with the narrators permission, and must engage in a piece of **action** (p.xx) against the other hero.

Whether a block is successful or not the narrator still maintains control over the scene and must work in the result of any block into the story.

Acts & Scenes

Each act in a film tends to have certain types of scenes to make it up. For instance in the first act scenes that

establish character are more common than confronting major threats to the heroes.

To reflect this, certain scenes will have more benefit to a player when framed in a given act. These scenes will give the player an extra point of impact after they have resolved.

Act 1

This part of the film is especially good for setting up who the heroes are going to be.

Create Background

Create Allies

Create Drive

Create or alter skeleton

Declare Qualities & Traits

Act 2

This part of the film is generally when the heroes fight back against the nemesis, overcoming threats and building support for the later half of the film.

Confront Threat

Create Allies

Create or alter Skeleton

Act 3

This part of the film is when the nemesis fights back and the threats seem to rack up against the heroes. The heroes also confront their own fears and doubts.

Nemesis

Create Threat

Act 4

This is the lead up to the finale, where henchmen are defeated, secrets are dealt with, friends are lost, lives are sacrificed and the nemesis is tracked to his lair.

Confront Threat

Nemesis

Finale

This is it boys and girls. The nemesis is in front of you and he must be brought down. The fate of the world is at stake. There are no bonuses in this act, you are on your own now.

Act 3 – Lights, Camera, Action!

Some of the story you can create in a scene involves you engaging in **action**. This will happen whenever you try to overcome a pitfall or confront another hero.

When a piece of action occurs we must roll some dice to determine the outcome i.e. does the hero triumph over adversity or does the pitfall prove too difficult to overcome.

Lights! – The hero's worth

The first thing we need to establish is the hero's **worth** in the piece of action. This is:

Level of relevant Background + Level of relevant Allies

The narrator must describe how their hero's background and connections are brought in and a majority of the player's at the table must agree.

Qualities and Traits

When a hero takes action, the player may spend any points they have in their quality pool. The player may spend as much, or as little, of their pool at once. Each quality can be one of three levels:

Level 1	=	Incompetent
Level 2	=	Heroic
Level 3	=	Epic

At level 2 and 3 a player can define a trait for their heroes quality. This is something they are particularly good at within that quality. This trait must be narrated into the story or it cannot be added to the character sheet.

Example: *Will Turner proves very early on in Pirates that he is handy with a sword. His player defines his qualities as:*

<i>Brains:</i>	<i>1</i>	
<i>Brawn:</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Trait: Swordsman, Pirate</i>
<i>Emotion:</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Trait: Rash</i>

This makes Will an action orientated character who acts before he thinks.

Camera! - The plot's resistance

Now we work out how much **resistance** the plot is providing to the hero's course of action. This will depend on the type of action taking place.

Overcoming a Pitfall

When taking on a pitfall the resistance involved is:

Level of Pitfall

Blocking another Hero

If a hero is blocking another hero for narrative reasons, see p.xx, then they both roll their worth. This is also the case when a hero confronts the nemesis directly.

Action! - Roll em.

Now the narrator chooses which quality his hero will use when he takes action. He rolls that many d6, whilst someone else rolls a number of d6 equal to the **current act number**. The finale counts as act 4 for the purpose of **action**.

Each side is looking to roll 4+ on each dice. These are called successes. The hero then adds his worth to the number of successes he has rolled. The person rolling for the plot adds it's resistance to their number of successes. Each side now has a total number of successes.

The side with the most successes is the winner. We now work out the fallout to the hero whether he won, lost or drew.

Choosing to Lose!

Instead of rolling the dice to decide whether you defeat a threat or not you can **choose to lose**. You can only do this when your worth is less than resistance of the plot.

You take an amount of damage equal to the difference between the hero's worth and the plot's resistance. You gain that amount of impact.

Consequences

So what happens when heroes, **win, lose** or **draw** a piece of action.

Winning

If the narrator has more successes than the plot, the he wins. The consequences depend on what the piece of action was about:

Overcoming a pitfall: Reduce the pitfall by the number of successes and gain that amount of impact.

Blocking another Hero: The narrating player must allow the victor's player to describe how their heroes come into conflict.

Losing

If the narrator has fewer successes than the plot then he loses. The consequences depend on what the piece of action was about:

Overcoming a pitfall: The level of the pitfall is increased by one until the end of the scene: this can't take it over 5. The hero also suffers **damage** (p.xx).

Once the scene is over the pitfall reverts back to its original level.

Blocking another Hero: If you lose a piece of action when blocking another hero, the player whose hero you are blocking must decide whether or not you take damage.

Ties

In the case of a tie the winning consequence happens but the hero also takes **damage** (p.xx).

Narration Rights

The rights to narrate the outcome of a piece of **action** always lie with the current **narrator**.

Bringing in Traits

If a hero can bring in a trait to the **action** then they need to roll 3+ instead of 4+ for a success.

Bringing in Drive

If a hero can bring their drive into the scene as a relevant piece of the ongoing story, they may re-roll any **failures**. The drive can be brought in at any point during the piece of **action**, even after the dice have been rolled.

Impact and Action!

A player can spend impact during a piece of action either before or after he rolls the dice.

Before

The player spends the impact after he has calculated his worth, but before he rolls his quality. Each point of impact spent gives the player an extra dice.

After

The player spends the impact after qualities have been rolled but before the total number of success is calculated. Each point of impact spent is an automatic success.

However this does mean that the player will have to describe how fate intervenes in helping his hero win the piece of action and also will not gain any impact from the action.

If at first you don't succeed..

When a hero loses a piece of action the pitfall they are facing has its level escalated by 1 until the end of the scene. The hero may try and overcome the same pitfall in that scene, but must use a different quality and approach the problem from a different angle.

Group Scene

We have already seen how the current narrator can invite other players into a given scene. This allows heroes to combine forces to overcome threats.

Combining Forces

When one or more heroes tackles a threat each individual player must describe how their hero is going to contribute to the overcoming of the threat. Once everyone has had their chance to contribute to the narration it is time to roll the dice.

The heroes all roll their individual pools of dice the level of resistance being the total momentum of all the participating players.

For some instances it might make more sense if resistance was just the momentum of the narrating player. Can they have higher qualities.

Lending Allies

When there are multiple heroes in a scene, they may not be able to assist each other directly. A hero may 'lend' an ally to another hero for a piece of action. This ally's level gets added to the borrowing heroes worth for that action.

Dividing the Spoils

When you overcome a threat as a team the impact gained from the piece of action is divided up as the narrating player wishes.

Damage

Bashed, bruised but still standing is how many heroes end up towards the end of a film. As well as the negative consequences associated with losing a piece of action, a character may also take **damage**.

When does a character take damage?

When a player **ties** or **loses** a piece of action then any 1's he rolls count as **damage**. The damage can be assigned to any part of a player's hero, qualities, connections or background, as long as it can be justified in the narrative.

Example:

Damage to qualities

This represents damage to your physical self, mind or personality. You take damage to whichever ability you rolled in the piece of **action**, or whichever one you think is appropriate. This can cause an ability to drop to 0 making it useless.

Example:

Damage to Connections

This represents allies being hurt or killed, or your relationship with a connection degrading. Damage to a connection reduces the level of the connection by the amount of damage assigned.

Example:

Damage to background

This represents you losing faith in your own abilities, training or strength you draw from your past. Damage to a background reduces the level by the amount of damage assigned.

Example:

Swept away!: Momentum vs. Anchor Value

When your momentum becomes larger than your anchor value then your hero has been overcome by the progress of the plot.

When a hero becomes **swept away** they lose control of their own destiny. A swept away hero's next scene must be a **nemesis** scene.

Healing

Of course heroes never do stay down for long and recover quickly.

Healing damage to Qualities

Whenever a player is successful in a piece of action, the character they are narrating for heals all damage to Qualities.

Healing Background and Ally damage

The only way to reverse any damage to these two aspects of your hero is to spend impact to increase them (p.xx).

Act 4 – Ending Acts & Finale

So we now know how to frame scenes, engage in action and assign and heal damage. The last thing we need to complete the picture is how we change between acts and eventually confront the plot **nemesis**.

Changing Acts

At some point the players will achieve the **focus** of the act. At this point the players decide what the focus of the next act is going to be.

The players also need to decide who is going to go first in this new act. It may just be appropriate to keep on going round the table as normal, or one of the players may wish to go first.

Shooting the Finale

When the players get to the finale it is just one scene that involves everyone.

Henchmen

The players may narrate the presence of any henchmen, see p.xx, and confront them as threats, gaining impact as normal. All henchmen must be defeated before the nemesis can be overcome.

Fighting the Nemesis

During the final scene the players can actively engage in pieces of action with the nemesis. When they do so they treat it just like they are blocking a hero, with the nemesis getting to roll his full **worth**.

When it comes to fighting the nemesis himself, the heroes will most likely need to wear him down a bit before his final comeuppance. Whenever a hero defeats the nemesis in a piece of action, then the nemesis suffers damage. The nemesis suffers this damage to the relevant quality, and is defeated when one of his qualities is reduced to 0.

The nature of the quality reduced will show how the heroes have defeated him; emotionally, mentally or physically.

Plot Devices

Any plot device introduced earlier on in the plot may be used to defeat the nemesis outright, with little need for confrontation. This tends to be the way most action adventures end. A nemesis should be given a chance to

defend himself against a plot device, but the exact use of it is up to the players.

The Fallout

Once the nemesis has been defeated the players get a chance to each narrate an ending for their hero, or narrate a group ending. They may still spend impact during the fallout and so may create new allies and backgrounds they have gained from the story.

Heroes may still overcome pitfalls in the fallout, but no more momentum is gained during this section of the story.

Example: Will gains the ally "Elizabeth (3)" at the end of the film, when she chooses him over Norrington.

Possible background section to be added with information on different genres, their tropes etc.