



ANANAKTICA

Islandia q̄s̄ a nova Graecia dicitur, ab Erico, Magellanico, explorata, q̄s̄ in Regis Hispaniae Anno 1497. quae ad eius exploranda missus, fuit a Rege Hispaniae Anno 1497.

NOVA ZEELANDIA
detect 1642
C. Marianna Diemen
et Sylva d'ic Koningens

Landt
detect 1642
Antoni van Diem
van de Zeebaan
Landt

Landt
detect 1642
Antoni van Diem
van de Zeebaan
Landt

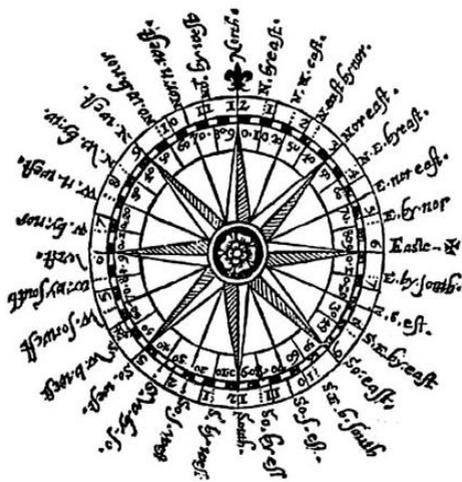
A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALCHEMY

Alchemy is real, and more powerful than could have been ever imagined. Ever since Isaac Newton discovered in 1693 that metals contained life, it was simply a matter of time before he found a means to command that life and the metal itself.

During the European wars of the 18th century, Newton and his students protected the shores of the newly united countries of Great Britain. Though crude by today's standards, the powers of Newton's ferromancers were enough to repel enemy fleets, persuading joints to rust, cannon to burst and shot to melt.

Exhausted and humiliated, the old kingdoms of Europe collapsed into revolution. In the turmoil, knowledge of the new alchemy flooded across the continent. There was a brief lull of enlightenment as each nation drew breath before the new "Peoples" governments, hungry for power and importance, delved unrestrained into the darkest practices of demonology. Led by men who had seized power in the name of peace, Europe fell into the deadliest conflict of its history.

But Newton, his life now extended by his discovery of the elixir of youth, had not rested on his laurels. In strictest secrecy, he and the Fellows of Oxford had gradually revealed that the life within metal existed also within stone, then water, and finally in the air itself. When the demon Napoleon arose from the anguish of the victims of the revolutionary wars, Newton's newly trained phalanx of Alchemages stood ready to defeat him and lead their island nation to their Imperial destiny.



ANARKTICA

FATE OF HEROES

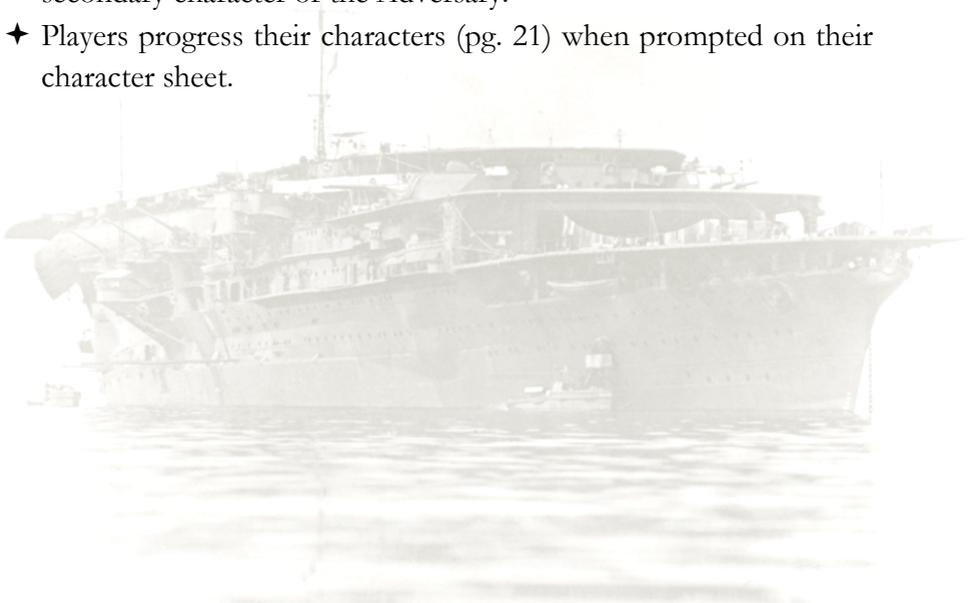
QUICK START GUIDE

Intended for story gamers already experienced with *Archipelago* or *Love in the Time of Seid*

- ✦ Read out the back cover, inside front cover and Scenario Overview. (pg. 2)
- ✦ Each player picks a character (see separate Game Materials) and reads out the front of their character sheet.
- ✦ The Adversary player reads alone the 'Playing as the Adversary' section. (pg. 23)
- ✦ Players suggest a Terrible Secret (pg. 5) for others and pick one for themselves.

Play Advice

- ✦ Each scene has a spotlight character responsible for starting and ending the scene. (pg.13)
- ✦ The other players narrate their own character, add description, play secondary characters, own their elements, add location events (inside back cover) and use the ritual phrases *More details*, *Stay with it*, *Do it differently*, *I'd like to throw something in*, *That might not be quite so easy*, *I need to clarify something*. (pg. 16)
- ✦ *That might not be quite so easy* and resolution cards (pg. 18) are only used in relation to action by a Hero, never on an action of a secondary character or the Adversary.
- ✦ Players progress their characters (pg. 21) when prompted on their character sheet.



Playing the Game

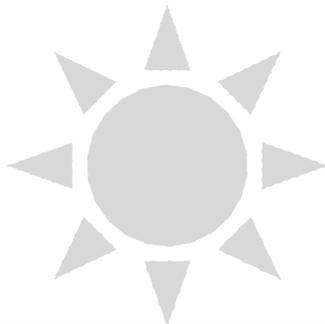
- ✦ The Champion leads the first Opening Scene where they are recruited by the Agent. (pg. 7)
- ✦ The Savage leads the second Opening Scene with the Agent.
- ✦ The Mage leads the third Opening Scene with the Agent.
- ✦ The Agent sets up and leads the progress of the expedition and its encounter with the Tsarists on the coast of Anarktica.
- ✦ The Adversary resolves the encounter and narrates the destruction of the two expeditions.
- ✦ Starting with the player to the left of the Adversary, the player describes how their Hero escaped from the doomed expedition and where he or she came ashore. (pg. 8)
- ✦ At the start of each subsequent scene, the Hero chooses to have a Journey or Rest scene (pg. 9), chooses a location and starts narrating the scene.

Final Confrontation

- ✦ When the players wish to move to the final confrontation (pg. 12), the Adversary player takes the spotlight and it remains with them until the story is resolved.

Epilogues

- ✦ Each player can provide an epilogue (pg. 12) for their character and additional a story element they owned.





Anarktica: Fate of Heroes

A Steampunk story game by Epistolary Richard

Setting developed from *Fate of Heroes* created by
Epistolary Richard, Nick Reynolds, Fiona TW & a gamer

Rules based on *Archipelago 2nd edition* by Matthijs Holter

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With thanks to:

- ✦ Matthijs Holter & Jason Morningstar for allowing use of *Archipelago* and *Love in the Time of Seid*.
- ✦ Pete for initial playtesting
- ✦ London Indie RPG Meetup for bringing the creators together

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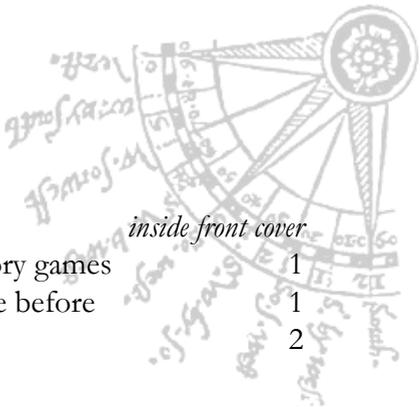
Anarktica: Fate of Heroes is a free story game and is distributed without payment to the authors or contributors. If you play and enjoy this game, please consider donating what you feel it is worth to the Mines Advisory Group at www.justgiving.com/anarktica (UK) or www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/anarktica/anarktica (US)

The Mines Advisory Group is a neutral, impartial humanitarian organisation dedicated to clearing the remnants of conflict and enabling the recovery of affected people.



RC 16th June 2012

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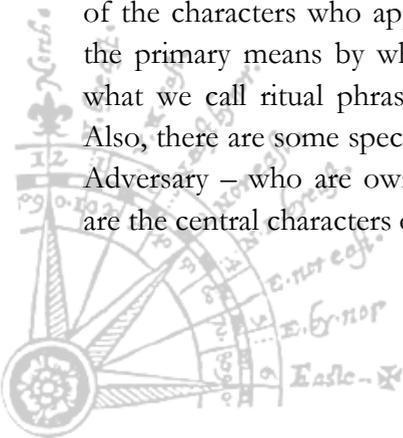
If you are versed in the ways of story games

Anarktica is a low prep, quick playing scenario based on the *Archipelago 2nd edition* rule-set by Matthijs Holter and inspired by its gaming offspring *Love in the Time of Seid* by Matthijs Holter and Jason Morningstar. It requires five players, no GM and should take three to five hours.

If you've never played a story game before

You probably played a game when you were a child called 'One-Word story'. You and some others would sit in a circle and one of you would start off with the first word of a sentence. The next child around the circle would add the second word and the one after the third. By every child adding a word, the group would soon complete the sentence, and then another sentence, and then a paragraph. If you played for long enough, eventually you would complete an entire story all together as a group. That's one of the most basic story games.

This is like that. However, instead of adding a single word, each player narrates what happens in an entire scene. Other players can help by posing questions, adding new ideas, or providing the voice of the characters who appear as the story develops. In *Anarktica*, the primary means by which other players help is through using what we call ritual phrases. There's a section on these later on. Also, there are some special characters – called the Heroes and the Adversary – who are owned and voiced by a single player. They are the central characters of the story of *Anarktica*.



Scenario Overview

Anarktica tells the story of a group of four heroes, their journey across the land of Anarktica, and their encounters with its inhabitants, creatures, monsters and mysteries. Outwardly brave and resolute, each hero is saddled with a terrible secret that tears at their soul and taints their trust in their companions until finally they encounter the Adversary and their true nature is revealed.

✦ The Setting

The setting is the coast and continent of Anarktica, a steampunk version of Antarctica. The Heroes are inhabitants of a developed world, ruled by civilized empires, but they face the last, untameable wilderness left on the planet. All the grandeur and dangers of the real world Antarctica – experienced by the great explorers of the heroic age such as Amundsen, Shackleton and Scott – are present, along with whatever fantastical creations the players wish to add.

✦ Play function

The game plays out in a series of scenes, collaboratively narrated by the players. Each scene has a ‘spotlight’ player whose character is central to that scene. The spotlight player establishes the scene and narrates the actions and thoughts of their character. All the players (including the spotlight player) narrate the other parts of the fiction, including other characters (and especially their own character).

Each player also has ownership of certain elements of the fiction as dictated by the character they’re playing.



W A R M I N G U P

While there is no GM, the game greatly benefits from having one player more familiar with the game or with story gaming in general who can introduce the game at the beginning. In the event of a tie, the privilege falls to whoever brought the game along.

Depending on the experience of the group, the introducer may have other players read aloud the preceding pages 'If you've never played a story game before' and the 'Scenario overview'.

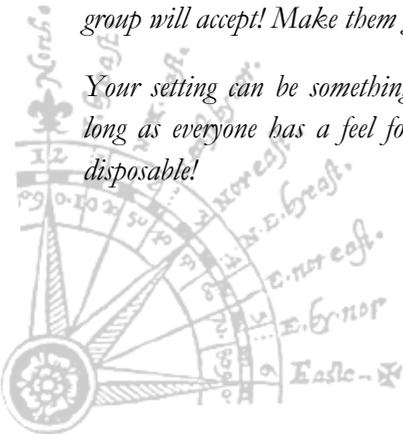
If this is the first time you play...

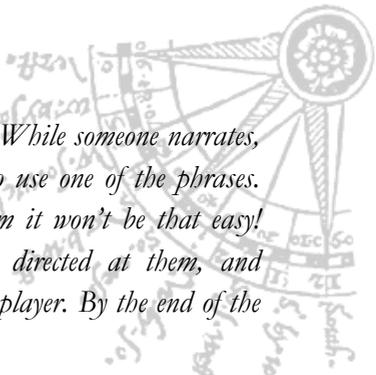
The introducing player should run a short exercise to teach the ritual phrases and ensure the players are comfortable with the material in the Play Advice chapter, particularly with their roles when their characters are in and out of the spotlight.

Explain each ritual phrase and answer questions. Then decide on a familiar setting.

Learning the rules by trying them out before the game means you can take lots of chances. Use this opportunity to push the boundaries of what you think the group will accept! Make them guide you!

Your setting can be something from a movie or TV show you all know; as long as everyone has a feel for the genre and characters it will be fine. It is disposable!





Take turns narrating stories or events in this setting. While someone narrates, the others should listen actively for an opportunity to use one of the phrases. Ask for more detail! Throw something in! Tell them it won't be that easy! Whenever someone has had two or three phrases directed at them, and acted/reacted accordingly, the turn passes to the next player. By the end of the exercise, you've all both given and received instruction.

Make sure everyone understands how they can contribute, even when their characters are not the focus of the story. This exercise may feel silly or redundant, but being comfortable with the phrases is the key to a good game.¹

Once you've completed this exercise and everyone is comfortable with the phrases, run through and answer questions on what else players can do when their character isn't in the spotlight:

- ✦ Introduce and play secondary characters
- ✦ Introduce and describe location events
- ✦ Introduce or veto items of their owned story elements

Introduce the setting

The introducing player should read out the background on the back cover and then ask another player to read aloud the page entitled 'A brief history of Alchemy' on the inside front cover.

Finally, the introducer should briefly outline the five available characters. These pieces together provide all the background a group needs to know to start getting into the game.

¹ *This section is taken from Love in the Time of Seid and is used with permission.*



SETTING UP

Choose a character

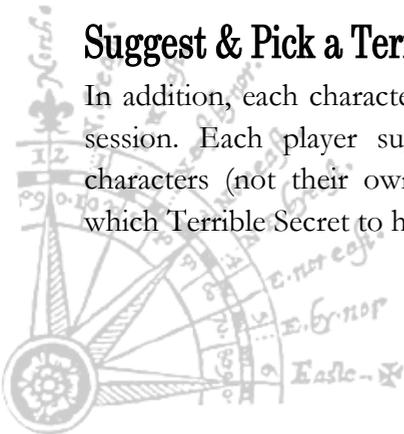
Before beginning the game, each player chooses one of the characters (see character sheets in the separate Game Materials). *Anarktica* includes five characters: the four Heroes and the Adversary. The four Heroes all play in a similar manner, while the Adversary has some special rules as detailed in the ‘Playing as the Adversary’ section below.

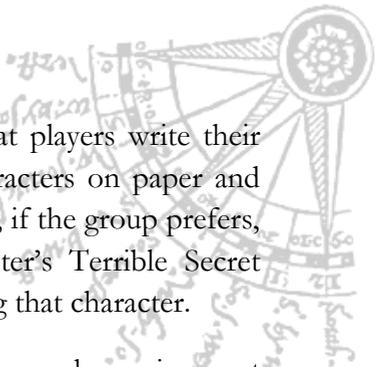
Each player reads out the front of their character sheet to the group (including their element ownership) and each Hero player gives their character a name on the back of the sheet.

The reverse of each Hero character sheet is entitled ‘Expedition Log’. Players use this to progress the Heroes through their adventure and keep a note of what’s been established in relation to their owned story elements. There’s more detail on these in ‘Progressing your character’ and ‘Story element ownership’ in the Play Advice chapter below.

Suggest & Pick a Terrible Secret

In addition, each character has a Terrible Secret particular to that session. Each player suggests a Terrible Secret for all other characters (not their own). The controlling player then decides which Terrible Secret to have for this session.





Doing this in secret is recommended, so that players write their suggested Terrible Secrets for the other characters on paper and hand it to the controlling player. Alternatively, if the group prefers, suggestions can be made openly. A character's Terrible Secret should never come from the player controlling that character.

The Adversary knows all, so if Terrible Secrets are chosen in secret each Hero should show the Terrible Secret they've chosen to the Adversary player.

Effective Terrible Secrets will inject conflict between the Heroes, destroy a relationship or introduce great danger. Examples include:

- ✦ For the Savage: You are the Champion's illegitimate child, fathered during his brutal conquest of your country.
- ✦ For the Mage: You inherited your talent as an Alchemage from an ancestor who was a follower of the Adversary.
- ✦ For the Agent: You have secret orders to forge an alliance between the Empire and the Adversary by offering one of your fellow Heroes as a blood sacrifice.

Poor Terrible Secrets are ones that are trivial, unrelated to the current story or counter to the tone of the game desired by the group. An example poor Terrible Secret for the Adversary would be that it was a pink, fluffy kitten.

It is the responsibility of each player to bring their Terrible Secret into the story. Anarktica is an unnatural land and it would not be impossible for a Hero to encounter people they last saw long ago, see visions of the past in the face of a glacier, or have their words, thoughts or fears manifest into physical beings before them.



PLAYING THE GAME

Opening Scenes

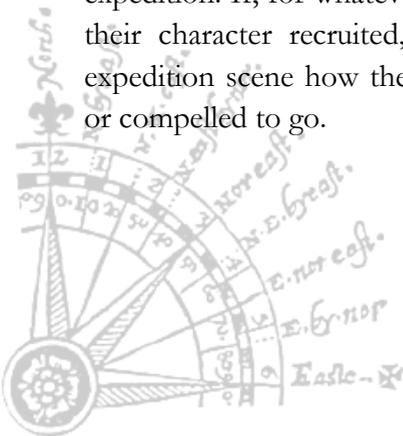
The first three scenes are short introductions to each of the Heroes, starting with the Champion, set before the expedition to Anarktica departs.

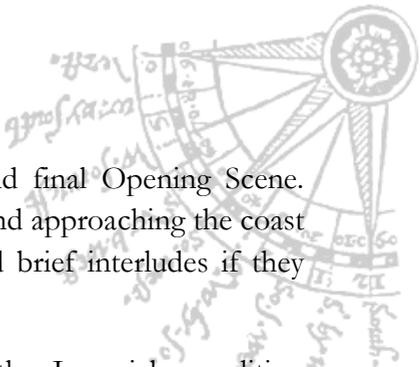
The Champion's player begins the scene describing a characterful activity for their Hero, which is then interrupted by the Agent who is there to recruit the Champion for the Anarktica expedition. The Champion and the Agent should play out the encounter, with the Agent's player using the opportunity to help define the nature of the threat that the Empire believes exists on Anarktica.

Once the Agent has successfully recruited the Champion for the Anarktica expedition, the Champion player closes the scene.

This same format is followed to have two more similar introductory scenes with first the Savage and then the Mage being recruited by the Agent.

All the Heroes should end their scene recruited to join the expedition. If, for whatever reason, a Hero's player refuses to have their character recruited, that player must then explain in the expedition scene how their character was subsequently persuaded or compelled to go.





✦ The Expedition

The Agent's player begins the fourth and final Opening Scene. They describe the expedition setting out and approaching the coast of Anarktica. The other Heroes may add brief interludes if they wish to allow their characters to interact.

The Agent player then describes how the Imperial expedition encounters a rival Tsarist expedition of similar size. The Adversary player then resolves the scene by describing how the two expeditions are destroyed. The Hero players can interject as needed to describe their attempts to resist and ultimately escape from their doomed craft. This concludes the Opening.

Anarktica

The spotlight then moves to the player on the Adversary's left, who takes the next scene, and continues on to that player's left or however the group wishes to move the spotlight. Just as in the Opening Scenes, the Adversary is never the spotlight player in this section of the story.

In their initial scene on Anarktica, the spotlight player should describe how their Hero found their way to land and where they have come ashore. It is recommended that the Heroes begin this section of the story separated from each other so that non-spotlight players can focus on describing the surroundings and the elements they own.



At the start of each of their subsequent scenes on Anarktica, the spotlight player chooses whether to have a ‘Journey’ scene or a ‘Rest’ scene.

✦ Journey scenes

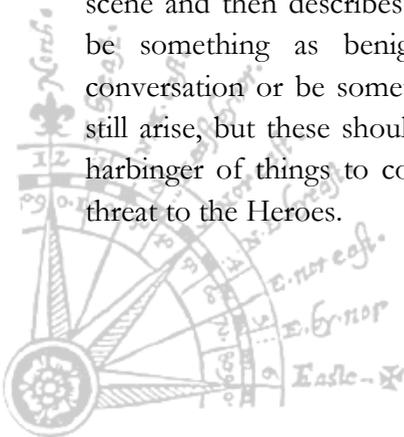
Choosing a Journey scene denotes the Hero exploring the realm of Anarktica. They must choose a specific location, set the scene, describe their progress through the location and any obstacles in their path and be ready for other players to add Location Events, threats or other aspects of the continent.

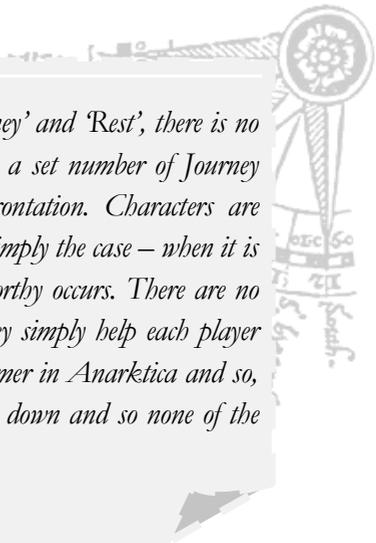
In short, choosing a Journey scene shows willingness for a scene of action, adventure and peril.

✦ Rest scenes

Choosing a Rest scene denotes the Hero taking time to recover from their previous exertions. They *may* choose a new location, but do not progress past it, or alternatively remain where they were at the end of the last Journey scene.

Choosing a Rest scene denotes an interest in having social interaction between the characters and having the drama come from within the party. Rest scenes allow the Heroes to pursue their personal agendas with each other. The spotlight player sets the scene and then describes what their character is doing. This may be something as benign as engaging another character in conversation or be something more sinister. External threats can still arise, but these should be subtle or sophisticated or merely a harbinger of things to come, rather than pose a serious physical threat to the Heroes.





Note that, while the game uses the terminology of 'Journey' and 'Rest', there is no requirement to Rest after a Journey scene, nor is there a set number of Journey scenes to have before progressing to the Final Confrontation. Characters are assumed to rest automatically when they are tired, it is simply the case – when it is not done as part of a Rest scene – that nothing noteworthy occurs. There are no specific benefits to choosing a Journey or Rest scene; they simply help each player control the game's pacing. Note also that it is high-summer in Anarktica and so, just as in the real-world Antarctica, the sun never goes down and so none of the Heroes could ever be considered truly rested!

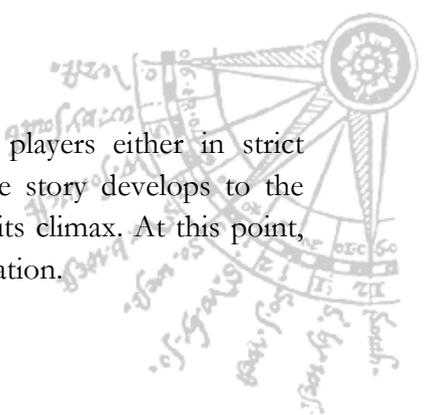
✦ Locations

A list of Locations with corresponding Location Events is included on the inside back cover. These are examples only and players should create new events and locations as they go.

✦ Reuniting the party

If the Heroes begin this section separated, it is likely that – at some point – the player will tire of their personal journey and wish their character to rejoin the others so as to further their personal agenda. Unless a Hero is captured or otherwise has their movement restricted, their player can narrate them reuniting with another character at any time irrespective of who is in the spotlight. It's recommended to have them appear at the most dramatic, exciting or inconvenient moment possible.

Once Heroes are reunited, each player continues to have their own spotlight scenes as before. The other Heroes are assumed to journey or rest alongside them unless it is narrated otherwise.



The spotlight shifts between the Hero players either in strict rotation or as the group wishes until the story develops to the point where it feels natural to draw it to its climax. At this point, the story progresses to the Final Confrontation.

Final Confrontation

In the Final Confrontation, the spotlight moves to the Adversary player and stays with them for the remainder of the game until the Epilogues. They are now responsible for setting the location, establishing the scene and responding to the Heroes' actions. While the Hero players retain their element ownership, they should look to create in coordination with the challenge that the Adversary player has designed for them to face.

Epilogues

Once the Final Confrontation has been completed, each of the players (including the Adversary player) narrates an epilogue for their character and, if they so choose, an element they owned. Epilogues should be brief and shouldn't contain any challenges, but should rather focus on the consequences of the journey on the character in their future life, or the impact that their actions on Anarktica had on subsequent developments in the world.



What do you do when you're not in the spotlight?

When your character's not in the spotlight in the scene, your role is even more important! Your job is to support the narrative being built by the spotlight player, help develop the growing storylines and to keep things interesting. Your tools are:

- ✦ Playing your own character
- ✦ Adding description
- ✦ Adding or playing secondary characters
- ✦ Adding location events in a Journey scene
- ✦ Using ritual phrases
- ✦ Owning story elements

- ✦ Playing your own character

Even when it's another player's spotlight scene, you should continue to play your character if they are present. However, when you're playing your character 'out of the spotlight' your goal is to support the narrative the spotlight player is building rather than trying to shift the focus onto your character. If they're spoiling for a fight, go for it! But if they're having some quiet introspection, don't have your character go wild just to liven things up.

- ✦ Adding description

You can always add some description of the surroundings or an item or person mentioned. Nothing more than a sentence or two. Your goal is to enrich the group's mental image with a choice observation rather than drown them in detail.



✦ Adding or playing secondary characters

You can introduce and play a suitable secondary or background characters (‘extras’) at any time. Again, remember, your goal is to support the scene and the shared storyline. Reusing a particular secondary character over one or two scenes can provide a rich environment. Having them muscle in on every scene pulls focus from our actual heroes and cheapens their storylines.

Even though one player will typically create and then play a secondary character, they aren’t owned by anyone. Any player can take them over at any point.

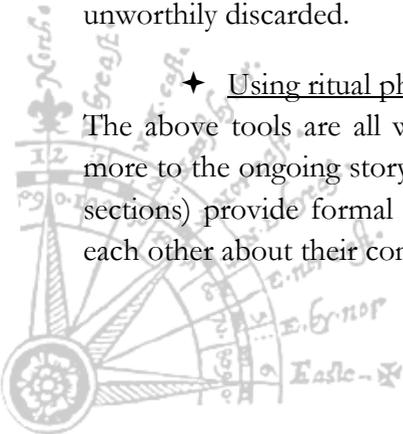
✦ Adding location events in a Journey scene

The Heroes are on a quest exploring a hostile land and will encounter dangers of both known and unnatural origin. Choosing a Journey scene, the spotlight player has shown willingness for a scene of action, adventure and peril so give it to them! Example locations and events are given in the inside back cover, but you can and should create your own.

Caution, though! Location events should be a significant source of action and additional investment in the scene. Introducing more than one or two will either stretch the scene beyond the group’s interest or result in them being briefly mentioned and then unworthily discarded.

✦ Using ritual phrases & Story element ownership

The above tools are all ways to allow a player to add something more to the ongoing storyline. These two (covered in the next two sections) provide formal means for players to communicate with each other about their contributions to aid the quality of the story.



Using Ritual Phrases

In any story game, players need to have the ability to not only make creative contributions, but also to query those made by others. This can be easy amongst friends, but awkward and imposing amongst players who don't know each other well.

The ritual phrases exist to provide a formal, understood and consistent means of communicating such creative queries between the players. They are a shared language which the players can use to help each other and improve the quality of the overall story.

There are six phrases², and anyone can use any of them at any time. These phrases are an important tool to use during the game. They should be used as instruction to make sure the story flows, that dramatic tension increases appropriately, that everyone can vividly imagine the fiction. A phrase should be received accordingly; nobody is perfect, neither player nor instructor, and acting on instruction is an act of courtesy and faith. If someone throws you a phrase you don't agree with immediately, try it out anyway - if things don't work out, the group will tell you!

More details!

...tells the player to provide more description of a person, object, location or similar. This is what makes settings and characters more real: little things like dirt under someone's fingernails, frozen reeds by a river, the silver armband that's tarnished and scratched.

² This section is taken from *Love in the Time of Seid* and is used with permission.



Stay with it!

...tells the player to make sure a situation or scene doesn't end prematurely. If someone tries to cut a tense scene and jump to the next one, for example - call "stay with it!" Embrace tension. Don't wimp out!

Do it differently!

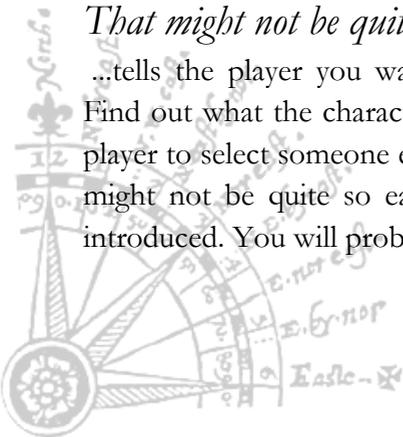
...tells the player that something feels like it's jarring. Are things suddenly going Monty Python? Or is the scene going nowhere? Rewind and try again. You're doing everyone a favour by being quality control, making sure that uninspiring stuff doesn't enter the fiction you're sharing. And you're giving the other player a chance to really shine, instead of having to stick to the half-baked thing they just produced. "Do it differently" can, of course, be phrased in whatever way your group is comfortable with - it isn't meant to be critical or confrontational, but rather to enforce the consensus on the game's tone.

I'd like to throw something in!

...tells the player that you want to narrate a short interlude or follow-up sequence. Make sure you don't steal the scene - this is just for a sentence or two.

That might not be quite so easy!

...tells the player you want someone to draw a resolution card. Find out what the character is trying to do, then ask the spotlight player to select someone else to draw a card and interpret it. "That might not be quite so easy" is a flag that you want uncertainty introduced. You will probably use it a lot!



I need to clarify something!

...tells the player or group there's something you've forgotten or something you need help understanding.



Drawing Resolution Cards

A resolution card is drawn whenever a player uses the phrase *That might not be quite so easy!* as outlined above. The resolution cards are the same as those used in *Archipelago* and *Love in the Time of Seid*. The one amendment made for *Anarktica* is that resolution cards **are only ever drawn in relation to an action taken by a Hero**.

In the event of a challenge or a conflict between a Hero and a non-Hero opponent, the resolution card is drawn in relation to what the Hero does rather than what his enemy does.

For example, should a Hero be faced with a monstrous kraken that seizes them in its tentacles and tries to swallow them. Rather than drawing a resolution card to see if the kraken succeeds in eating them, the Hero should narrate how they attempt to escape the kraken's clutches. If a player then uses *That might not be quite so easy!* then another player draws a resolution card to determine if the Hero succeeds in their attempt to escape.

This may feel artificial at times; however the resolution cards are skewed towards success rather than failure. Restricting their use to Hero players helps avoid the Heroes being easily slaughtered in the multiple deadly encounters they face. The story should be one of



breath-taking feats and narrow escapes rather than a meat-grinder where the odds ensure the Heroes are doomed to failure.

Where two Heroes are in conflict with each other, then *That might not be quite so easy!* can be used in relation to an action taken by either player.

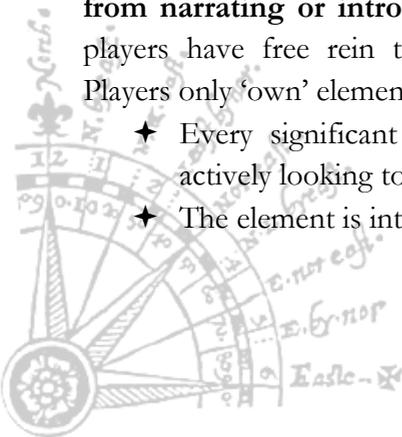
There are eight different resolution cards that can be drawn (copies can be found in the separate Game Materials). Cut them out and either paste them on stiff card to allow them to be shuffled or alternatively fold them up and place them in an envelope so they can be drawn like raffle tickets. Place the resolution card back in the mix after it's been drawn so it can be drawn again.

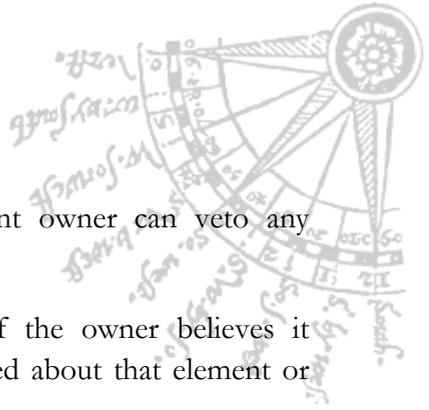
Owning Story Elements

Every player 'owns' certain elements of the fiction as defined by their character choice. As an element owner, look for a suitable opportunity to use the 'out of spotlight' tools to weave that element into the developing story.

Note that Element ownership does not prevent other players from narrating or introducing that element to the story. All players have free rein to introduce and narrate any elements. Players only 'own' elements to ensure that:

- ✦ Every significant story element has at least one player actively looking to introduce it
- ✦ The element is internally consistent.





✦ Owner veto

To provide that consistency, an element owner can veto any narration that relates to that element.

This should only be done, however, if the owner believes it contradicts what's already been established about that element or the owner's vision of the element.

For example, the Agent player owns the element Technology. If a player narrated in that a character had a satellite phone, the Agent player could veto the narration – even if the exact level of technology hadn't yet been established – because it contradicts their vision of the steampunk setting.

Note that a veto is different from saying *Do it differently!* A veto isn't used to reflect personal taste in narration and plot; it's meant to ensure that the integrity of the setting is intact. The veto should be exercised only for the means of benefitting the story as a whole.

It's okay to discuss the veto with the other players; however, the final decision rests with the element owner. Once that decision's been made, all players should go on with the game. If another player really wants a story element interpreted in a particular way then, the next time you play, they should take the respective character who owns that element.

In rare instances elements may overlap (if the party is confronted with a techno-alchemical Tsarist beast-monster). If there is a dispute over vetoes and it is truly not clear which is the dominant element, then the Adversary player makes the final decision.

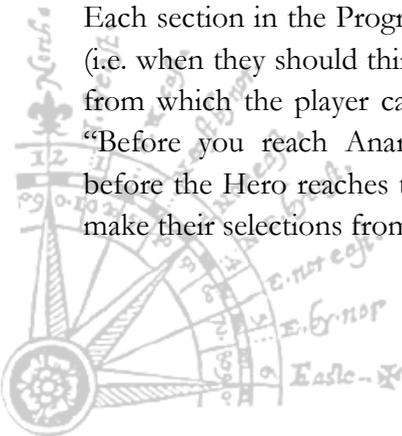


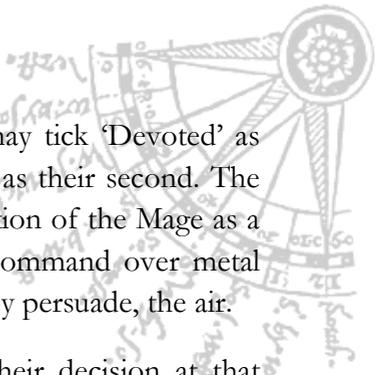
Progressing your Character

On the reverse of each character sheet there is a column entitled Character Progression.

EXPEDITION LOG	
MAGE PROGRESSION	STORY ELEMENT
NAME	AS THE MAGE YOU OWN THE ELEMENTS OF ALCHEMY & BEASTS OF ANARKTICA
BEFORE YOU REACH ANARKTICA <i>You portray yourself to others as: (select one)</i> Ambitious Devoted Enthusiastic Better than them <i>You control metal and have one additional power: (select an element and an ability over that element)</i> • Air ○ Listener • Fire ○ Talker • Water ○ Channeller	NOTES ON ALCHEMY NOTES ON BEASTS OF ANARKTICA
WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER A MEMBER OF A TRIBE OF ANARKTICA	

Each section in the Progression column gives the player a prompt (i.e. when they should think about it) and then a choice of options from which the player can select. For example, with the Prompt “Before you reach Anarktica” this means that, at some point before the Hero reaches the shore of Anarktica, the player should make their selections from the options given.





Using the Mage as an example, the player may tick ‘Devoted’ as their first option, and then ‘Air’ and ‘Talker’ as their second. The player uses these choices in their characterisation of the Mage as a devoted follower of the Champion with a command over metal and the additional ability to talk to, and thereby persuade, the air.

(Note that, while the player should make their decision at that time, they do not need to reveal what they have chosen to the rest of the group until they wish to.)

The options are typically an ability coupled with a question about the Hero’s character. Thus the player explores both their Hero’s powers and their true nature at the same time. There are no rules as to the properties or effects that each ability gives – they are only a source of inspiration for the character’s further development.

In *Anarctica* the Heroes are all experienced combatants. This is not character progression in the sense of the Heroes obtaining new abilities right there and then, rather it represents the progression of the player’s understanding of the character as the story builds and the dramatic tradition that no protagonist reveals the true extent of their power or inner nature in the story’s opening moments.

By allowing the player these options mid-adventure they can tailor their choice to best suit their ideas for the storylines that are emerging.



PLAYING AS THE ADVERSARY

Playing as the Adversary is a unique challenge within the game. The Adversary player is not a GM and doesn't control a Hero and so has few responsibilities in the early sections of the game. And yet the ultimate success or failure of the game rests on the Adversary player to provide a fitting and satisfying ending to the story developed by the group.

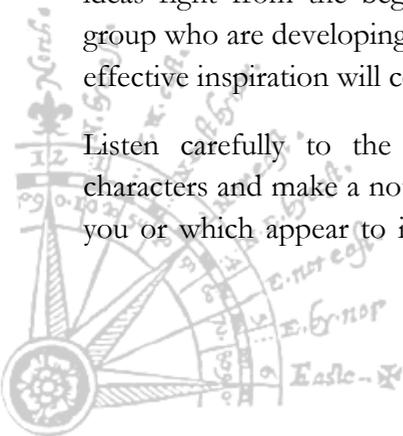
The primary goal of the Adversary player is to provide the climax to the Heroes' stories. To help you make the climax as satisfying for the group as possible you know the Heroes' secrets, you own several elements of the setting and you will control the spotlight for the final scenes.

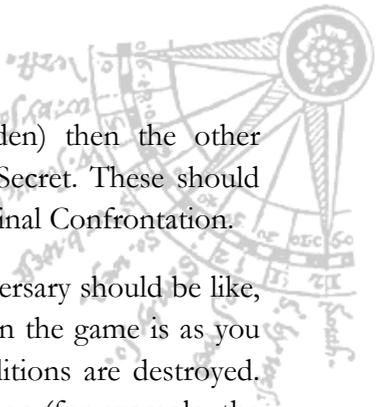
If you already have a clear idea for the Adversary, then go for it! There are no restrictions in the section below, just guidance.

Starting out

If this feels like too great a responsibility or you can't think of any ideas right from the beginning, don't worry. You are part of a group who are developing the story together and some of the most effective inspiration will come from the other players.

Listen carefully to the Hero players as they read out their characters and make a note of aspects their characters that interest you or which appear to interest them. If you're playing a 'closed





game' (where the Terrible Secrets are hidden) then the other players will show you their chosen Terrible Secret. These should be gems of inspiration to help you build the Final Confrontation.

If you don't yet have an idea of what the Adversary should be like, then start out small. Your first involvement in the game is as you describe how the Imperial and Tsarist expeditions are destroyed. Decide on a means by which this could happen (for example, the expeditions could be destroyed by a direct attack from the Adversary's forces, by a monster from the deep, by a storm or other elemental forces, by treachery within one or both expeditions).

Whatever method you pick can be a starting point as to how the Adversary can be developed further. A direct assault could lead to an Adversary with powerful armies, a monster could lead to an Adversary who has mastery over beasts, internal treachery could lead to an Adversary whose spies have infiltrated the rest of world or who can possess others, resulting in the Heroes journey being filled with paranoia and suspicion as they try to determine who they can and cannot trust.

Developing the Adversary

As the Heroes reach the coast of Anarktica and begin their journeys do not feel as though you are responsible for placing the obstacles in their path. If you do so, the group dynamic may emerge where the other players look to you to set the challenges they face in every scene, while they merely narrate the Heroes'

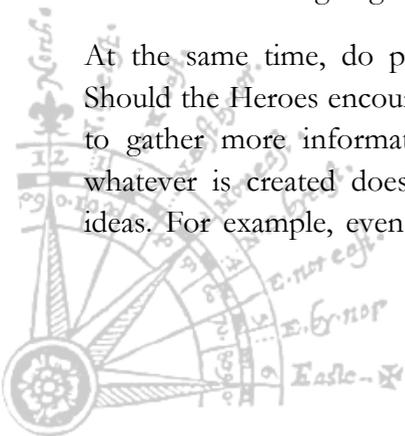


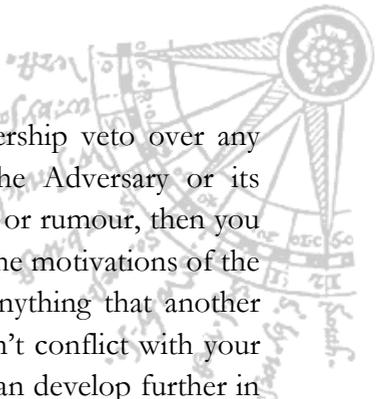
solutions. You will have effectively promoted yourself to GM and removed any responsibility the others felt to create the story.

It is the entire group's responsibility to create the challenges that each Hero will face. In the early stages of the journeys, allow the Hero players to use their narration and aspect ownership to place obstacles into each others' paths. Even if it takes a few quiet scenes without obvious external conflict, eventually the Hero players will instinctively create challenges to be overcome. The less the Adversary's influence is felt in the early scenes, the greater a sense of mystery will build. Allow the Heroes to begin to explore the vastness of Anarktica, use your regular player privileges to add small elements or secondary characters who are benevolent or at least are not immediately hostile to the Heroes, and most importantly of all... listen.

Listening to the other players, what they focus on, what they create and what they have their characters do, is a vital means to gain material for designing a satisfying Final Confrontation to end the adventure. As you get ideas for interesting plot-threads, add small pieces of the concept to scenes as hooks and see which ones the Hero players seize upon. As they demonstrate their interest, you should grow increasingly confident about adding significant elements to the ongoing storyline.

At the same time, do pay attention to your aspect ownership. Should the Heroes encounter any Anarktica natives, they will look to gather more information about the Adversary. Ensure that whatever is created does not conflict with your own emerging ideas. For example, even though the Tsarists and the Tribes are





owned by other players, you retain an ownership veto over any concrete information they possess about the Adversary or its forces. If information is presented as opinion or rumour, then you can be more flexible as the truth – as well as the motivations of the informer – can yet be created. Of course, anything that another player creates about the Adversary that doesn't conflict with your ideas can serve as great inspiration that you can develop further in the Final Confrontation.

Designing the Final Confrontation

✦ Structure

Structurally, the Final Confrontation should consist of one or a few preliminary scenes, the climax of the story and perhaps a follow-on scene before the game heads into individual epilogues. Moving to the Final Confrontation is an indicator that the group is looking to bring the story to a head and then wrap it up, so do not try to do too much. Confronting a group who has already taken their Heroes across an epic journey with the start of another huge slog is a sure way for player fatigue to set in.

If your desired Final Confrontation requires a set up over a fair number of scenes, say the Heroes are required to infiltrate a labyrinthine city or follow a trail of clues or acquire certain artefacts, then start to lay the necessary elements out in the Heroes' Journey scenes. Hopefully, this will lead to the ideal situation where the story naturally segues into the Final Confrontation as it becomes clear that you are ready to start setting scenes and bring the story to its conclusion.



The actual nature of the Final Confrontation is down to you, but it would normally consist of some supreme challenge the Heroes would have to face. This challenge can be physical, either direct combat with the Adversary, its forces, or passing through traps or barriers that require strength or skill; the challenge could be mental, incorporating puzzles or riddles and placing the resolution squarely on the abilities of the players rather than the Heroes they narrate.

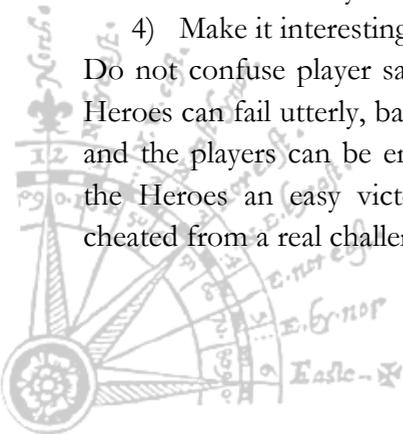
Finally, you could confront the Heroes with a moral or ethical challenge, threatening to expose their secrets, tempting them with the satisfaction of their personal ambitions, or turning them against each other.

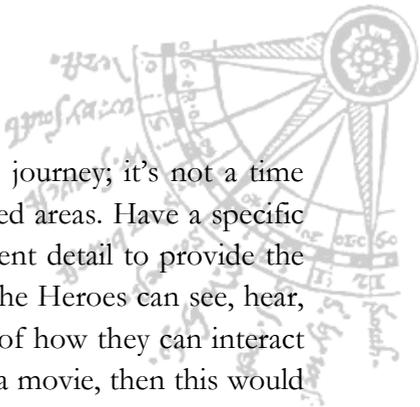
✦ Objective

Your goal for the Final Confrontation is the same as your goal for the game of providing a satisfying climax to the Heroes' stories. This can mean different things to different people, but broadly you should be looking to:

- 1) Make it cinematic
- 2) Make it personal for the group's particular interpretations of the Heroes
- 3) Bring together the disparate elements created into a coherent story
- 4) Make it interesting

Do not confuse player satisfaction with the Heroes' success. The Heroes can fail utterly, barely escaping with their lives or even not, and the players can be enormously satisfied. Conversely, handing the Heroes an easy victory will likely leave the players feeling cheated from a real challenge.





1) Cinematics

This is the conclusion of the Hero's epic journey; it's not a time for adventures to occur in vague, undefined areas. Have a specific location in mind and describe it in sufficient detail to provide the group with a clear mental image of what the Heroes can see, hear, feel and smell and to come up with ideas of how they can interact with the location themselves. If this were a movie, then this would definitely be where most of the budget is spent.

2) Making it personal

The group should feel as though this is the climax to their particular story, not a cookie-cutter climax that could finish off any session. Your primary tools to make the Final Confrontation personal are the Heroes' Terrible Secrets. Secrets that have yet to be revealed can be exposed. Secrets that have been revealed can be paid off and any conflicts between the Heroes brought to a head. None of the Heroes should emerge the same character as they arrived at Anarktica. Do not feel, though, that you must cover every single Terrible Secret. Building the confrontation around the most interesting one or two can be more effective than artificially stretching so as to hit each one.

3) Bringing the story together

Here you should be focusing on trying to make all the different stuff that's been created through the different journeys feel as though it is part of a coherent story. Keep a track of any loose ends that the Heroes create; pick those you feel most relevant and build them into the confrontation. Loose ends can include secondary characters, information the Heroes have gathered, items they have encountered or skills or other abilities that they've



developed. Say, for example, that a Hero has spent several scenes gradually gaining the trust of a native tribe who captured them and ultimately was initiated into their ranks. That tribe, or the consequences of that rite, become all the more significant if they can be tied into the Final Confrontation.

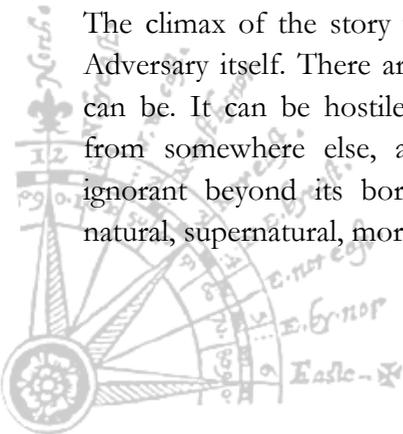
Loose ends can even be Heroes themselves if they have somehow fallen during their journeys. The Final Confrontation is an ideal time to re-introduce any of them who have been captured or incapacitated in the wastes of Anarktica.

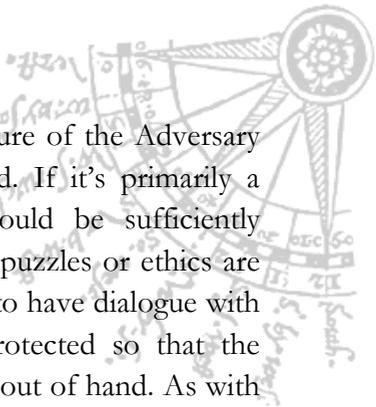
4) Making it interesting

A key component for any satisfying gameplay is for it be interesting. If you intend to confront the Heroes with any significant decision (for example, requiring them to sacrifice one of their party to ensure the others safety), then always ask yourself the question, “Is the answer to the decision obvious?” If yes, then it will likely not be very interesting. Ensuring that there are pros and cons to any decision is a good way to help it be interesting. If you find the Heroes arguing or agonising over a choice they have to make then it’s likely you’ve made it interesting.

The Adversary

The climax of the story will often include an appearance by the Adversary itself. There are no restrictions on what the Adversary can be. It can be hostile, benevolent, native to Anarktica or be from somewhere else, all-knowing about the world or be as ignorant beyond its borders as the world is about Anarktica, natural, supernatural, mortal, immortal, or may not even exist.





You should only look to ensure that the nature of the Adversary fits the Final Confrontation you've designed. If it's primarily a physical challenge, then the Adversary should be sufficiently powerful and yet still able to be defeated. If puzzles or ethics are involved and the Adversary needs to be able to have dialogue with the Heroes, then it must be sufficiently protected so that the Heroes either cannot or do not wish to kill it out of hand. As with all fantastical adventuring, always be aware that the Heroes may well choose the most direct, and bloody, resolution to even the most byzantine puzzle placed before them.

Every Final Confrontation should include the possibility of the Heroes succeeding in defeating the Adversary in some manner. However, defeat should not be limited to killing the Adversary off. The Adversary can be defeated (and the Heroes thereby succeed) by destroying or removing something or someone it values. It can be defeated by delaying or thwarting its plans for the rest of the world. The Heroes can even succeed by escaping with some vital piece of information that will enable the world's armies a chance to defeat the Adversary in the future.

Heroes can sometimes be hell-bent on destroying their enemy if they believe that's the only way they can succeed. If you do want to introduce different methods of victory then make it clear to the group. Players can only play the game they know they're playing. If you make it clear and they still ignore what you say and carry on, determined to take-down an immortal, invincible Adversary, then at least they can't say they weren't warned.

GAME ORDER SUMMARY

Setting Up

- ✦ The players warm up and read out the 3 background sections
- ✦ Each player chooses a character and names them
- ✦ Each player reads out their character sheet to the group
- ✦ The Adversary player should read to themselves the 'Playing as the Adversary' section
- ✦ Each player (including the Adversary), either in secret or in the open, chooses a Terrible Secret for their character from those suggested by the other players. The Hero players show the Adversary their chosen Terrible Secret.

Playing the Game

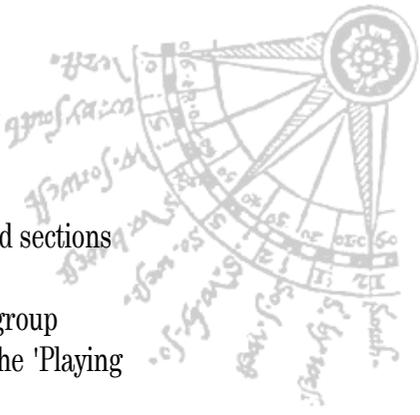
- ✦ The Champion leads the first Opening Scene where they are recruited by the Agent
- ✦ The Savage leads the second Opening Scene with the Agent
- ✦ The Mage leads the third Opening Scene with the Agent
- ✦ The Agent sets up and leads the progress of the expedition and its encounter with the Tsarists on the coast of Anarktica
- ✦ The Adversary resolves the encounter and narrates the destruction of the two expeditions
- ✦ Starting with the player to the left of the Adversary, the Heroes describe their escape from the doomed expedition and where they came ashore.
- ✦ At the start of each subsequent scene, the Hero chooses to have a Journey or Rest scene, chooses a location and narrates the scene
- ✦ The other players add Location Events, threats, secondary characters and environment.

Final Confrontation

Epilogues



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The Mines Advisory Group is a neutral, impartial humanitarian organisation dedicated to clearing the remnants of conflict and enabling the recovery of affected people.



Coast & Shipwreck

- Assignment of blame
- Aerial attack
- Some alchemical act needs to be performed
- A half-burnt document is discovered

The Wastes

- One of the party endangers the rest as a result of an element
- The Adversary takes control of the weather
- One of the Heroes encounters someone from their past

The Iceberg Sea

- A Hero falls into the depths as a result of an element
- The Adversary demonstrates their power
- The Icebergs are home to a race of creatures

The Craggs

- The party is ambushed by a band of the Adversary's forces
- Remains of an earlier expedition are found
- Two characters are gripped by carnal passion

The Glacial Temple

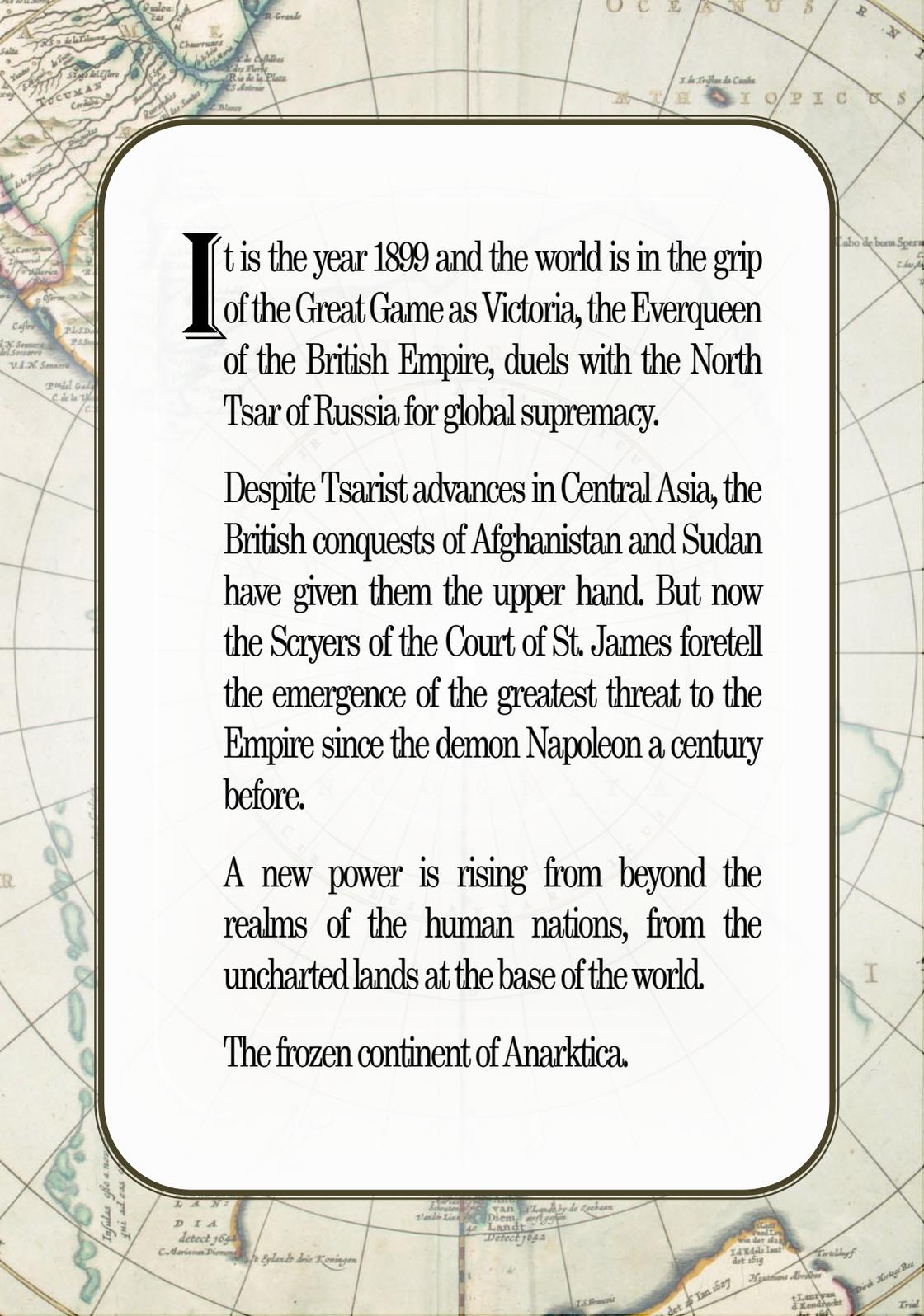
- The Adversary sends an envoy
- A Hero has a vision of a route out of the Adversary's realm
- The Temple lives

The Hidden City

- Two tribes settle their differences
- Leadership is challenged
- A Hero has something of value stolen

The Inhuman Forest

- The party discovers how the Adversary punishes failure
- A Hero chooses between mercy and their own self-interest



It is the year 1899 and the world is in the grip of the Great Game as Victoria, the Everqueen of the British Empire, duels with the North Tsar of Russia for global supremacy.

Despite Tsarist advances in Central Asia, the British conquests of Afghanistan and Sudan have given them the upper hand. But now the Scryers of the Court of St. James foretell the emergence of the greatest threat to the Empire since the demon Napoleon a century before.

A new power is rising from beyond the realms of the human nations, from the uncharted lands at the base of the world.

The frozen continent of Anarktica.