

Instant GM

A Bag of Tricks



by Ramsey “Tome Wyrms” Lundock

Edited by Wayne Tonjes

Avalon Games



Instant GM A Bag of Tricks

by Ramsey "Tome Wyrms" Lundock
Edited by Wayne Tonjes

Contents

Introduction	1
1) Plot Seeds	1
Writing with Plot Seeds	1
Using Plot Seeds to Prepare for a Game	2
GMing with Plot Seeds	2
Example Plot Seeds	3
2) Stock Characters	7
Stock Character Library	7
3) Rakugo Props	15
Windbreaker	15
Baseball Cap	16
Pen	17
4) Conclusion	17

An Avalon Games Product, All rights reserved, Version 2.0, 2010

All comments, suggestions and contacts can be made at...

Avalon Games Company, avalon@comstar-games.com

Or visit

Avalon Games at...

www.avalon-games.com



Introduction

The players have to constantly adlib and adapt to plot developments. If they become overwhelmed, it is "in character" to stop and discuss the situation with each other. The Game Master on the other hand has no confidants. He is expected to react instantly to what the players describe their characters doing.

The typical GM spends hours preparing before a game; planning for everything the characters might try. But no matter how much you prepare, the only sure bet is that the players will think of something you didn't. In fact the more material you prepare, the more likely it is that one of the players will latch on to an incidental detail and take off in an unexpected direction faster than you can say "Red Herring."

Every Game Master has his own style. But all of them need to be able to think on their feet. Improvising during a game is easier if you are ready to step away from the written game and go in the direction the players want to try. Remember the player characters are the main characters in the story you are telling. By definition the plot is what they do, not what you planned for them. You want to gently guide the group 'back on track' without letting them realize that they ever deviated from the script.

There are three techniques which can improve your improvisation behind the GM screen: Plot Seeds, Stock Characters, and Rakugo Props. (On a personal note: Some of the best games I've ever run, I've shown up at the table armed only with this bag of tricks and no fore planning to get in the way.)



1) Plot Seeds

Plot seeds are generic plots, suitable for any genre. They're no more than a single sentence, often only a phrase, that sums up the goal of the adventure and the type of obstacles separating the heroes from that goal.

Plot seeds are helpful for writing, preparing for, or running a game. They give you an easy way to remind yourself how the adventure is supposed to develop. Keeping the Plot Seed in mind while you write creates an adventure more consistent in tone and pace. Behind the GM screen, the Plot Seed reminds you not only what track to aim the players, but what are the appropriate ways to guide them, so that they make the right decision on their own.

Writing with Plot Seeds

When writing with Plot Seeds, choose one you think your group will enjoy. Next decide how it will work in the genre in which your game is set. The Plot Seed "Kill the Monster" probably means an alien-nasty in a SF game, a bear, alligator, or big cat in a realistic modern setting, and some form of ghoul or ghost for a horror game.

Once you have this in place, think of reasons why the characters would become involved in this type of plot. This gives you a chance to customize to your group if you know them very well: a rogue who would never lift a finger to save a princess from the space pirates, might leap into action if it's his girlfriend or younger sister who was taken to the secret asteroid base. Both scenarios are still the Plot Seed of "Save the Princess."

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of making the Plot Seed relevant to the player characters. The standard way to get the characters involved is to have someone hire them. Since this one is practically fool proof, it has been overused to the point of comedy. You don't have to write a generic plot. You know your players and their characters. Think of some way to get them involved. Even something as simple as having one of the characters inherit a haunted house that needs exorcising can make the players interested in an otherwise "standard" adventure.

The next step is to determine what type of challenges keeps the heroes from achieving their goal from the onset. Do they have to hurry? investigate? fight? deceive? This is another excellent opportunity to customize the adventure to your group. If one of the characters is a computer expert, throw him a computerized lock or



**All games available at
(Click on the name to visit their site)**

RPGNow.com

e23.sjgames.com

wargamedownloads.com

wargamevault.com

Yourgamesnow.com

Drivethrustuff.com



**Click here for a free
catalog and coupon
book. Inside you will
find links to all of our
great games and some
coupons for 20% or
more off selected
games.**

If you like this product, try other games from Avalon Games

Arcanum

An exciting adventure game of magic, glory and exploration. Set for 2 or more players, the game uses a unique chip system to resolve all events and encounters. Now with four great expansions.

Board Games

Avalon makes some great board games, great games at a great price. Arcanum, Mystic Adventures, Dragon Lords and Junkyard Wars are but a few of our great titles.

Battle Tiles

Battle Tiles, Avalon Games, is a fun, and exciting way to improve your gaming experience. Use these high quality map tiles to create new and challenging battle arenas for your miniature gaming, or use them to create maps for role playing games of all types.

Each square is set to a 1" to 5 foot scale, and each tile is created so you can interconnect them with other tiles to create massive settings for adventure and battle.

At a cost of less than fifty cents a page, and hundreds of possible combinations, you can't go wrong with Battle Tiles, so get started and have a battle to remember.

Avalon Clip Art

Avalon has tons of artwork, all ready for you to use. Great art for a great price is our goal, so grab a handful right away.

Character Portraits

Need a fast picture of what your character looks like. These professional, full color works will fit the bill.

Each set comes with 10 full color portraits of different fantasy characters, each suitable for use in all of the most popular role-playing games.

Sets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are all ready for download, so go get 'em.

Mini-Games

Avalon Games is happy to offer tons of little games, that we like to call Mini-Games, and with over 30 titles, you are sure to find one or more games that will blow your mind. Little, however, does not mean lame. No, these are great gaming gems, just in small bite sized forms. Fun, fast and cheap, they are a great way to get some gaming fun into a short block of time. Have a look, you might be surprised at what you find.

Worlds of Wonder

Worlds of Wonder is a fast, simple to play RPG system designed for use by advanced players who wish to create detailed characters without having to roll on endless charts and deal with endless rules.

After 30+ years of playing, running and designing games, be they RPG's or board games, we at Avalon have come to one conclusion. Its not the game's rules that make it enjoyable, but the people you play with. With that in mind, Worlds of Wonder takes the most important aspect of any RPG, the character creation, and tries to offer players, and their GM, the tools needed to make the time spent playing together well worth the time spent creating the characters.

Worlds of Wonder Expansions

Want more Worlds of Wonder? Try one of the many expansions for the system. More monsters, foes, magic, skill sets and gaming stuff to keep you occupied for weeks, months, hell maybe for a lifetime. Ever expanding, the WoW system is made for gaming fun, so don't wait, have an adventure and enter Worlds of Wonder.

Arcana

Arcana is generic world, designed for use with any Fantasy RPG System, and so the information presented here and in other Arcana expansions will of course be a bit vague as to stats, levels and powers. The intention is to give the GM and players a world rich in personality, history and depth, one where they can seek adventure, but use any RPG system they feel most conferrable with.

The basics of the game world are presented here in the core book, but as expansions are released, the complexity of the world will grow as more and more of its history, dangers and wonders are explored. When it is all said and done, Arcana will become a vast world of detailed and expansive depth, one where that you and your friends can full explore.

Game Geek

Avalon's Monthly game magazine, inside you will find tons of gaming goodness, free games, add on materials for many of Avalon's titles, and a monthly sections dedicated to S&G, Battle Axe and Arcana. Great game stuff each and every month.

**Avalon is a proud participant of Kiva,
making loans that change lives.**



loans that
change lives

S & G Battle System

Avalon's premier game system the S&G battle system allows you to play skirmish level engagements, and do so with a fast, easy to learn system that also allows for endless expansions and genres. With S&G you can fight battles between fantasy based elves and orcs, or blast off into the cold hard future with space marines and aliens.

2

Warlord Grom



2

4

Strength 3

Speed 8 / 1

Movement 4

Adrenal 4

Will 4

Health



Weapons and Armor

Weapons	As mod	Damage mod	Notes
Scimitar	-1	+1	-
Dagger	+0	-1	-


Special Abilities

- 1. Savage Blow (Attack, 3)**
 Grom can make a single savage attack, often killing a foe outright with a single blow of his deadly scimitar. You must declare this ability is being used before Attack Dice are rolled. On a single attack, Grom may add +2 Attack Dice to his total for that attack. (With no limit to the number of dice that can be rolled)
- 2. Command (Move, 2)**
 Grom may use his loud demanding bellows to command other orcs near by. When this ability is used, Grom may activate any one orc character, who is within five squares. This activated character may perform one action. (Note that the character may still take their normal actions when their turn comes up.) Gram may perform this ability but once a turn.
- 3. Shatter Shield (Attack, 1)**
 Grom often shatters shields and weapons with his mighty blows. Declare this ability before the Attack Dice are rolled. If Grom scores a hit, instead of doing any damage, he may shatter, and thus destroy, a foe's readied weapon or shield (Your choice.) If the foe does not have a readied weapon or shield, then this ability has no effect.


Magical items gain a save. Roll 1D6, and on a roll of 6+, the item resists the effect. Per five points of the item's cost, over the first five points, adds an extra +1 to the die roll is gained.




Wolf




Kir




Sie







Night Stalker



Major Glory



Lamia



Gyea

Battle Axe is a simple to play tabletop system for skirmish level battles. Using cards instead of dice, you will find the game to be less luck based and much more tactical in nature. The rules and cards provide here will be enough to get you started, and new characters and rule expansions are on the way so you can continue to increase both the size and composition of your War Bands.



OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document Copyright 2000-2003, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich baker, Andy Collins, David noonan, Rich Redman, Bruce R. Cordell, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Instant GM Copyright 2006 ComStar Media, LLC; Author Ramsey Lundock.

END OF LICENSE