

Archipelago in the Midnight Sea

Introduction

This game is about a place that doesn't exist. More importantly it's about the people in a place that doesn't exist. When we talk about people that don't exist in places that don't exist it gives us the freedom to talk about ourselves. This game is ultimately about who we are as creative, passionate beings.

Each player will need a sheet of paper, something to write with and 5 Fudge dice (ordinary cube dice with two +s, two -s, and two 0s instead of numbers). One player will need to be the Game Master. The Game Master is responsible for putting the characters of the other players into situations that challenge the passions of those characters. The players are responsible for fighting for those same passions.

The Place That Doesn't Exist

Far, far, off the coast of any mainland there's a patch of water that is so deep that it's as black as the midnight sky. In the middle of this midnight sea there's a large and varied collection of islands. Some say these islands are really the broken off tops of pillars from the architecture of some underwater race of giants. But of course, the sea is so deep that no one has ever been down more than a few feet.

Someone once lived here because the islands are dotted with ruins that some say go down as deep as the sea itself. Some even say that a few of the Ancients who built the ruins are still alive and wander the islands looking for like themselves. But most likely they destroyed themselves with their own terrible magic.

No one knows how long after the Ancients the natives appeared. No one even knows where they came from. The natives spent many generations developing their tribal culture and practicing their shamanistic magic. Tribes merged and tribes died off, sometimes through marriage and sometimes through war. That is the way of people.

Then the explorers from the west came. They came with their galleons and guns and necromancy. Some came to trade in peace. Some came to conquer. All came to take the riches of the Ancient ruins home to impress their kings and queens. Riches some tribes considered sacred treasures of the earth.

After but a short decade of trading and conquering, of agreements and misunderstanding, of inter-marriage and genocide one tribe decided they'd had enough. A great spell was cast and about 100 miles off the cost of the furthest island a great wall of fire rose from the midnight sea. The wall of fire completely encircled the island chain. For better or for worse the natives and settlers were trapped with each other. But no more scared treasures would leave the archipelago. Many tried to leave and many perished with their ships in flames.

When it was clear that there was no chance of returning home the heads of the noble families from the west got together and divided up the islands, the peasants and the native tribes. It is not human nature to be satisfied with what one owns even in the isolated archipelago there is more to be had. And so the galleons still sail between the islands, trading and plundering. The families merge and families die off, sometimes through marriage and sometime through war. That is the way of people.

Life is complex in the archipelago of the midnight sea. Peasants struggle to live their harsh colonial lives, natives struggle to preserve their tribal culture and the nobles fight for the purity of their bloodlines and if the rumors are true then Ancients walk among it all. Sometimes this complexity gets to people and they choose to leave it all behind. A peasant takes off to seek a higher fortune than his lot in life. A native abandon's his tribe. A noble forsakes the politics of his family. These people have chosen independence from the culture that spawned them. The world has many names for these people: Adventurers, Highwaymen, Bandits, Pirates, Wanderer, Gypsies. These individuals form small, often temporary, communities around their own ideals. These communities merge and die off, sometimes through marriage and sometimes through war. That is the way of people.

The People That Don't Exist

This game is about playing people from the archipelago in the midnight sea. Every player who is not the Game Master needs to create a character. They will be responsible for making decisions and declaring actions for this character.

The first step in this process is deciding the character's Origin. A character's Origin is the culture he comes from. There are four Origins to choose from.

Colonist – The character comes from peasant stock among the western colonists.

Noble – The character comes from one of the noble families that control the islands.

Native – The character comes from one of the native tribes.

Ancient – The character is one of the last remaining builders of the ancient ruins.

In addition to one of the four basic Origins the play may optionally add the qualifier:

Independent. An exception is that an Ancient character **MUST** take the qualifier Independent.

Independent means that the character has in some way broken away from his Origin. This does not mean the character has no ties or obligations to those from his Origin, not does it mean the character is a total loner. In fact, it is very likely that the character has built up his own sub-culture around him. The player should identify what form the character's Independence takes.

Once the character's Origin is settled the player should create an Occupation for the character. An Occupation is a word or phrase that is representative of the character's skill set. This can be what the character does for a living but it doesn't have to be. Even bored rich nobles have hobbies. Characters that have the Independent qualifier should create two Occupations. People who wander the world tend to pick things up along the way.

Now that the player has some idea of who his character is it's time to create the character's Passion. A character's Passion is the one all encompassing thing that drives the character into motion. It should be something concrete and something that is obtainable within the confines of a single story.

It is vitally important that the player have some personal connection or sympathy for the character's Passion. This is because it is the player's primary responsibility to fight for the character's Passion. A central conceit of this game is that failure is most emotionally rewarding when it is *least* wanted by the player. A player knows he has found the right Passion for his character when it would be personally upsetting to see the character fail to achieve it.

Bad Passions

"Prove to the world that I am a slave to no man."

"Protect my men from all harm."

"Live up to the ideals and honors of my family."

Good Passions

"Avenge my father's murder."

"Find the totem stolen from my tribe."

"Win the heart of my lady fair."

The next step is to assign numerical values to the character's three basic statistics. The three stats are Physical, Social and Magic. The player simply divides 8 points among these three. They can be zero but no higher than five. A character that has a Native Origin gets a free +1 to Physical. A character that has a Noble Origin gets a free +1 to Social. A character that has an Ancient Origin gets a free +1 to Magic. A character with a Colonist Origin gains no bonus. The use of these stats is described in detail later.

After assigning the numbers the player should create a Style for each of the three stats. A Style is a short word or phrase that is generally descriptive of the look and feel of the character when he is taking actions within the scope of the statistic. "Manipulative" might be a good Style for Social and "Elemental Shamanism" a good Style for Magic as some examples.

This is the point where the player momentarily stops considering the character wholly in internal terms and consider the character's greater setting context. The player should create an initial Situation for his character. A Situation is an event that either just happened to the character is happening to the character right as play begins. "I have just been taken prisoner by a native tribe." or "My ship is under attack by the dread pirate Captain Regan" are good initial Situations. How closely the initial situation is tied in with the character's Passion is up to the player.

Finally the player should create a list of Nouns. Nouns are the people, places and things external to his character but are integral to the character concept. Consider the character's Origin, Occupation, Passion and initial Situation carefully and note down all the elements that relevant to those concepts. Three to five nouns per character is a good number. At this point the players are ready for play.

Preparation

Before the first session of play the Game Master needs to organize all the Nouns on the player's sheets into a coherent starting situation. He should consider the People listed and flesh out their motivations and establish relationships between them. He should look at any Things listed and consider who else might value them. He should look at any Places and consider who else might come from or use such a location. It is perfectly okay for the GM to create new Nouns out of whole cloth to flesh out this starting situation.

The most important thing the GM should consider is how these Nouns interact with the characters' Passions. Not just the Passion of the character the Noun comes from but ALL the characters' Passions. Whenever possible the GM should angle the Noun's to "speak" the characters' Passions in some way, perhaps as a direct adversary or rival, perhaps as an ally or perhaps even as a presented alternative passion to pursue.

In addition to positioning the Nouns relative to the character's passions the goal of this process is to cross pollinate the characters' situations. Since the Nouns will be inter-connected across characters so will the character's actions. In the end the GM should be prepared to play the Nouns with as much passion, verve and gusto as the players are expected to play to their character's Passions.

The GM should assign Origins, Occupations and Physical, Social and Magic scores to any People as if he were making them in character creation.

Play Structure

Play happens as a sequence of scenes. It's the GM's job to place the characters into scenes by describing who is present and what is going on. The purpose of scenes is to confront the players with situations that speak to their characters' Passion. A good scene provides the player with the opportunity for his character to make a choice and take concrete action that addresses his Passion.

The first scene for each character is, of course, their initial Situation defined during character creation. During scenes the GM describes the decisions and actions of those external to the characters controlled by the players. Players are of course responsible for the decisions and actions of their own characters with a scene. Finally the GM has authority over when a scene ends. Players may request scenes either explicitly or implicitly (usually by announcing a character's course of action that warrants its own scene) but the GM retains editorial authority over the sequence of scenes.

Conflict

Within a scene a conflict arises when two or more characters take pro-active actions to achieve incompatible goals. This game uses dice to resolve these conflicts of interest. The first step in

this process is to identify the conflict as Simple or Complex. The GM has final say over which kind of conflict is applicable.

Simple Conflict

The key to a simple conflict is that only one of the characters involved can accomplish their goal. Therefore it is most often used when there are only two people involved and one person simply wants to stop the other person from doing something. However, in rare cases more people can be involved such as in a three way race where only one person can win the race.

Each player whose character is involved in the conflict should decide which base stat they are using based on what action the character is taking. Fighting would be Physical while intimidation would be Social. (Magic is a special case discussed in its own section for now stick to Physical and Social).

Each player then rolls their five Fudge dice and adds the result to the value of the stat they are using. If the action the character is taking is specific to a character's Occupation he gains a +1 on the roll. The winner is whoever rolls highest and that player's character is considered to have the momentary advantage. Ties are settled by whoever has the higher base stat score. Further ties are settled by re-rolling.

The loser has the option of pushing the conflict into a second round. He does so by describing his character taking a follow up action that represents a change in tactics or approach to the conflict. He then re-rolls any dice which did not contribute concrete values to initial roll (i.e. 0s and +/- pairs). The initial winner re-rolls all the dice he rolled this round (he has the advantage after all).

This process is repeated until the current loser has no dice to re-roll or accepts defeat. The character of the player who wins the final round accomplishes his goal and everyone else does not. The group collectively describes the outcome.

Example

Robert's character Antonio is chasing a bandit through the back alley's of a city. The GM decides this is a simple conflict, either the bandit gets away or he doesn't. Since this a chase Robert rolls his 5 fudge dice and gets (+,0,+,-,+). He adds that to his base Physical score of 3 for a total of 5. The GM rolls five fudge dice for the bandit and gets (+,+,+, 0, 0). He adds that to base bandit's Physical score of 2 for a total of 5. This would be a tie that goes to Antonio because his base score of 3 beats the bandit's base score of 2. However, the bandit's Occupation is Street-wise. Since the chase is taking place in back-alleys he gets a free +1 raising his total to 6 giving him the advantage.

Robert decides he wants to push things into another round. He describes Antonio leaping up onto the roof of a nearby building and leaping from rooftop to rooftop in the hopes of cutting the bandit off. He re-rolls three of his dice (the 0 and the +/- pair). The bandit re-rolls all of his dice.

This time Robert rolls (+,+, 0) which he adds to his base score of 3 for another total of 5. The GM rolls(-,-, 0, 0) which he adds to the bandit's base score of 2 for a total of -1. He still gains his Occupation bonus raising that total to 0. It seems that Antonio is gaining on the bandit across the rooftops. The GM decides to push things into a third round. He describes the bandit climbing through a window into a nearby house hoping to find a hiding place. He re-rolls the two dice that came up zero (the minuses might not have helped but they contributed concrete values). Robert re-rolls the three dice he rolled this round.

Robert rolls (+, 0, -) and adds that his base score giving him a total of 3. The GM rolls (-,-) and even with the Occupation bonus the poor bandit scores only a total of 1. The GM has no more dice to re-roll so the conflict is over. Note: It could have ended earlier if at any point the current loser had decided to not push on into another round. The group decides that Antonio finds the bandit cowering in the corner of near by closet.

Consequences for Simple Conflicts

Conflicts by their very nature transform the situation within the developing fiction. Sometimes those changes are sufficient consequence enough. If that's the case then the game simply proceeds from there.

However, sometimes it seems like something more should happen. In the case where it seems appropriate after a conflict that the losing character should be physically injured or exhausted then the winner may inflict a number of Physical Hits on the character equal to the number of rounds the conflict went. The effects of Physical Hits are described in more detail later. In the above example Robert may wish to inflict three Physical Hits on the bandit representing his exhaustion from the chase.

Many Simple Conflicts will be about attempting to influence the behaviors of others. It is important to note that the results of a conflict can not force a character to take a specific action. At the end of Simple Conflict where the winner is attempting influence the behavior of the loser the loser has a choice. He can either comply with the behavior OR he can allow the winner to "bank" a number of Social Hits equal to the number of rounds the conflict went. When banking Social Hits the player should note who the Social Hits effect (the loser of the conflict) and the source of the Social Hits (what the conflict was about). The banking player may then inflict those Social Hits on that character at a later date by making the source relevant to the new conflict. The effects of Social Hits are described in more detail later.

Example

Robert's character Antonio is confronting his wife over the fate their child. Antonio wants his wife to turn over the kid to him for his own safety and his wife thinks he will be safer with her. They roll this out as a Simple Conflict and after two rounds Antonio wins.

The GM (playing the wife) has a choice. He can either have the wife turn the kid over to Antonio or he can allow Robert to bank two Social Hits against Antonio's wife for later use. Robert might

very well use them immediately if he chooses to have Antonio try to take the kid by force from his wife.

Complex Conflict

A Complex Conflict happens when multiple participants are trying to achieve multiple goals that could all succeed or fail independently. Often Complex Conflicts involve three or more participants however sometimes it makes sense to treat a Simple Conflict like a Complex Conflict if you want more detailing or the actions being taken are particularly dangerous to those involved. For example, a duel might look like a Simple Conflict however because both characters might sustain injury irregardless of who wins it might be worth running it as a Complex Conflict. The GM has final say over whether a situation warrants a Complex Conflict.

The first thing that happens is that everyone declares openly what actions their characters will be taking. Like Simple Conflicts these actions are evaluated to see which base statistic the rolled dice will be added to. Everyone then rolls their five fudge dice simultaneously and adds the result to the value of their base statistic. Like Simple Conflicts those whose declared actions fall within their Occupation gain a +1.

The character's actions occur in order from highest rolls to lowest rolls with the value of the base scores breaking ties and re-rolling as necessary until there are no total ties. When a character's action occurs the target decides which base statistic is appropriate for his defense (this does not have to be the same score as his declared action). He then re-rolls any non-contributing dice (0s, and +/- pairs) from the *last* roll he made this round and adds it to the value of the base statistic he is defending with. The +1 Occupation bonus applies to defensive actions as well.

In Complex Conflict, Consequences are evaluated on an action by action basis instead of at the end of the entire exchange. If the fictional change in the situation is sufficient then accept that proceed from there. However, if the action of a successful aggressor was an attempt to cause physical injury or stress then the loser subtracts his defense roll from the aggressor's action roll and takes the difference in Physical Hits.

If the action of a successful aggressor was an attempt to influence the character in some way then the loser subtracts his defense roll from the aggressor's action roll and takes the difference in Social Hits. This happen immediately, irregardless of whether the character chooses to comply with the influence.

Hits

Hits (both Physical and Social) are penalties that first come off the number of dice the player is rolling and then off the base statistic of the action. The difference between a Physical Hit and Social Hits is that Physical Hits persist from action to action and often scene to scene while Social Hits affect the next roll the player makes only. Physical Hits and Social Hits stack and effect ALL rolls irregardless of which base statistic is being used.

If a player finds that he has a total number of Hits equal to or greater than 5 (for his dice) the character can still act but the total value for his “roll” is imply his base statistic minus the number of Hits over 5 (since Hits eat dice first). This can result in a negative number which is fine. If part of those Hits come from Social Hits this counts as the “roll” they affect and go away.

If a player finds that he has a total number of Physical Hits equal to or greater than 5 (for his dice) plus his Physical base statistic then his character collapses into unconsciousness and might even be dead. Assuming the character isn't dead the GM frames a new situation describing the circumstances of the character's recovery which might very well be in a rival's dungeon.

Social Hits go away either after they affect a single die roll or at the end of a scene.

Physical Hits recover much more circumstantially but in general they go away at a rate of one per scene.

Example

Antonio's son, Rudolph, hates his father. Robert declares that Antonio is trying to pick up his son. The GM declares that Rudolph is trying to stab Antonia with a knife. He also declares that Antonio's wife, Carmen is shouting, “No! Don't!” at Rudolph.

No one has any Hits so everyone rolls their five fudge dice. The GM rolls two sets: one for Rudolph and one for Carmen. Robert rolls (+, +, +, 0, 0) which he adds to his base Physical score of 3 for a total of 6. The GM rolls (+, -, +, +, 0) for Carmen which he adds to her Social base statistic of 4 for a total of 6. The GM rolls (+, +, +, -, +) for Rudolph which he adds to his Physical base statistic of 2 for a total of 5.

So Carmen's shout happens first (she tied with Antonio but her higher base statistic breaks the tie). Then Antonio tries to grab Rudolph and finally Rudolph will try to stab his father.

Carmen's action affects Rudolph. The GM narrates how Rudolph stays focused coldly on his father despite his mother's cries. The GM then re-rolls two of Rudolph's dice (the canceling +/- pair) and gets (+, 0). He adds the result to Rudolph's Social (since his defensive action was cold determinism) base statistic score of 3 for a total of 4. Since Carmen's roll is better we subtract Rudolph's result of 4 from her original result of 6. Carmen inflicts two Social Hits on Rudolph.

Next Antonio tries to grab Rudolph. The GM describes Rudolph attempting to side step his father. Rudolph technically has one die to re-roll (the zero from his previous roll). However, Rudolph is suffering from two Social Hits from his mother's distracting cry. The first Social Hit takes out the one die he would have re-rolled. Rudolph is attempting to dodge his father so he's using his Physical basic statistic which is 2 but his second Social Hit knocks that down to 1. Rudolph's Social Hits then expire.

Rudolph's total of 1 is far outweighed by Antonio's original roll of six. Antonio grabs a hold of his son. Since there is no intent to injure the fictional consequence of Rudolph being grabbed by his father is sufficient.

Finally, Rudolph attempts to stab his father. Robert narrates how Antonio is holding onto his son with one arm and trying to hold the knife at bay with his other arm. Robert re-rolls two of his dice (the original 0s) and gets (-, -) which he adds to his base Physical statistic of 3 for a total of 1. The GM subtracts Robert's roll of 1 from Rudolph's original roll of 5 for a total of 4 Physical Hits inflicted on Antonio. The GM narrates Rudolph planting the knife squarely in his father's neck!

Conflict with Inanimate Objects

Sometimes it may be necessary to treat an inanimate object such as storm or a volcano like a character. In these cases the GM should simply assign a number to the object between 0 and 5. This number acts as all the objects base statistics. In conflicts the GM announces actions for the object as if it were a living, thinking thing and rolls appropriately.

Conflict by Proxy

Sometimes conflicts can be rather large scale such as two armies fighting each other or ship-to-ship combat on the high seas. This is done by running the conflict as normal (usually as a complex one) between the characters that represent each side. The difference is that character "actions" may be carried out by no-name, minor proxy characters such as gunners firing canons.

Hits are handled as normal with the exception that at the end of the conflict Physical Hits are halved if the character was actually in a position to have been injured during the conflict and simply go away if there was no danger of the character sustaining injury during the conflict. Being driven into "unconsciousness" simply represents the army being defeated, or the ship sinking but the character comes out relatively okay.

Magic

Magic in the archipelago is long and slow and highly ritualistic. Nobody tosses fireballs or charm spells around casually. Therefore using the Magic base statistic is handled differently than the other statistics.

The first thing the player must do is explain what exactly they want the effect of their character's Magic to be. Part of that is identifying a concrete target for the spell. This target will ultimately be rolling against the character's magic roll to see if the spell works.

Unlike other rolls the player does not get five fudge dice to roll. Instead, once the spell effect has been defined the player begins to describe, concretely, the actions his character is taking to perform the ritual and for each concrete action described the player gets one Fudge die. The player may do this as long as they like and may even exceed the normal five die limit.

Once the player has accumulated his dice he rolls and the target of the spell rolls his five fudge dice and adds it to the base statistic that makes the most sense to be defending with. Magic is very powerful and thus has a higher chance of overall success but carries the risk of dangerous consequences. The player sets aside any dice that come up as plus or minus.

The pluses are added to the character's Magic base statistic and are not canceled by any minuses. Instead, for each minus the GM inflicts some kind of negative consequence on the character. As with all consequences if the fictional ramifications of the consequence are sufficient that's all that happens. However, the GM may inflict Physical Hits or bank Social Hits (either for his own characters or awarded to another player) against the character if it is fictionally justified. The GM may inflict only one Hit per minus.

If the character's spell is not successful the player may re-roll any dice that came up zero. Again, pluses add and minuses inflict consequences. The target re-rolls any dice that didn't come up pluses and adds the result (including the previous pluses) to the base statistic he's defending with. The player casting the spell should narrate further actions that keep the ritual going.

A successful spell follows all the normal rules of conflict consequences. If the fictional consequences are sufficient they simply stand. The spell can inflict Physical Hits or bank Social Hits equal to the number of pluses rolled during the ritual.

Example

Bob wants Antonio to turn his wife Carmen into a frog. Bob narrates Antonio first crafting a doll that looks like Carmen. Then he narrates Antonio covering the doll in honey and leaving it out to attract flies. Next, Antonio releases a cage of frogs which begin eating the flies and parts of the doll. Finally Antonio draws a large circle around the frogs, flies and doll. That's four actions and so Bob rolls four fudge dice and gets (+, -, 0, 0). He adds the result to his Magic base statistic of 1 for a total of 2 (since the minus doesn't count).

First the GM narrates how the flies nip at Antonio's hands as he draws his circle causing him to bleed. This inflicts a Physical Hit on Antonio. Next, the GM rolls five fudge dice and gets (+, +, -, 0, 0) and adds the result to Carmen's Physical base statistic (because she's resisting being turned into a frog) of 2 for a total of 3. The spell doesn't work yet.

Bob decides to re-roll his zeros. Normally he'd re-roll both but now Antonio has a Physical hit (which eats dice) and so he can only re-roll one of them. He gets (+) which he adds to his previous (+) and his Magic base statistic of 1 for a total of 3. The GM then re-rolls Carmen's minus and two zeros and gets a disastrous (-, -, 0) which adds to her previous (+, +) and her Physical base statistic of 2 for a total of 2. The GM narrates Carmen transforming into a frog.

Magic With On Going Effects

Magic will often have some kind of on-going effect like a charm or a curse. The player who cast the spell should note the final total of his roll when he cast the spell. Periodically, the target may attempt to resist or break the effect of the spell. The target simply rolls five fudge dice (minus any hits as normal) and adds it to the same base statistic he rolled to defend against the spell in the first place. If his total beats the recorded total for the spell the spell is broken.

A special case of this situation involves charms or other mind-control like effects. Like any conflict even Magic can not force a player to have their character do something they don't want to do. Instead when the spell caster tries to exert influence over the character the player whose character is affected by the charm rolls to resist as described in the previous paragraph. If he fails he has the option to comply or allow the spell caster to bank Social Hits against him just as if he had failed a social Simple Conflict.

It may make sense for a spell to manifest some kind of physical object that is capable of acting on its own. If the manifested object is sentient the GM simply writes up the entity as a character. If the object is non-sentient the GM treats it as an inanimate object carrying out a purpose (such as a storm that helps fight an army). In this case treat the manifested object as described in the Inanimate Objects in Conflict section.

Magic in Simple or Complex Conflicts

As has been described Magic is a highly ritualized, time consuming processes. However, if a player really, really wants to pull off some magical effect mid-conflict they can still try. However, the player only rolls a single die since there is only time in heated conflict for a single ritualistic action. In this case simply treat result as you would any other action in simple or complex conflict with the exception that if the die comes up minus the GM may inflict a consequence on the character.

The On Going Game

As mentioned the game proceeds as a sequence of scenes. The purpose of scenes is to speak to the character's Passions. The contents of scenes (sometimes) lead to conflicts. Conflicts create consequences. Eventually, consequences will accumulate into some kind of resolution relative to a given character's Passion. This is usually when a character's story is over.

It should be noted that at any point a player may choose to rewrite his Passion. This can happen when a player feels his character has had a change in priority or when a Passion is no longer achievable but there are still wider issues to deal with in the fiction.

Example of Change in Priority

A character starts out with a Passion, "to find the lost treasure of the ancients." But at some point along the line the character develops a romance with a young woman and she ends up getting kidnapped by a pirate. The player decides that the woman is more interesting and of more importance and so rewrites his Passion as, "to rescue the woman."

This doesn't necessarily mean that finding the lost treasure of the ancients is no longer of relevance to the character but it is a cue to the GM that it is no longer the focus of the character. Remember that the GM organizes his scenes to put pressure on the character's current Passion.

Example of Unresolved Issues

A character starts out with a Passion, "to win the love of my lady fair." However, at some point in the fiction the lady in question is murdered. The Passion has resolved but her murder feels like an outstanding issue and not an ending. Therefore the player rewrites his character's Passion as, "to avenge the death of my lady fair."

Final Notes

The guiding principle of this game's design is, "live in the moment." Any given player only has to think about pursuing his character's Passion and what momentary action his character is taking towards that. There are very little tactical choices embedded in the resolution system which are more about adding fictional details to conflict exchanges than strategic manipulation. The most significant choice in the system is that the loser often has to decide whether they want to give up or push on.

The guiding principle applies to the GM as well but one level up in attention. The GM is managing multiple characters but his decisions within scenes should be just as momentary as the players. In between scenes the GM need only consider what the starting circumstances of the next unit of situation will be and has the character's Passions as his guiding beacon. Enjoy!