

STARSHINE

STARSHINE is a role-playing game about adventure fiction. Adventure fiction are all those story about little people going on fantastic adventures. It is almost always fantastic in nature, featuring elements of magic or science fiction. It ranges from the tails of King Arthur and his knights to modern day classics like the works of Hayao Miyazaki and Richard Adams.

It these stories there is a quest or goal, but the heart of the tale is the encounters the character has along the way. These encounters reflect the character's inner self, which grows and changes as they interact with the world around them. Whats important isn't what the characters can do but how they feel about the events that are happening around them.

Playing the Game

The following sections describe how to play the game.

Step 1. Setting the Stage

The first step is all about talking with your fellow players and coming up with some common ground around which to base future play. Its the only part of the game where everyone is on an equal footing and everyone's goals are identical. Just talk through the following points until everyone's satisfied with the answer. If you find that your groups waffling or having trouble finalizing things, set a time limit

General Setting

What kind of world does the game take place in? Is it a historic period, a familiar setting from fiction, a common archetype or some kind of mash-up. Try to sum this up as succinctly as possible.

Examples: The future in a 1950's sci-fi novel, Victorian England, a medieval fantasy world like Middle Earth, New York City

Fantastic Elements

In addition to the general outline given above, what kind of fantastic things exist within the world. These elements are divided into four categories, each of which is outline below.

Everyday Magic

Are there fantastic elements that are an everyday part of life? Are there things about this world that are fundamentally different from are own.

Examples: Daemons in the His Dark Materials trilogy, monsters in D&D, flying cars in the Jettsons.

Closet Cases

Closet cases are fantastic elements that exist, but that are rare enough as to not

fundamentally change the nature of the world.

Examples: Dracula in his titular novel, Totoro in My Neighbor Totoro, the Cthulhu Mythos

Special Skills

Sometimes there are magical elements that do fundamentally impact the nature of the world, but that are limited to a select class of people or that take special training to acquire or interact with.

Examples: Jedi in Star Wars, wizards in most fantasy settings, Super Heroes

Crisis

It's an essential truth in STARSHINE that something is wrong with the world that the characters inhabit. It's up to the players to decide what it is. It can be vague or specific, it can affect everyone or just a handful of people, but it must be important within the context of the game.

Example: The Empire's increasing power in Star Wars, the mother's illness in My Neighbor Totoro, the threat to the warren in Watership Down

Sides

In the face of the crisis there must be sides, people must have taken or must continue to take a stance. Optimally, the sides should not be black and white, but shades of gray. Ideally, the players should all agree to have their characters be on the same side, and they should designate the other side as the thing that they are opposed to or the thing that opposes them.

Examples: The Free People and Sauron in Lord of the Rings, the individual and the warren in Watership Down, Iron Town and the spirits of the wild in Princess Mononoke.

Episodes

An Episode is a single unit of play. Episodes can take any amount of time in the real world (they can be spread over multiple get-togethers and play times), but they represent a finite thing within the fiction. To tell when an Episode ends it must be determined through play whether the characters achieved the Episode's objective, were placed in a position where that became impossible, or where they surrendered the objective.

During this part of Setting the Stage, the groups need to decide on what the parameters of each Episode will be. What kind of goals will they focus around? How long will they last?

Examples: Units of in game time in which some objective must be achieved, time spent in a given locality, the time it takes to complete a quest, the time it takes to defeat a given enemy.

Boundaries

Unlike most works of fiction, STARSHINE's duration is theoretically infinite. Also, like the fiction that it imitates, it's important that the characters' initial confrontation with and

exposure to the world finds them in a place where they are limited in power and ability. That's why, the players need to determine a bound area of power or influence that the players must win access to for their characters.

Examples: Authority in the world, magical ability, psychic awareness, immunity to some horror, control of an innate or afflicted power.

Step 2: Defining Roles

Now that the basics of the game have been outlined, the players must determine who will take the role of the Director, who steers the fiction, facilitates play and arbitrates the rules. All of the other players will be Actors. An Actor creates a Persona who they will speak for and control throughout the narrative.

Step 3: Creating Personae

Once its been determined which players are Actors, the Actors will need to create their Personae. To create a Persona, go through each of the sections below and follow the instructions listed.

Answer any Questions posed by Step 1

Often times natural questions will arise about the qualities of individual characters from what was established when Setting the Stage. Before anyone begins creating their Persona in earnest, the players should come up with a list of any such questions that spring to mind. Answering these questions is the first part of creating a Persona.

Remember, that when creating Sides, the group should have already decided which Side the Persona belong to, so that doesn't constitute a question that needs to be answered.

Create a Faction

Even though all the Persona are on the same Side, each Persona should represent a separate element or piece of the Side of which they are a part. The player has total freedom in the creation and conception of his faction, within the boundaries established while Setting the Stage.

Define your Relationship to the Faction

Just because you create a Faction doesn't mean that your Persona necessarily supports or ascribes to it, it just means that your Persona is in some way defined by it. Just how they are defined by it is up to you. Some Persona will be loyal adherents of their Factions, some will be forced into the service of their Faction, some will be outsiders desperately seeking entrance. Really, its up to each player to decide what his Persona's relationship to the Faction is.

Set your Characteristics

By the time you've answered any questions posed by the setting, created a Faction and defined your Persona's relationship to that faction, you should have a descent idea of who

your Persona is. This part of Persona creation is all about locking down and completing the concept that's been developing so far.

Each Persona is defined by a number connected to each of twelve scores called Characteristics. Each Characteristic represents some value or quality that the Persona might possess or lack. Each Characteristic begins with a value of zero, which represents a normal person within the setting. The player can decrease the value of their Characteristics (up to -3) in order to increase other Characteristics by an identical amount.

The twelve Characteristics are: Compassion, Difference, Equality, Faith, Honor, Hope, Insight, Liberty, Passion, Purity, Tradition and Will.

Create your Expressions

Once you've set the value for each of your Characteristics, you'll need to come up with a list of Expressions tied to each of the Characteristics. An Expression is a way that the possession or lack of the value or quality that the Characteristic represents manifests itself in the Persona's behavior.

You'll have one Expression for each point above or below zero. The Expressions you choose should help differentiate the Persona and should further define them.

It's a good idea to record every Expression you invent to a master list so that the group has some "go-to" Expressions to rely on. If you're having trouble coming up with some, ask the group to pause character creation and have everyone brainstorm Expressions to add to this master list that you can either choose from or use as a starting point for inventing new Expressions that better suit your Persona.

Choose Knacks and Powers

After setting your Characteristics and selecting your Expressions, it's time to decide what sorts or skills and abilities your Persona possesses, which are expressed in the game as Knacks and Powers.

Knacks are listed as adjectives about the character and normally describe some sort of skill or occupational background. They can also express personality traits that have less to do with a person's values and more to do with innate qualities (for instance, Brave or Calm could be Knacks).

Powers are listed as one or two word descriptions of what the power is capable of or what the power is called within the setting. Any powers selected during Persona creation need to have been established already during Step 1.

A player has six points to spend on Knacks and Powers. Each Knack the Persona possesses costs one of these points, while purchasing access to a power group (a set of powers with a common origin, background or skill set) costs 3 points and includes access to the first power in that group. Each additional power from the same group costs an additional point.

If it's unclear what powers exist, what power groups exist, or what powers belong to what groups, suss these things out with the other players before spending any points.

Like Expressions, you'll want to record Knacks and powers to a master list so that every Persona's are on the same page. It might be worthwhile to spend some time consolidating Knacks with similar names or purposes.

Decide on Limited Tools and Assets

In general an Actor is allowed to list any item, social status or connection they want their Persona to possess without question. Some items may be limited by the Director, as he feels their presence is unfair, uninteresting or over complicated. Other items are limited by the Actor's themselves.

Each Actor should list five things (items, property, statuses or connections) that they think are really unique to their character or their faction and put these things on a Signature Items list. Other Persona are restricted from possessing these items unless they also include them in their five things.

Each Actor should also list any other important things that their character possesses, making sure to note their location.

Record your Scores

There are twelve scores that determine how you interact with the game's Challenge system (defined below). These scores are based on the current value of your Persona's Characteristics, as defined below:

Characteristic	Score	Formula
Compassion	Guard	Compassion +3
Difference	Recovery	(Difference +3) x2
Equality	Aid	Equality +3
Faith	Fortune	Faith +3
Honor	Defense	(Honor +3) x2
Hope	Stunt	Hope
Insight	Risk	Insight x -1
Liberty	Surrender	Liberty +3
Passion	Lead	(Passion +3) x2
Purity	Threat	Purity
Tradition	Base	Tradition +3
Will	Power	Will

In addition to the above Scores, every Persona begins with a Boundary of 1 and a Clearance of 1. This measure's how far the Persona has progressed along the game's established Boundary.

Set the Influence of your Knacks, Powers and Tools

Each Knack, Power and Signature Item your Persona possesses has an affect on one or more of your Persona's Scores. At this point, you'll need to attach each Knack, Power or Signature Item you possess to a given Score and record that Score's boosted value. If the

Score is influenced by a Knack, its boosted value is determined by treating the related Characteristic as being 2 greater. If its influenced by a Power, its boosted value is determined by treating the related Characteristic as being 3 greater. If its influenced by a Signature Item, than its boosted value is determined by treating the related Characteristic as being 1 greater.

Fill in the Details

Now add any additional details you wish to include about your Persona. These details can be whatever you like, but things like name and appearance are common considerations. You shouldn't try to add anything about your character that can't be accurately represented by the statistics and values you've determined so far.