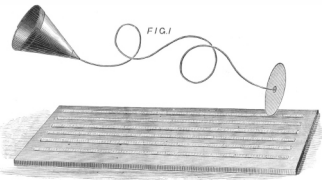


BEFORE YOU EMBARK.

Choose two or three of the below character traits and cross them off. They are unique to you and can not be used by future players.

a musician, penniless, unschooled, anxious, a widow, a mother, an orphan, a risk-taker, a magician, a prize-winner, in love, manic, strict, charitable, unforgiving, young, weary, defiant, gloomy, discreet, childish, short-tempered, confident, patient, quiet, shy, loud, brave, trusting, aloof, hostile, vulgar, cruel, rash, a hunter, retired, a rat catcher, a sailor, an academic, a clerk, an apiarist, a physician, gentle, a dreamer, a criminal, a judge, an immigrant, desired, a weaver, disguised



BEGINNING THE WORK.

Take your journal in hand. Feel its pages, its possibility. How does it remind you of the machine you can picture in your mind? Know that it will help along your path to successfully constructing the infernal instrument.

If you are not the first holder of this notebook, read the logs of the futile attempts it contains. How did each fail? What will you do to avoid such foolish errors? Know that their mistakes are mere stepping stones to your personal greatness. With your hands, the music will ring so loud that even the angels will weep.

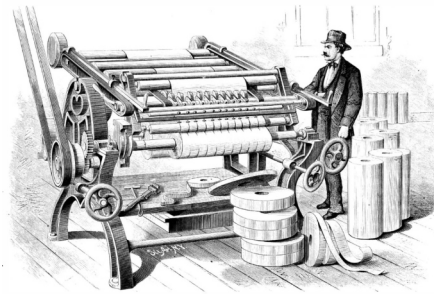
THE FIRST LOG.

Title this section of the journal with your name and the date. Then, answer:

Describe how you acquired the journal. Did you discover it? Was it left to you in a will? Did you purchase it?

How does the machine look in your mind? Is it big, larger than a room? Is it small, fitting in your pocket? What are the many materials it will require? Metal, wood, fiber, gems, lightning?

End your entry with a hopeful note about your plans, and how they will succeed.



EVENTS UNFOLD.

For the rest of your time with the journal, you will encounter events that shape and inform how your machine progresses. Let some time pass in the real world. Then, when you feel the journal calling to you, draw a card. You will write an entry based on this card.

The suit of the card informs the mood of your entry, while the value of the card determines the event that occurs.

After you finish writing your log, place the card at the bottom of the deck. Do not shuffle.

A GUIDE TO PROGRESS.

Hearts - security, love, hope, friendship, excitement, conviction

Diamonds - hurt, anger, jealousy, distance, skepticism, hate

Clubs - apathy, guilt, remorse, boredom, loneliness, inferiority

Spades - pride, respect, importance, faith, surprise, power

Two - An unforeseen obstacle

Three - A theft or betrayal

Four - New construction

Five - Unexpected help

Six - Sleepless nights

Seven - Steady progress

Eight - A musical revelation

Nine - Secrets and promises

Ten - An attempt at distraction

Jack - A fundamental shift

Queen - Failure narrowly avoided

King - An appeal to a higher power

Ace - A breakthrough realized

INEVITABLE FAILURE.

When you draw a face card or an Ace, your doom draws ever closer. Mark this by drawing a skull or other symbol of dread in the corner of that log. When this has happened a total of three times, your downfall occurs the next time you would write an entry. Follow the instructions on the reverse of this flap for your final entry.

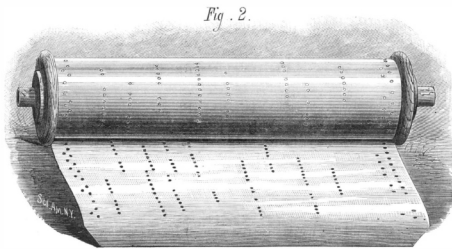
YOUR DOWNFALL.

You know that your end is upon you. Looking at the machine you know you can never finish, how do you feel? What does the machine mean to you? How does the music sound now? Was it worth it?

Your character is fundamentally changed and is rendered unable to complete the machine. Did they die? Become institutionalized? Drift away? Forget themselves? How?

Where do remains of the unfinished machine go? Are they burnt? Disassembled for parts? Thrown into the void? Who does this and why?

The journal lives on, as a testament to your failure. End your final entry with a half-finished sentence.



PASSING ON.

Before you pass on the journal to the next player, be sure that you have added content warnings as needed (see back page).

If you are the last person to play the game, share the journal with the ones who came before you. Afterwards, be sure that the journal is lost to the ages. Burn it, bury it, drown it, tear it apart, or just lose it in your attic.

YOU SHOULD KNOW.

To play this game, you will need a small, lightweight notebook that is easy and inexpensive to mail. You might consider a Moleskine or even just several sheets of lined paper hastily stapled together. When starting a new game, consider the character you are playing and what type of journal they might use. You will also need a deck of standard playing cards; these are not passed between players.

Gameplay happens across days, weeks, or even months. Only one person plays this game at a time, but many people play it in sequence.

As part of this game, you will pass on a journal to the next player. Determine order in any way you see fit, and be sure that the next player consents to playing before you give them the journal. We suggest mailing the journal to the next player, to introduce physical wear and tear, but it's also okay to just dead drop or hand it to them.

This game has themes of inevitable death, obsession, mental illness, physical and emotional self-harm, isolation, depression, fixation, and futility that might be difficult for some players. As you play this game by yourself, be sure to be aware of your own out-of-character needs and feelings. It's always okay to stop playing.

If you introduce something that might be upsetting to other players in your journal entries, be sure to leave an out-of-character content warning for future players. When you get the journal from someone else, be sure to read their content warnings. It's always okay to skip reading some portions of their entries.

The Machine

by Adira Slattery & Fen Slattery

The curse snuck up on you, and now you can't escape. You're not sure how or when it began, but every waking moment, you feel the machine call to you.

Behind its words are music, beckoning you to build. The impossible notes echo in your mind, and you know what you must do. You can see it now, this manifold instrument.

You will complete this infernal machine or die trying.