

PLAY

ACT 5

IN MEMORY OF ANAMNESIS

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5 ACT PLAY

BY KADEN RAMSTACK

A SOLO TABLETOP ROLE PLAYING GAME

THE TWO-ROLL ARCANA

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INTRODUCTION

5 Act Play is a solo role playing game where the player creates a 5 Act Shakespearean play based around drawing cards and using the prompts from the included tables to write a summary for each Act.

This game takes course over a Setup and the 5 Acts and provides the player instructions on writing both comedies, tragedies, and the purpose each Act serves.

TOOLS

Writing Implements, Tarot Deck or Two-Roll Arcana Alternative

THE TWO-ROLL ARCANA

Playing Cards, 1d20, 1d6

MINOR ARCANA

SWORDS → SPADES

PENTACLES → DIAMONDS

WANDS → CLUBS

CUPS → HEARTS

MAJOR ARCANA

Roll both the 1d6 and 1d20 then consult the following table. The resulting number will represent the number on the Major Arcana Card.

1d6	Adjust d20 Result	Inverse or Upright
1	Subtract 1	Inverse
2	Subtract 1	Upright
3	No Change	Inverse
4	No Change	Upright
5	Add 1	Inverse
6	Add 1	Upright

CHART BASICS

- Even are Upright, Odds are Reverse
- 1-2 shifts result down, 5-6 shifts the result up

You can decide if the Jack is the Knight or the Page or feel free to pick on a case by case basis.

HOW TO PLAY

GAME PLAY OVERVIEW

You will first start with the Setup which will instruct you on how to make characters and major themes of the play.

The Setup involves using the Major Arcana Cards for the characters and the theme.

After you are finished with the Setup you move on to the Acts.

Each Act consists of drawing a set number of Minor Arcana Cards and one Major Arcana Card.

The Minor Arcana will give the player a prompt for something to happen during the Act of the play. These might include a character dying, someone tricking someone, or someone overhearing something. Each Act will tell you how many Minor Arcana cards to draw.

Major Arcana Cards will influence the Act in some way, either as a location, a prop, tone, character reaction, or something else entirely. With the exception of Act I and Act V, the interpretation and use is completely up to the player. Act I and Act V will have specific instructions on how to use the Major Arcana card.

At the end of each Act shuffle the Major Arcana card you drew back into the deck.

Always feel free to discard or modify a prompt for any reason

WRITING THE ACTS

After you have drawn all the cards and gone over the prompts, write a brief summary of events from the following prompts. You don't have to write scenes or dialogue, just a brief description of what happens in as much or little detail as possible.

There will also be a description on how long each Act typically is, but you do not need to reflect this in your summary.

Always feel free to add in more elements to the story if needed.

If you are having trouble fitting an element into the story it can always be a soliloquy that helps set the tone rather than move the plot forward. Think of Mercutio's Queen Mab speech in *Romeo and Juliet* or Hamlet's Yorick speech in *Hamlet*.

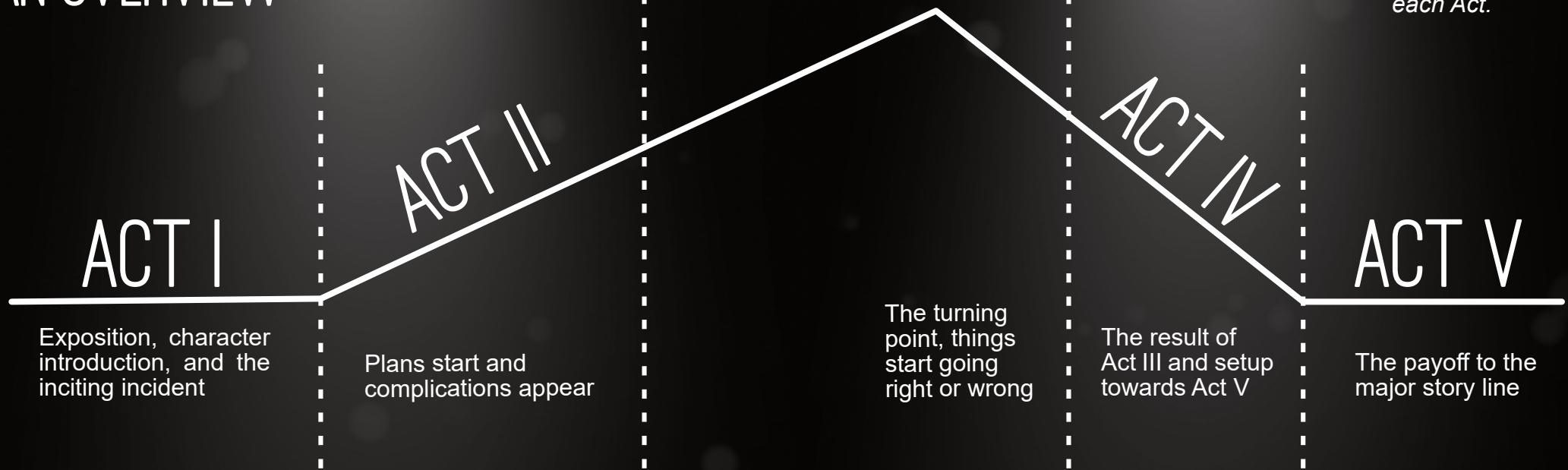
BASIC FLOW

1. DRAW 3 MINOR ARCANA CARDS
2. READ PROMPTS
3. DRAW MAJOR ARCANA CARD
4. WRITE SUMMARY
5. SHUFFLE MAJOR ARCANA

THE 5 ACTS

AN OVERVIEW

A more in depth explanation for each Act will be provided during each Act.



COMEDY vs TRAGEDY

During the Setup you'll need to decide if you want to make your play a comedy or tragedy. Outlined below are the differences

COMEDY

Comedies tend to have more complicated plot lines and focus more on situations than characters.

In comedies, situations usually start out bad and then get better. These plays typically end in a marriage or reunion.

TRAGEDY

Tragedies tend to have simpler plot lines and focus more on characters who have a tragic flaw.

In tragedies, situations usually start out (relatively) fine and then get worse. These plays typically end with the death of most of the characters, especially the main character.



SETUP

CARDS

Separate all of your cards into the different suits: Pentacles, Cups, Swords, Wands, and Major Arcana.

CHARACTERS

PROTAGONIST

The leading character, or characters of the play. Your play should have at least One Main Protagonist, but you may choose to have a second like in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Draw 1 Major Arcana for every Protagonist and use it as inspiration for the character(s).

ANTAGONIST

The opposition to the main protagonists. You may choose to write the major antagonists as groups of people, such as the Montagues and Capulets instead of one person. If this is the case, you may wish to make more Secondary Characters than the recommended 3.

Draw 1 Major Arcana for every Antagonist and use it as inspiration for the character or groups.

SECONDARY CHARACTERS

Also known as Supporting Characters, they are less important than the main characters but still serve to move the plot forward or have their own subplots. They may be with or against the main protagonist.

Draw 1 Major Arcana for each Secondary Character and use it as inspiration for the characters.

You must create at **least 3** Secondary Characters. If your primary antagonist is a group, you may wish to create even more.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Throughout the game you may introduce minor characters at any time. Usually these characters only appear for one or two scenes. You do not need to make any minor characters at this time and these characters do not require Motive Cards.

TIPS

It's not strictly necessary, but you may wish to keep a separate list of characters including their name, role, and attributes for reference when playing the rest of the game.

Try not to think too much about motives for any characters yet, those will be introduced in Act I.

When you are finished making characters, shuffle the cards back into the Major Arcana deck.

SETUP CONTINUED

THEME

Draw 1 Major Arcana Card. Use this card to create the major theme of the play.

Some themes include: Love, Revenge, Coming of Age, Learning Your Place etc.

There is no wrong way to interpret the Major Arcana. Feel free to use the traditional meanings, a new meaning, or ideas from the art or name of the card.

If you haven't already, decide now if your play is a Tragedy or a Comedy.

REMINDERS

You should not permanently write out Main Characters or Main Antagonists of the story until Act 5. This doesn't mean that the character can't die, especially if your story involves ghosts or the underworld, but they must still be present and influence the story until the final Act.

Major Characters can be sent away for a while, but may return, especially if they are the Main Character. Think of Hamlet in Act IV when he is sent away to England, but then later returns.

When you are finished with the Setup, shuffle all the Major Arcana Cards back into the Major Arcana Deck before starting Act I.



INSTRUCTIONS

For every character, draw 1 card from the Pentacle Deck. This is the character's Motive.

When you draw a card, feel free to assign it to whichever character you like. Give every character/group one, and only one motive card by consult the chart below.

Then, draw one Major Arcana Card. Use this card as inspiration for the inciting incident. **Remember, this incident will set the rest of the play into motion.**

MOTIVES

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| A. Greed | 8. Religion |
| 2. Paranoia | 9. Loyalty |
| 3. Jealousy | 10. In Debt |
| 4. Revenge | P. Arrogance |
| 5. Romantic Love | Kn. Family Love |
| 6. Wants to leave | Q. Save someone |
| 7. Doesn't want to marry | K. Wants the throne |

ACT I

*Make sure to include the following:
Major Characters and Backgrounds
Setting, Motives, Inciting Incident*

OVERVIEW

The introduction serves as exposition for the play. Major characters and motives are clearly established and an inciting event occurs that sets the rest of the story into motion.

You may choose not to introduce every Major Character in Act I, but they must be introduced in Act II.

It also might be helpful to keep a separate list of characters and their motives but it's not completely necessary.

COMEDY EXAMPLE

Much Ado About Nothing

Leonato, his daughter Hero, and his niece Beatrice are introduced in Messina. Duke Don Pedro returns from war with Claudio, Benedick, and other soldiers. Claudio and Hero fall in love. Beatrice and Benedick who have both sworn off love and marriage bicker and argue.

TRAGEDY EXAMPLE

Romeo and Juliet

The Capulets and Montagues are introduced in Verona. A fight breaks out between them, establishing their feud and establishing if they fight again someone will be banished. Romeo Montague is introduced. Juliet is introduced and she's to be married to Count Paris. The Capulets hold a party and Romeo sneaks in and meets Juliet. Romeo and Juliet are now motivated to be with one another.

INTRODUCTION

PENTACLES

INSTRUCTIONS

Draw 3 Sword Cards and introduce these elements into the plot. If you have more characters you may wish to draw more cards.

Draw one Major Arcana Card. This card will influence the Act in some way, either as a character, plan, prop, or any other component.

COMEDY EXAMPLE

Much Ado About Nothing

Hero and Claudio become engaged at Leonato's ball. Don Pedro's brother, Don John, is motivated by bitterness and plots with soldiers to make Claudio think Hero cheated on him.

ACT //

OVERVIEW

This introduces complications into the story. Conflicts appear, plans are discussed and start moving into action. Characters work towards achieving the goals from Act I and are hindered or helped along the way.

This is typically the longest Act in a play. **All Major Characters must be introduced by the end of this Act.**

TRAGEDY EXAMPLE

Romeo and Juliet

Romeo sneaks into the Capulet estate and sees Juliet through a window/balcony. They bond and fall in love. Romeo convinces Friar Laurence to marry them. The Nurse brings the message from Romeo to Juliet telling her when and where they will meet. Romeo and Juliet get married in secret.

RISING ACTION
SWORDS

PLOT ELEMENTS

- A. Unrequited love
- 2. A misunderstanding
- 3. Someone is a twin
- 4. Someone tells a lie
- 5. An arranged marriage
- 6. Someone's returned
- 7. Something's gone missing
- 8. A foiled murder
- 9. A secret confession
- 10. A successful murder
- P. An impending Army
- Kn. A new rivalry is formed
- Q. Someone is demoted/ fired
- K. Someone expresses doubt

ACT



OVERVIEW

The climax is **not necessarily** the moment of greatest drama or tension, but it represents a turning point in the story. New plot lines might still be introduced.

This is typically the second shortest Act of the play. If this is a comedy, this is when things start going right. If this is a tragedy, this is when things start going wrong.

TRAGEDY EXAMPLE

Romeo and Juliet

Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, challenges Romeo to a fight, which he refuses. Mercutio, Romeo's friend, fights in his place and is killed. Romeo kills Tybalt for revenge and is banished. Lord Capulet moves Juliet's marriage to Count Paris to the next day.

PLOT

- Someone dies A.
- Someone is too late 2.
- Someone becomes sick 3.
- Someone gets a letter 4.
- Two major characters 5. get in an argument
- Someone is forced to 6. act against their will
- Someone overhears 7. something

CLIMAX

INSTRUCTIONS

Draw 3 Sword Cards and introduce these elements into the plot. If you have more characters you may wish to draw more cards.

Draw one Major Arcana Card. This card will influence the Act in some way, either as a character, plan, prop, or any other component.

CUPS

ELEMENTS

8. A secret marriage
9. Something is stolen
10. Someone is banished
- P. Someone acts erratic
- Kn. A character challenges another to a duel
- Q. Someone hesitates or doesn't do something
- K. Someone disguises themselves

COMEDY EXAMPLE

Much Ado About Nothing

Claudio and Don Pedro overhear a maid talking with one of Don John's soldiers. Hero, Claudio, and Don Pedro decide Beatrice and Benedick should be partners and plot to have each other overhear conversations about their feelings. After overhearing the conversations they realize they do love each other.

INSTRUCTIONS

Draw 3 Wand Cards and introduce these elements into the plot. If you feel like you do not have enough elements to move the story forward towards a conclusion, draw more cards.

Draw one Major Arcana Card. This card will influence the Act in some way, either as a setting, a prop, tone, or any other influence.

FALLING ACTION
WANDS

PLOT ELEMENTS

- A. Someone dies
- 2. A secret is revealed
- 3. An admission of guilt
- 4. Someone is captured
- 5. Someone fakes a death
- 6. One last warning is given
- 7. A message is intercepted
- 8. A fake a marriage/wedding
- 9. Someone flees
- 10. A plan is foiled
- P. Someone tricks someone
- Kn. Someone betrays someone
- Q. Someone is caught in the act
- K. A character returns (if no previous characters have left, invent a minor character)

COMEDY EXAMPLE

Much Ado About Nothing

After being convinced that Hero is cheating on him, Claudio breaks off the marriage at the altar. Hero faints, and Beatrice, Leonato, and Benedick convince everyone that she died. Watchmen overhear the soldiers talking about how they tricked Claudio and arrest the soldiers.

TRAGEDY EXAMPLE

Romeo and Juliet

Friar Laurence gives Juliet a sleeping potion to make her seem dead. The wedding party thinks she is dead and Friar Laurence sends a message to Romeo telling him the truth.

ACT IV

OVERVIEW

This is the Final Suspense and should be the direct result of what happened in the climax. **No new major conflicts should appear**, but more complications should happen. This is the last buildup before the finale, and the events in this Act should set up the finale.

This Act is typically either as long as Act II or slightly shorter.

INSTRUCTIONS

Draw one last Major Arcana Card. Use this card as inspiration for the concluding incident, and wrap up all the loose threads and decide the fates of the characters.

If this is a tragedy, most people will either be dead or worse than when they started.

If this is a comedy, the antagonist is defeated and usually there is a big wedding or celebration.

If you are uncertain as to what should happen to a character, you may draw another Major Arcana card for inspiration.

OVERVIEW

This is the payoff for the major plot line and any minor plot lines that haven't been resolved.

Typically this is the shortest Act of a play.

CONCLUSION

MAJOR ARCANA

COMEDY EXAMPLE

Much Ado About Nothing

Don Pedro and Claudio are told that the soldiers tricked them, and as penance Claudio agrees to marry Leonato's other "niece" who is really Hero in disguise. Benedick and Beatrice decide to get married, Don John is arrested, and the play ends with a dance.

TRAGEDY EXAMPLE

Romeo and Juliet

The message to Romeo doesn't arrive and he hears from his servant that Juliet is dead. Romeo buys poison from an Apothecary, returns to Verona, kills Count Paris, and takes the poison. Juliet wakes up, learns what's happened from the friar and kills herself with a knife. The families learn what has happened and decided to end their feud.

ACT V

After you have written the conclusion, give your play a title! It can be the names of the main characters, something that happened in the play, the setting, or even the major theme of the play.

CITATIONS

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5 ACT PLAY

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