

**FRIENDSHIP
EFFORT
VICTORY**

A SHONEN TTRPG BY

Kamala Kara Arroyo

FRIENDSHIP EFFORT VICTORY

A Powered By the Apocalypse Hack For Shonen Battle Comics

Inspired by Vincent & Meguey Baker's **Apocalypse World**

By Kamala Arroyo

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INTRODUCTION

If you're reading this book, you're probably a little bit like me: You're a fan of the wild adventures found within the pages of a battle manga. The hotblooded heroes, the world crushing angst, the sparkling fights!

That's what this game is all about! It's all about jumping into your own battle manga and living out your own teenage superhero adventures!

But, before you get there, there are some things you should know. Some basics to go over and some concepts to explain. This chapter goes over those concepts in detail.

The chapter is divided into:

- What is a roleplaying game?
- What do I need to play?
- What is a Manga?
- Basic Terms and Concepts

If you're familiar with roleplaying games, I suggest skipping those first two sections. However, I strongly advise reading Basic Terms and Concepts, which serves as a glossary of all the key terms used throughout the book to describe particular mechanics, and is crucial for understanding the rest of the game. Skipping this section will leave you very confused for everything that follows it.

What is a Roleplaying Game?

Roleplaying games have been around for a long time. They focus on playing with the imagination of the players to create a fun experience. More glibly, it's a game of make-believe, a set of rules that guide that conversation and seeks to help facilitate that style of play. It's a guide on how to tell a particular kind of story.

Players make and play their own characters while a game master, called the Mangaka in this game, makes and plays the world itself and every other character. The players and the Mangaka play the game through conversation, slowly building a tale of adventure, humour, and drama over the course of two to four hours.

Then, they pack up, and come back later to continue their story. Maybe in a week, maybe in a month, maybe in a year in a very extreme, elongated session of gaming. It all comes down to what works for the group.

An important thing to remember is that in the end, it's just a game. It's about having fun with friends. As such, understanding each other's boundaries, respecting each other's needs, and being understanding of each other is an essential element.

It's everyone's job to make sure no one feels left out, hurt, offended, or otherwise uncomfortable. Not everything has to go everyone's way, but there is no reason anyone should actively push anyone's buttons or be recalcitrant to rectify their behavior if they do so accidentally.

What Do I Need To Play?

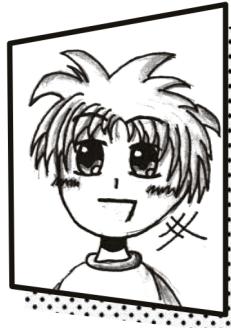
Running a game of Friendship, Effort, Victory doesn't require many materials.

Players need a copy of all the playbooks, a pencil, an eraser, and two six-sided dice. Ideally, there should be enough so that each player has a set of dice for themselves. Only one player may use a playbook at a time so multiples copies will usually be unnecessary. Some advancements will allow you to draw from other playbooks. Having an extra may be useful.

The Mangaka needs the MK's sheet, a pencil, and an eraser. They don't roll dice.

The playbooks and MK's sheet will be available online in the near future.

Alternatively, the essential information can be copied down onto paper from this book itself.



What is a Manga?

If you're reading this, you're likely already a fan of manga. But, let's assume that you aren't. Let's assume you somehow got hold of this book with no knowledge of manga. It's not impossible, and neither is there anything wrong, it's just that it'd be unlikely.

"MANGA" IS THE JAPANESE TERM FOR "COMIC BOOKS" OR "GRAPHIC NOVELS."

That is the crux of the matter. Manga is just comic books. However, the term is often used to refer to comic books made in Japan. More so, this often leads to stereotyping. Make no mistake: manga is a medium, not a genre. For comic book fans who know little about manga, it's the same way that American comic books are not just "superhero comics" and feature a variety of genres. For everyone else, calling manga a genre is like referring to music or movies as a genre. It's simply incorrect.

However, it probably helps to understand what we are referring to when we discuss manga in this game. We are referring to "battle manga" aimed at teenage boys. Those manga tend to have the most international appeal and their cartoon adaptations often air after school or on Saturday mornings in North America. Just as most people's exposure to American comics are superhero comics, most people are exposed to battle manga over any other genre in the medium.

What is a Battle Manga?

Battle manga (or battle comic) is the genre of manga that this game emulates. It is a vast genre, so we are specifying "shonen" battle manga, aimed at teenage boys, and particularly how it is portrayed in Shueisha Comics' **Shonen Jump** line of comics. Furthermore, as that is still a vast body of work, we are going for the feel of the series that were considered "The Big 3" in the late 1990s and the late 2000s. The Big 3 at that period were **Naruto**, **Bleach**, and **One Piece**.

Let's define some key elements:

- A fighting adept main character
- A moral pertaining to friendship and teamwork
- Undercurrent of self-improvement
- An emphasis on combat
- Flashy fights and elaborate techniques

There are more secondary elements, but this is a good place to start.

The traditional protagonist is a young male who is an adept fighter. They often have a lot of energy and a love of combat, but this is not universal. Some may be more reluctant heroes. But, they are young (teenage), adept at combat, and usually have a clearly defined goal. Sometimes these goals are the cornerstone of the plot ("I'm gonna be king of the pirates") while other times they are more subdued ("I'm going to protect my friends and town.") The story will revolve around this character and their friends.

This protagonist will have a supporting cast of close friends that will grow (and rarely shrink) over time. There will be an emphasis on their bond and how it keeps them together. They will stick with each other and view their friendship as sacred. While betrayals can happen, they are rare and treated with dramatic flair and importance, never lightly. Betrayals will almost always result in redemption and reintegration of the character, no matter how far the betrayal progresses.



These characters will focus on self-improvement. Whatever the motif of the battle manga is, they will strive to be better at it. If they're martial arts, they will want to get better at martial arts. If they're battle chefs who find exotic foods, they will want to improve their cooking and combat skills. If they're guardian ghosts, they will want to improve their ghost and combat abilities. A key feature, as you likely gathered, is a focus on becoming better at martial feats. This has to do with combat's importance in battle manga.

Combat is the center of a battle manga and a battle manga can't be a battle manga without it. Combat must be the ultimate decider of conflict. Maybe minor challenges of the body and mind will proceed, but the finale will always be a battle between characters. It is why they are called "Battle Manga."

These battles have to be flashy and feature interesting techniques. This is mostly to avoid boredom and fights getting stale. Simply having big explosions and cool powers isn't enough, however. Choreography is everything and no one is "wowed" by the same trick done over and over. Sure, they have signature techniques and reuse moves, but they must be presented with tense new scenarios, stakes, and circumstances to keep things fresh.

Sometimes, these elements are subverted, but rarely.

These key elements make up battle manga, but are just the most basic elements. There is a lot that is laid on top before a battle manga is created. It might be best, for the uninitiated, to review battle manga series to get a feel for them to better run and play this game.

Recommended Battle Manga:

- One Piece
- Hunter X Hunter
- My Hero Academia
- Naruto
- Bleach

While these series are great and worth a look for that reason alone, this entire list also does a good job of showing the variety of stories possible even within a particular company's take on a sub-genre aimed at a particular, narrow demographic at specific point in time.



Basic Terms and Concepts

To those familiar with **Powered By The Apocalypse** titles, there won't be much here that surprises you except for Inspired and Shock. This section goes over the basic terminology and concepts present throughout the game.

Manga: Japanese for comics. It's pretty much just that. I use the term "comics" and "manga" interchangeably in the book.

Battle Manga: Manga that focuses on fighting. One can argue they share a lot of elements with American Superhero comics in that they generally follow larger-than-life characters as they fight personifications of vice.

Shonen: It's Japanese for "boy" and generally refers to an age demographic of 12-15 years old. This term is often shorthand for "Shonen Battle Manga."

Shonen Battle manga: Manga that focuses on fighting and is aimed at boys age 12-15. Modern shonen battle manga have teenage protagonists, but not all do.

Player: A player is an individual who plays the game. They are different, however, from the Mangaka. Players play their own character and serve as the protagonists of the game. They move the plot forward and the plot centers on them.

Mangaka: The mangaka (the term for the author of a manga) is the individual who plays the world and the characters not played by the players. They're the ones "running the game" and direct the course of play. For efficiency, they get to have final say on disagreements, but are not "the boss" or "the author" or anything else that would imply complete control. This is a game, not a book, and the important thing is everyone having fun.

Player Character (PC): A player character is a character played by one of the players. This is opposed to a character played by the Mangaka. Each player character is defined by their playbook, which is chosen by the player during character generation. Throughout the book, they are referred to as "shonen heroes" for flavor, but they may also be called player characters or PCs.

Playbook: In other RPGs, this would be your class. A playbook refers to the archetype you're playing as outlined in the game. Each playbook tells you how to make a character including what makes

the character special and how to advance the character. The reason they're called playbooks is they're designed to be self-contained so one can print them out and make a character without having to consult the main rulebook. It's very convenient, I assure you.

Non-player Character (NPC): A character played by the Mangaka. They may have some stuff written down about them (especially if they're a villain), but most will just be a voice and a name you run into occasionally.

Zakos: The nameless nobodies that player characters fight in groups. Ever seen a scene where a bunch of people get mowed down by one character? Those guys getting mowed down are the Zakos.

General: A general is an important, named NPC who serves the main villain. Think of any big organization in a battle manga or any powerful villain who has a right hand man, the big names in that organization and/or the right hand man is a general.

Villain: The main bad guy of a story arc. They are the ones behind it all. Their defeat signals the end of an Arc. Think of the biggest antagonist in battle manga and you got the idea.

Session: A 2-4 hour experience where players and the mangaka sit down to play a game. It starts when everyone starts playing and ends when everyone packs up for the night.

Arc: In other rpgs, this would be an adventure. An Arc covers the entirety of from the first effects of a villain's presence in the world to when they're defeated. Battle manga fans sometimes call these sagas or arcs, depending on what fandom you're following.

Series: In other rpgs, this would be a campaign. It refers from the very beginning of a game to its end. From the moment you decide to play the game to the moment you decide to either play a different game or start over with a blank slate.

Roll: When a move triggers, you will be asked to roll. To roll, you take two six-sided dice, and roll them on the table. Add the results together and any other modifiers, like the relevant stat, to the result, the move will tell you what.

Moves: The core of a PbtA game. They are an effect that reinforces the genre being emulated and trigger when an event occurs in the narrative. Each move tells you what triggers them and what their effects are.

Basic Moves: These are the moves all player characters have access to at any time. They handle some of the most basic elements of the game and will come up the most often.

Battle Moves: A subset of basic moves that only come up during a battle.

Battle: A fight between two or more characters. One of these characters must be a player character. A battle begins once the player character is involved in a fight and ends when one side of the conflict flees or is knocked unconscious or dead.

+/- X Forward: This means that you take +/- X to your next move. When you roll your next move, you alter the final result by X.

+/- X Ongoing: This means you take +/- X to all your moves until an effect occurs in narrative that stops this situation. When you roll your moves, you alter the final result by X.

Inspired: When you are inspired, you roll three six-sided dice and take the two highest results. You then add these results together with any other modifiers, if applicable. Unless otherwise stated, this only applies to your next roll. If you are ever inspired and in shock at the same time, they cancel out: roll normally. If you would be inspired twice or more, ignore it.

Shock: When you are in shock, you roll three six-sided dice and take the two lowest results. You then add these results together with any other modifiers, if applicable. Unless otherwise said, this only applies to your next roll. If you are ever inspired and in shock at the same time, they cancel out: roll normally. If you would be shocked twice or more, ignore it.

Harm: You take X-Harm when you are significantly damaged from an event.

Experience: As you train, you grow stronger and more skilled. Moves will tell you when to mark experience. You also mark experience whenever you roll a 6- on a move as you learn from your mistakes. Each playbook has three actions that, when you do them, you mark experience. When you mark experience five times, you take an advancement.

Advancement: As you fight and train, you will grow in power and learn new moves and abilities. Your archetype's playbook will tell you what options you get for advancement.

Opponent: An opponent is just whoever you're fighting at the moment.

Ties: Ties are the connections you have with other people. Despite the name, it doesn't mean you are always on good terms or act in the same interest. It can entirely be a one way relationship.



YAWN



MANGAKA

That's you, the MK. You're the GM of **Friendship, Effort, Victory**. Exactly what kind of setting you use doesn't really matter. This hack is more for the general themes that repeat throughout shonen battle manga, not a particular battle manga. It isn't a "generic" anime game: it only really works with battle manga. That said, it isn't tied to a particular motif. Ninjas, pirates, martial artist, whatever! What's important is it embodies the themes and feeling of popular shonen battle manga like **Dragonball, Naruto, and One Piece**.

There are many ways to GM games, but Friendship, Effort, Victory follows Apocalypse World's style of GMing: the GM has an Agenda, Principle, and Moves that define and limit their actions to better emulate the genre.

Here are yours:

AGENDA

- Experience the life of a hot blooded youth rebelling against the world
- Fill your world with battle and emotional strife
- Play to find out how they grow into a strong adult

Experience the life of a hot blooded youth rebelling against the world: The worlds of Shonen comics are full of teenagers with conviction and a rebellious attitude. They go against the status quo and try to create a new one that is ideal. They are at that age where they begin to see what's wrong with the world. They begin to question and condemn. Why were we brought up as ninjas? Why should I just hide my head and not risk myself when bad people run wild? Why does everyone in power have to bully those who aren't? These questions may be naive to some, but are very pointed and appropriate questions that drive the world and action forward.

Fill your world with battle and emotional strife: Shonen battle comics are *battle comics*. They are filled to the brim with flashy struggles and explosive conflicts. These battles tend to be the most memorable parts of the story and are the hallmarks of the genre.



Play to find out how they grow into a strong adult: Don't plan. Don't ever plan. Let the game itself, the moves, the conversation, move play forward. You're not writing a story, you're playing a game. Always play to find out. Shonen stories are about the teenage experience and that includes growing up. As you go through this game and experience the world, the characters should grow up as well. But you should not pre-decide how this will happen: let the world, let play, let the internal logic of things direct that course. You don't get to pre-plan your life, all the events that will happen, and how you will respond to them all: you can only respond when those big moments come. And they will come.

- Be anime as all hell
- Address the characters, not the players
- Scream out your childish ideals with resolute conviction
- Battle with fiery intensity and powerful dialogue
- Keep Battles 1-on-1 as much as possible
- Never be afraid to have a character come off as smug and superior
- Make your move, but never speak its name
- Name those who are important in the moment
- Cause chaos and conflict in the characters' lives
- Be a fan of the player characters
- Think off-screen too
- Ask cutting questions and build on the answers
- Respond with challenge and a well-earned reward

PRINCIPLES

Be anime as all hell: Form a colorful and conflict-riddled shonen battle manga. It's a world full of flash techniques, fierce competitors, and lots of training.

Address yourself to the characters, not the players: Don't say the player' name, say their characters' name.

Scream out your childish ideals with resolute conviction: The villains of shonen battle manga hold simplistic views on the world. Sometimes they are simply villainous and sometimes they follow a flawed, shallow philosophy. Even side characters can find themselves spouting out these details in moments of grief or desperation. And let the player characters prove these wrong through their own actions and ideals.

Battle with intensity and powerful dialogue: Battles lie at the center of shonen battle manga. It's in the name, after all. That doesn't mean everything is a battle, but battles are the center. When they occur, they should be grand and powerful, or at least interesting.

Battles are also not an end of social interaction. Shonen fights are full of conversation and an exchange of ideals, changing character's viewpoints as a result of a battle full of dialogue. So keep your lips moving when the fighting starts.

Keep Battles 1-on-1 as much as possible: Shonen is all about the big 1-on-1 duels. Team-ups are the exception, something special to come up on occasion. Split between scenes, turn bigger battles into 1-on-1 battles by pairing people off, separate the PCs, remind them that they get an XP for doing a battle on their own, and never forget to say that they can still help by just spectating.

Never be afraid to have a villain come off as smug and superior: Shonen villains are full of themselves. They just are. Why? Because, when teenagers rebel, they often are mocked for their folly by someone who claims to just know more than them. In shonen comics, this behavior is folded into a villain to give teenagers an outlet for their annoyance.

Make your move, but never speak its name: MKs have moves that guide their actions. When they come up, don't say their names, just make them: don't say you're splitting up the team, say a wall pops up from the floor.

Name those who are important in the moment: A big way to make a place feel alive is to name those who live in it. We humans associate a lot of meaning with names, so not giving them out can make some characters feel hollow. Don't feel obligated, though, to give the Zakos a name, for example, but people who talk and are important for even a moment should have a name.

Cause chaos and conflict in the characters' lives: The life of a shonen hero is not without strife or trouble. It's quite the opposite. Characters should be pushed and challenged throughout the game to grow and rise to the task. If there is a nice status quo, it should be wrenched down and the characters should find themselves dealing with a constantly changing situation. Things aren't easy, that's why the world needs a hero.

Be a fan of the player characters: Just because you should cause chaos and conflict in the characters' lives does not mean you should try to ruin those lives. Some things are just central to their characters and shouldn't be tampered with. Things that made the character cool to begin with, for example, are a no go. Denying a character success when they worked for it and won is another no go.

FRIENDSHIP, EFFORT, VICTORY!

A good litmus for most people is, if you feel you're going too far (even for a second) you are probably going too far. And, while we are on the subject, these comics are aimed at young teens and are pretty teen friendly: PG-13, tops!

Think Off-Screen Too: Don't just focus on the here and now. Maybe the price of failure is something happening far away that will soon be the character's problem. There are often machinations working against a shonen hero: a conspiracy they know little of themselves. It may not be complex, but it can move forward without their knowledge. Or, even, a more minor thing like an adversary arriving quicker than intended.

Ask cutting questions and build on the answers: Be sure to get an insight into the characters' emotions and past experiences. Characters should have thought bubbles full of details when something big happens. This is not to mention all the times that the comic fades to a flashback. If something big happens to your character, be sure to ask.

Respond with challenge and well-earned rewards: Heroes need to be challenged to grow and mature. If things are going well, then there is no reason to change or fight. When someone fails or goes off to change things, they should run into obstacles that test their physical skills, their morals, and their ideals. Remember: "Friendship, Effort, Victory." When a hero works hard for something, they should be rewarded for their efforts. Life rewards those who put in the effort in shonen battle comics.



MK MOVES

- Separate them
- Capture someone
- Put someone in a spot
- Announce off-screen badness
- Gloat about future badness
- Give the opponent a new form

- Inflict harm
- Inflict a condition
- Unleash a supermove
- Have a flashback
- Take away their stuff
- Activate their stuff's downside
- Challenge a PC's ideology
- Tell them the possible consequences and ask
- Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost
- Turn their move back on them
- Make a threat or villain move

• After every move: "what do you do?"

MK Moves are what the MK relies on to resolve actions. Whenever a player does an action, the MK responds with one of these moves. How hard or soft the moves are, however, are up to the MK in the moment.

Soft moves are when the player can still react. They are ones the MK should use most often. A good rule of thumb is to use one whenever the players, literally or metaphorically, look to the MK and wonder/ask "what's next?" They are the type of move you should be using most often. An example of a soft move would be "the martial artist gets into his stance and charges at you with his fists in a flurry, what do you do?"

Hard moves are when players can't react. They are most often used when a player rolls a 5(-) on a roll. An example of a hard move would be "the martial artists get into his stance and charges at you with his fists in a flurry, take 1-Harm, what do you do?"

There are two additional important things to note from those examples. While both of them cover the same event, the former is more "put someone in a spot" while the later is "inflict harm." Secondly, in neither instance, was the move's name said. It didn't go "I put you in a spot by having him punch at you, what do you do?" Doing it that way kind of breaks the flow of the conversation and weakens the experience. Remember the Principle: Make your move, but never speak its name.



Separate Them: This move is fairly straight-forward. You physically separate the shonen heroes from one another. Perhaps they need to go down different paths, perhaps boulders fall and make walls between them, perhaps they're teleported to separate rooms: the possibilities are endless, but the results are the same. This move is a good fall back when trying to maintain the "keep battles as one-on-one as possible" principle.

Capture Someone: This might sound like it can only be used as a hard move, but it can be a soft move. There are many examples in battle manga of moves meant to entrap someone, not to mention environmental hazards. While the hard move would have them go off, the soft move would leave the shonen hero in the midst of it going off but with a chance to escape. In battle, it can be great to add some tension to the narrative. Outside of battle, it's another way to help keep battles one-on-one as one person being captured keeps them out of the fight, leaving them to the spectate move. This is definitely useful for the jobber and the straight man as their archetypes are often the first to be captured in battle manga.

Put someone in a spot: This is your great fallback move due to its vaguity. It can mean many, many things. It can cover many things. For example:

- Someone pressing an attack (or even just attacking)
- Someone finding out something private and embarrassing about a shonen hero
- Someone just finding themselves at the wrong place at the wrong time.

It's a move you will use often and you'll be glad it's there.

Announce off-screen badness: This one can be taken two ways. It's literal meaning is that someone bad is approaching. Something you have yet to see. One way you can take that is hearing footsteps of a powerful enemy coming up to you. You weren't expecting it, you didn't know they were there, but now they are coming. Or maybe it's just the guards in a building, but that's still bad, especially since you weren't expecting them.

The other way you can take it is a little harder to implement. It's no secret that animes tend to have cutaway scenes to other groups in the story. In this case, you could also use it to have a quick cutaway to the villains accomplishing something bad or sending someone to their location. It's best to keep things short, of course, as these would be NPC only scenes which would be boring to watch. One to five sentences at most, but it can be an interesting tool to establish tension.

An important thing to remember is that the players know, but not the shonen heroes. This kind of information dissonance doesn't work in every group. So, sometimes it's best to not even use this move that way, but it can be interesting from time to time.

Gloat about future badness: This is the villain's speech move. More of a reminder of the key principle "Never be afraid to have a villain come off as smug and superior." Shonen villains are just very smug and, in their own way, will flaunt their victories over the heroes' head. Just like in the comics, this helps establish hatred of the villain and gets the players interested and invested in taking them down. Never underestimate what someone will do when their pride has been hurt.

Give the opponent a new form: Transformations have been a staple of battle manga for a long time. They give the audience the sense that the character has grown in the power and, with this, the battle has somehow escalated. In a way, it's almost cheap tension. It gives the sense that whatever was the status quo of the fight before is now gone. A great thing to pull out when you want some of that "cheap tension." Having the character go "I'm only using 25% of my power. I guess I'll use the other 75% now" is another way of doing this and has the same effect, even if no physical transformation occurs.

Quick warning, it may be cheap tension, but it has its limits. If you do it too often, especially in one fight, then it can numb the effect.

Inflict harm: This one is pretty straightforward. Either directly tell a player to take harm or put them in a position where that is the stake. This move might be a constant go-to in a battle, but don't get too reliant. While it's certainly the expected outcome, one needs to remember the point of a battle isn't for the MK or shonen hero to win, but to make an interesting experience. Don't always default to this in a fight, mix it up to create interesting and dynamic outcomes to failed moves. Lastly, I would highly advise against using this as a hard move unless a player rolled 5(-). It can just be off putting to some players.

Inflict a condition: Pretty much the same thing with inflict harm. However, one should consider the source when doing this move. Players have their own ideas on how their shonen hero may react to something. As conditions are emotional, this may conflict. Using it as a soft move can weaken this punch as failing a roll may make it feel "more fair." Some players, on the other hand, might be fine with it, especially if they agree it makes sense for their character. Wait on using this move until after the first few sessions and you got a good idea of how a player may think.

Unleash a supermove: A hallmark of shonen battle manga is the many powerful techniques the characters know and use. From the simple energy beam, to elaborate traps, to gigantic bombs, to bursts of speed, supermoves are everywhere and are the building blocks of the flashy battle set pieces. Never be afraid to use one. You can never have too many in a fight. While ideally you should always have a cool sounding name for them that they shout out, don't sweat if you can't think of something.

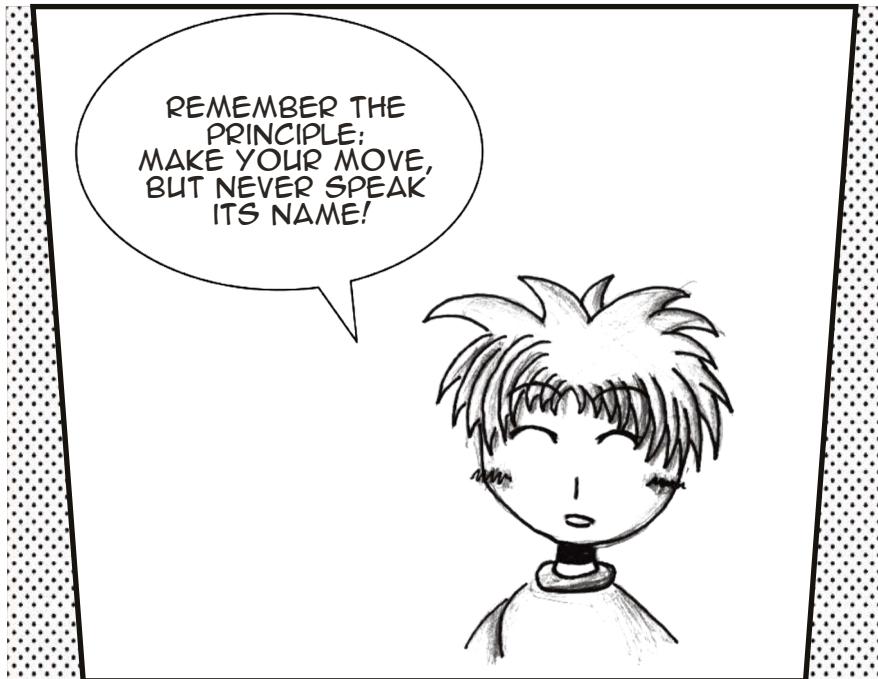
Have a flashback: Shonen battle manga is full of flashbacks. For those unfamiliar with the term, a flashback is a sequence in storytelling where the story goes on pause and the viewer is shown events that occurred previously. Shonen battle manga pull this trope so much that it'd be odd not to do them occasionally, but be careful.

Flashbacks will likely center on a small number of the shonen heroes and that can leave the others out in a lurch. You can use the rules for spectating, either them spectating at the time of the events or them spectating by interrupting the story being told, as a way of avoiding that. Use them sparingly and consider the group.

Also, be sure to consider if the event makes sense for the character. Perhaps pitch the premise to them before doing it. That is, if it is about a particular shonen hero. If it's about a NPC, then feel free to go ahead on whatever premise you feel fits, as long as it doesn't step on the shonen hero's toes.

Flashbacks should be handled narratively with almost no moves, but an occasional one may make sense.

Not to mention that you can just do a quick, five second flashback: "you remember that move from where. The tournament! It's the same move that he used on that other guy!"



Take away their stuff: This one is also very straight forward. The shonen heroes lose something they care about, be they objects or people. The former can be done lightly, especially if they get them back, but the later is a touchy subject. I'd suggest pitching it to the player before going ahead with the idea. It can be a great source of drama to lose someone, but some players may feel it's intrusive. A quick "hey, what do you think if this happens" isn't the end of the world and can avoid some drama. Use the former as you would, the latter sparingly. Taking people too often dulls the punch of it all. Frankly, I'd only do it once every few arcs.

Activate their stuff's downside: Another move that has versatility through vagueness. This can cover anything from a technique, a bit of gear, their own body, etc. It just means something the shonen hero has stops working for them and starts working against them. Maybe they pulled their leg when using a technique and now need to hobble. Maybe their magic sword has become too heavy and they can't lift it or fight with it. Maybe their explosive goes off too early and blows up in their face. The possibilities are endless.

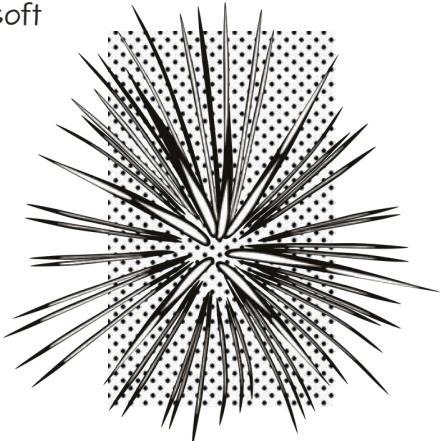
Challenge a PC's ideology: To start off, I'm talking about player characters, not players. The shonen heroes, not the people behind them. Don't attack or challenge the other person's belief unless you want an actual argument. Character beliefs are totally on the table, though.

That out of the way, shonen battle manga is full of exchanges of ideology. The seemingly naive and idealistic but confident and capable teenager calling an older, cynical villain on their self-serving rationalizations and delusions is a staple of many battle manga. But that street goes both ways. There is no end to villains in battle manga mocking and pointing out the flaws and naivety inherent with the shonen heroes' beliefs. Ideally, the results of the battle show the strength of the purity of their ideals, but not all battles are won either.

It's another great way to give the players a reason to fight against and get involved with a villain and it's a way of making a battle more than just an exchange of fists and beams.

Tell them the possible consequences and ask: This drives into a basic thing I brought up a few times on the more harmful moves: sometimes you should warn them ahead of time what's going to happen. It can add tension. It's not as if the shonen heroes are dumb. It's a trope in these comics for them to over analyze the situation and explain how something can go wrong. While many done for brevity and the audience's benefit, it serves the same function here. A shonen hero may full well know the risks because they are competent in battle or whatever and can assess a possible consequence and then decide if they want to go with that course of action.

Just remember you can always do a soft move if they spend too long contemplating their next action. It's okay to take some time to consider, but the game session only lasts so long and the world isn't standing still, just slowed down so to speak.



Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost: This is a great way to play with character motivation. You give someone a chance at doing something, but there is a catch. There might not be, but you could put one on. If you do, don't feel a need to hide it. Consider, again, the above move.

But, it can be great for drama to go "you see your brother, the many who killed your family, walking away. You must go avenge them! But, if you do, you have to abandon your friend in the middle of this battle. They might lose, not to mention how they'll take it. What do you do?" There is an opportunity ("revenge") and a cost ("abandoning their friend in a bad situation.") It creates some internal drama, develops the character, can make some interpersonal drama and drives the story forward one-way or another.

Turn their move back on them: This means that whatever they attempted works back against them. Maybe they were trying to make a deal with someone, but ended up caught to agreeing to something instead. A classic scenario is between two player characters. One is trying to get the other to listen to them and fails with a 5(-). Thus, the other player gets to make the other player listen to them as if they rolled a 9+. Essentially, their failure translated into the other's full success. It is best done with PCs as the move being turned back on them will be made with PCs in mind.

With NPCs, it's best to just handle it narratively. If the NPC is turning the move back on them, then it's more a narration. The player got a 5(-) trying to make an NPC listen to them so the NPC makes a counter-offer to them where they benefit more and leave that deal open. The player still has agency and can refuse, but it's the only chance they can get to get what they want now, they can't redo the move (something to generally never allow unless the situation materially changes).

Sometimes, you might want to turn an NPC's move back on them. Since NPC moves are narrative, handle it narratively. Have their big supermove blow up in their face comically. Whatever fits the mood of the scene and what you're going for.

Make a threat or villain move: This will be explored more later, but villains and threats have their own moves. As such, you can use them as if they were MK moves. It's as simple as that, really.

**AFTER EVERY MOVE:
ASK "WHAT DO YOU DO?"**

Doing this helps remind players of their agency. What do THEY do after these events? They know they're expected to react, they have something to react to, and, through their character sheet, have means to react. It keeps players moving. That said, you don't need to exactly say this every time. It can be repetitive so you can change the wording.

Also, if you're chaining moves into each other, "I use my big beam attack and...I can't control it, oh no!", then wait until the chain ends. But, really, that just means wait until it makes sense for the player to react.

Arcs

Arcs are a series of linked threats that progress and grow against the characters. Threats are people, places, and conditions that, by their nature, will bring them into conflict with the characters.

Making an Arc requires making decisions about the backstory and motivations of NPCs. It's best done between sessions so you have some time to think things through. Never do them before the 1st session, though.

An arc has some apparently mechanical components, but it's fundamentally conceptual, not mechanical. The purpose of your prep is to give you interesting things to say. As MK you're going to be playing your arcs, playing your threats, but that doesn't mean anything mechanical. It means saying what they do. It means offering opportunities to the players to have their characters do interesting things, and it means responding in interesting ways to what the players have their characters do.

When you make an Arc, choose what sparks your own interest. What you would like to see in a shonen comic. Ignore what doesn't interest you.



FRIENDSHIP, EFFORT, VICTORY!

To create an Arc, do the following:

- Choose a Need
- Create 3 or 4 threats
- Write its Agenda/Dark Future
- Write 2-4 Dreams
- List the Arc's cast
- Create the Arc's countdown

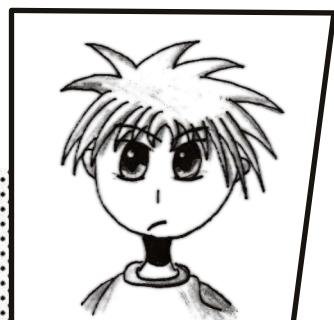


Underlying every Arc is a Need. Choose 1:

-SAFETY	-DUTY	-IDEALISM	-FEAR	-POWER
-GLORY	-REVENGE	-IGNORANCE	-EGO	-CHAOS

Ask yourself: Whose desire for power could put the characters at risk? Who fears the characters or their affiliations enough to act against them? Who is idealistic enough to enact a foolhardy and dangerous plan? Who seeks revenge against the characters? And so on down the list. Eventually, something will hit you. They may not even really know the figure yet, but they know its presence!

So copy down the need and create the appropriate NPCs. Keep making characters until you have 3-4 threats.





There are five categories of threats. When you create a threat, choose 1, then define their needs:

-HORDE -LONE WOLF -SOCIETY -AFFLICTION -LANDSCAPE

¤ Horde

A Horde is an evil ruler and those who serve them. They could be opposing kingdoms or organizations. An evil army is a common one or a corrupt kingdom or government.

Choose a kind of Horde:

- Army (impulse: to conquer and control)
- Insurgents (impulse: to spread fear and chaos)
- Shadow (impulse: revenge)
- Criminal (impulse: take what isn't theirs)
- Dreamers (impulse: fulfill a dream)

MK MOVES FOR HORDES:

- ATTACK WITHOUT WARNING
- AIM FOR THE TOP AND CRUSH WHO STANDS THERE NOW
- SEND AN EMISSARY
- GET AWAY WITH AN IMPORTANT ITEM
- REVEAL A PLANNED SURPRISE
- SURGE WITH ENDLESS REINFORCEMENTS
- PLAY PEOPLE AGAINST EACH OTHER
- MAKE A SHOW OF FORCE
- TRICK A POWERFUL OR IMPORTANT PERSON TO BELIEVE YOUR BENEVOLENCE
- RECRUIT A FORMER ENEMY
- WOUND A POWERFUL ALLY OF YOUR ENEMIES

FRIENDSHIP, EFFORT, VICTORY!



¤ Lone Wolf

A Lone Wolf is a force of nature made flesh. They act alone and command great power. They are those big bad guys who need no army, no friends, or allies: they are destruction incarnate even when they're alone.

Choose a kind of Lone Wolf:

- Monster (impulse: to consume and destroy)
- Wanderer (impulse: To challenge worthy foes)
- Selfish (impulse: to grow their own power)
- Enraged (impulse: to destroy the source of their fury)
- Misguided (impulse: to deliver their own brand of justice)
- Ruler (impulse: to control all there is)

MK MOVES FOR LONE WOLVES:

- DESTROY WITHOUT REMORSE
- TAKE THE LIVES OF MANY INNOCENTS
- DEFEAT A POWERFUL OR IMPORTANT PERSON ON A WHIM
- BARREL THROUGH BYSTANDERS ON THE WAY TO A GOAL
- CHALLENGE SOMEONE TO SINGLE COMBAT
- PROCLAIM THEIR GOALS AND DESIRES
- SHOW SUPERIORITY AND SKILL
- KIDNAP SOMEONE OF IMPORTANCE
- SPREAD PANIC AND FEAR
- FIND A KEY TO GROWING IN POWER

¤ Society

Society is the systems and social norms we agree to when we live with other humans. It isn't always just or moral and can be oppressive and corrupt. Forces from the shadows or from external sources can grow its ills as well. It isn't just a government, an army, or something tangible: it can just be the thoughts and culture that prevail across the entire world. It's the world's soul that's the threat.

Choose which kind of Society:

- Shadow Government (impulse: to oppress and obfuscate)
- Cycle of War (impulse: breed a cycle of hate and war)
- Military Government (impulse: use might to retain order)
- Corrupt Government (impulse: betray people for their own goals)
- Scapegoat (impulse: blame innocents for others' wrongdoings)
- Unfamiliar (impulse: to ostracize and confuse)

MK MOVES FOR SOCIETY:

- ORGANIZE THE LAW AGAINST SOMEONE
- LASH OUT AGAINST SOMEONE OVER A MISUNDERSTANDING
- LIE ABOUT SOMEONE'S ACTIONS AND INTENTIONS
- MAKE DEALS WITH SOMEONE
- SEND SOMEONE OF GREAT POWER AGAINST ANOTHER
- BRING DOWN THE FULL FORCE OF SOCIETY
- BETRAY AN ALLY
- TRY TO MAKE SOMEONE TURN AGAINST THEIR FRIEND.
- REPLACE SOMEONE IN POWER WITH SOMEONE WORSE
- RESTRAIN OR LOCK AWAY SOMEONE



FRIENDSHIP, EFFORT, VICTORY!

¤ Affliction

Strong bodies can still get ill and it can take someone out of a fight. Perhaps it's one of the PCs or an important NPC. Think of the Heart Virus Goku contracted, Luffy being poisoned by Magellan, and Naraku's many attempts to force another's hand through poison and illness.

Choose which kind of Affliction:

- Disease (impulse: to debilitate and harm)
- Poison (impulse: to weaken and expire)
- Hostage NPC (impulse: to save themselves or their friends)
- Cursed (impulse: to hinder)
- Beast Within (impulse: to dominate host)

MK MOVES FOR AFFLICITION:

- MAKE SOMEONE SLUGGISH AND HAGGARD
- PARALYZE WITH PAIN
- TRIP SOMEONE UP
- MAKE SOMEONE LASH OUT AT ANOTHER
- DISTRACT SOMEONE WITH SUDDEN, VIOLENT SYMPTOMS
- PUSH SOMEONE TO SACRIFICE
- FILL OTHERS WITH UNEASE
- INSPIRE HATRED



☒ Landscape

Sometimes, the location itself is a threat. People can easily find themselves in a dangerous location that puts them at risk. Think of Impel Down, Pilaf's sun room, or the exploding planet Namek.

Choose which kind of Landscape:

- Prison (impulse: to contain)
- Maze (impulse: to confuse and redirect)
- Stronghold (impulse: to crush and deter)
- inhospitable (impulse: to kill)
- Infested (impulse: to attack and swarm)
- Dying (impulse: to collapse)

MK MOVES FOR LANDSCAPE:

- SWARM AND SURROUND
- CONFUSE OR MISLEAD SOMEONE
- TRAP SOMEONE
- SICKEN SOMEONE
- LEAD ONE TO A POWERFUL OPPONENT
- BLOCK THE WAY
- BURST WITH DANGER
- IMPOSE A TIME LIMIT



MK THREAT MOVES

For all the MK's threat moves, the someone or something can refer to a PC or NPC. That said, some are more clear on who it refers to such as "take the lives of many innocents." Regardless, there is a fair amount of interpretation allowed with these moves like all MK moves.

Remember, you're the one making the move, even if "someone" is a PC.

Regardless, treat these moves like you treat your MK moves.

DESCRIPTION AND CAST

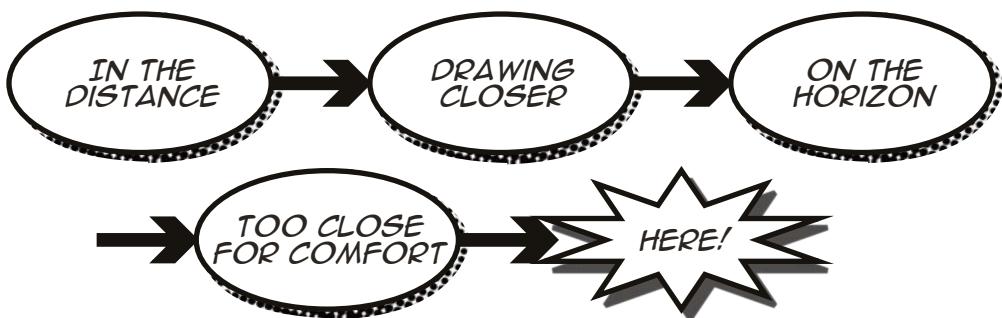
Write a quick description of the threat and a list of names of people involved with the threat.



COUNTDOWN TRACK

A countdown track is a means of reminding you that your threats have plans and direction of their own.

When you create a threat and you have a vision of its future, make a countdown track. If you don't, then don't worry: you can also add countdown tracks to threats you've already created.



- While the threat is **in the distance**, that threat is coming, but preventable. What will set it off?
- While a threat is **drawing closer**, that threat is in motion, but can be stopped. What can stop it?
- While the threat is **on the horizon**, that threat is inevitable, but there is still time to brace for impact. What signals it?
- When the threat is **too close for comfort**, that threat is at your doorstep, but hasn't gotten you yet. Is there a last minute hope?
- When the threat is **here**, the threat gets its full, active expression. What is it?

As you play, continue down the tracks at their own pace by checking off boxes.

Countdown tracks are both descriptive and prescriptive. *When something you've listed happens, continue down the track to that point. When you go down the track, it causes the things you've listed.* Furthermore, countdown tracks can be **derailed**: when something happens that changes circumstances so that the countdown no longer makes sense, scribble it out.



Once you've created 3 or 4 threats, come back to the Arc overall. Name it and give it a short description about what will happen if nobody stops it.

☒ Dreams

Write 2-4 questions about the fate and aspirations of different PCs and NPCs you're interested in. Mostly named NPCs.

You can write your dreams at a wide range of scales, but here are some **jumping-off points**:

- A person or small group's livelihood or lives.
- The aspirations of a person or small group.
- The safety, success, failure, growth, or decline, in some particular way, of a group of people.
- The safety and stability of the world or large part of it.

Dreams should be concrete and their risk of failure should have consequences. Inari and Tazuna want their village to be connected and able to grow and prosper. The people of Earth want to be delivered from the horrors of the Saiyans. Soul Society must stop Aizen from attacking the Soul King's Palace or else none of them may survive.

They should be things you're interested in finding out, not deciding. You must not answer the question yourself. I repeat, you must not answer the question yourself. You're committing to let the game's fiction's own internal logic and causality, driven by the players' characters, answer it.

☒ Cast

List all the names of NPCs involved in the Arc, from all its threats.

☒ Overall Countdown

Use these tracks to coordinate threats and events across your front.

First Session

The first session is important. It's the starting part where your hot-blooded adventure of youth begins. It's where the world is born, the players make their characters and meet, and the group is established. It's important to get it right.

Before The First Session

When they are made, get a print-out of all the playbooks, the MK sheet, and the 1st Session sheet. They don't exist yet so... looseleaf? Notepad? I'm sure you'll figure something out.

Get familiar with your Agenda, Principles and MK moves. These are what you'll be working with and they are your rules.

Familiarize yourself with the rules for making Arcs. Do not write an arc.

Watch some Shonen shows, but don't commit yourself to any story or particular world.

You need to establish the premise. FEV tries to emulate the shonen battle comics style, not a particular setting: it's a type of story not tied to a specific style of setting unlike Apocalypse World.

Ask yourself the following questions to get everyone on the same page for the first session:

- What's the big aesthetic of this comic? Pirates? Ninjas? Ghosts? Something else?
- What gives people power? Is there anything that gives them power or is the world just like that? Ki? Jutsu? Magic? Or just skill?
- Why do people fight? What motivates most people? Is there some big goal? To be the best? Head of a country? Peace?
- Does something tie all the characters together? A tournament? A shared master? A shared enemy? An academy? Something else?
- How is this world different? Is it mystical? Medieval? Science Fiction? Something else?
- What is the name of this manga?

While everyone owns the world, the MK plays it. While players add to it, it's important for the MK to make the initial premise for their own interest, but only up to this point. After this point, let it go: let play decide the rest.

During the First Session

Character creation should happen in a group. Help answer questions when they come up.

Go around for introductions and establish ties.

Now, you have some details on the world from before the first session and characters, but this isn't all. Your first session should focus on a big, transitional day in the characters' lives. Show, don't tell.

This doesn't mean it will be a good day. There will be conflict and stuff will happen. These conflicts will establish the world in broad strokes.

Think about your favorite shonen anime. Their first episodes follow one of their main characters on an average day until they run into a big conflict that shows off the uniqueness of their world and pushes them to a new life.

A lot happened even if it was just following them around for a day and it left them in positions they couldn't return from.

These episodes also sketch out the rest of the cast. We learned a lot about the people they meet along their initial adventure in those episodes as well. Unlike many of those shows, however, a lot of those characters will likely remain big members of the cast going forward, where most shonen manga introduce one-off characters for the initial story. After all, the cast is your initial play group.

Remember, everyone should get established because, unlike those shows, there isn't a main character.

Don't forget your Agenda, Principles, and Moves. Those don't go away just because it's the first session.

Remember, first session or not, you're still playing the game:

BRING THE GAME

But especially, do these:

- **Describe.** Be anime as hell
- **Springboard off character creation**
- **Ask questions like crazy**
- **Leave yourself things to wonder about**
- **Look for** where they are not in control, not experienced about, or otherwise unfamiliar
- **Push there**
- **Nudge the players** to have the character's make moves
- **Give every character good screen time** with the other characters
- **Leap forward** with named NPCs
- **Get into a battle**
- **Fill-out the 1st session sheet**

Describe. Be Anime As Hell: You've got a lot to work when it comes to describing the world. Character creation leads to a theme and a lot of information on the most important characters. You may know what people value or the big important events of the world or other such details.

Springboard Off Character Creation: The player characters are made of interesting details. The Forever Young might have a group of close friends, the Mentor may have his own school or students, the Guardian may have an order who tasked them to protect someone. These details are great building blocks and jumping off points. Make everyone human! Look at the relationships everyone made when they established ties!

Ask Questions Like Crazy: Ask about what the world looks like, what kind of technology people have, what lives people lead: don't just tell, share. Turn questions back on the PCs like "I don't know, why is the world full of superpowered teens?"

But especially, anything you want to know, ask. Anything you think might be interesting later, ask. Anything a player says that sticks out, anything that seems like the tip of an iceberg, or like fish moving under water, ask.

Leave Yourself Things To Wonder About: There are going to be moments where little details or interesting snippets will reveal themselves. You'll just be going along and your player will mention something or someone that will make you think "there might be a lot more to that thing."

Sometimes, it might even happen with your own NPCs. You'll just be chatting along and realize something is kind of interesting or an opportunity with what's being presented.

For now, maybe it's just best to mark it down somewhere and keep it in the back of your mind.

FRIENDSHIP, EFFORT, VICTORY!

Look For Where They Are Not In Control, Not Experienced About, Or Otherwise Unfamiliar: Shonen comics are about the lives of teenagers and their experiences. They still have a lot to know about the world. Heck, even older figures lack full knowledge on things. There is a lot they may not know and a lot that looms on the horizon.

Something can just be stuff close to home that they can't control like how Ichigo can't always keep his family out of danger or predict when hollows will show up. It could be things they are not experienced with like how they know little of the outside world or how to be a person. It could even just be parts of the world they are unfamiliar with like how they might be unfamiliar with what it really means to be a ninja and the hidden truths of their village.

The world is a big, scary place and people don't know all of it. The characters may want to feel safe and secure, but they are going to find that there is a lot out of their control and knowledge that will be a threat to them.

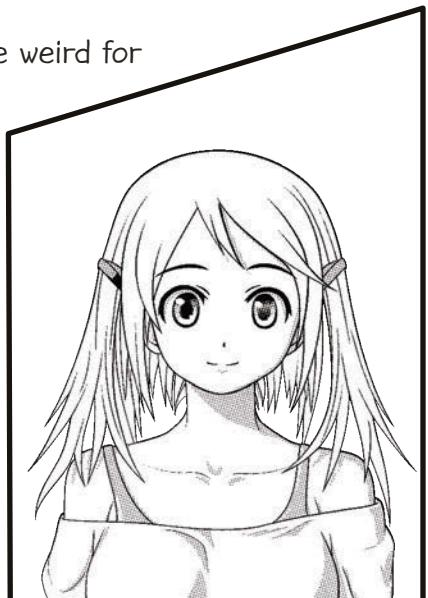
Push There: The MK move for pushing is announce future badness. They might just be going out of business, but having their ignorance pushed into their face is likely to happen. They are a transformational part of their lives, after all. Ichigo might just be heading to school, but then a nearby building bursts open as a soul reaper and a hollow are locked in battle. Nothing happens to him there, but it sure isn't the last time he'll encounter either entity.

The world they knew is about to go crashing down and the status quo they lived their lives with is about to end. Help it along.

Nudge The Players To Make Moves:

Powered By The Apocalypse is a little weird for traditional roleplayers and newcomers alike. You might have to nudge people along to make moves and act. Maybe they ran into a person they are wary of and you push for them to Read Them. Maybe they're lost on what to do so you ask them to Figure Things Out.

It's also a good idea to have everyone mention what moves they picked for their characters when they introduce themselves. Keeping that in mind might help you push them to action.



Give Every Character Good Screen Time With The Other Characters:

Bring people on stage in pairs or triplets. Let them all get on board and act around with each other. Some of the groupings are obvious, some unlikely. Play with them a bit and maybe give them a reason to talk to each other.

Build on what they said during character creation, especially when establishing ties. "So, you are mentor and student, let's see you two training." "You're one of the few who the Possessed trusted with knowledge of their beast, maybe we should deal with it rising up while they're around." "You chose to be that guy's rival. Let's put you two together for a bit."

Invent bad news to tell the other players. "You were walking around when you overheard that the person your friend walked off with can't be trusted. What do you do?" "You sense a strong presence barreling towards your friend's house. What do you do?"

Make pairings and have the characters justify them. Ask them how they found themselves in a situation. "Gintoki, looks like you were just enjoying your parfait when Shinpachi finds himself being harassed by this ritzy, pretentious Amanto. He's just harassing him, but it looks like it will escalate. Why are you both here, anyway?"

Leap Forward With Named NPCs: Remember, name your NPCs. Make them human. They aren't just "that ninja teacher" or "that hollow," they're Iruka-Sensei and Fishbone D. Naming people is a big deal in Shonen comics and, more often than not, names of new characters will appear in a box in front of them when they first arrive: in other words, be sure to drop their names when people arise.

Remember how to make NPCs human? Give them simple, straight forward desires and interests. Iruka wants his students to succeed and be happy. Isshin loves his kids and wishes he could see ghosts too. Cody wants to get free of Alvira and join the Marines.

Get Into A Battle: Fights happen and happen often. Don't let the first session hold you back. Maybe an argument escalates between rivals, maybe they are out on a routine mission to sweep monsters, or maybe they just find themselves attacked by what they don't know or understand.

Better get used to fighting because it's going to happen a lot.

Fill Out The 1st Session Sheet: This is a little dubious because this doesn't exist yet. We're working on it. Give it time. Until then, use some loose-leaf and we'll mention what sections will be on the final version.

Don't use the **Apocalypse World** 1st Session sheet because it's built for a very, very different experience.

The PCs will be in the center in a circle, like in the **Apocalypse World** 1st Session Sheet. Surrounding them will be sections on Relationships, Ignorance, The World, Theme, and NPCs.

You mention the player's relationships to PCs and NPCs under Relationships.

You mention what the player's know nothing about under Ignorance.

You mention established facts on the world that were created during play and character creation under The World.

You write down the theme you all decided on during character creation under Theme.

You write down the NPCs you've encountered and know under NPCs.

There will be two sidebars: I Wonder and Threats.

You write down holes, maybe from ignorance, that made you wonder and want to keep in mind.

You write down possible enemies and threats that cropped up under Threats.

This will all be more intuitive once the sheet is made.

After the First Session

Give yourself some time to let everything sink in. Maybe think about this during work your next day...if you can do it without getting caught.

Go through the list of Ignorance. What do they not know? Look over some of the Threats that cropped up. Linking them together can make for some good Arcs. "Those ghosts were pretty mysterious, but the grim reapers are even more so. Can they be trusted to always be the good guys?" "Ramen has a demon within him. That isn't just going to go away. He doesn't know much about it, what will happen if he is pushed too far?" "Strawhat might be a good pirate, but the Marines certainly don't see it that way. How long can he play his dreams of King before he starts to attract dangerous attention?"

Take these threats and build them into Arcs. Take the things you wonder about and rewrite them as Dreams.



The 2nd Session and Beyond

Things don't really change. Keep doing as you were doing except now you have Arcs and Dreams to take care of, so introduce them.

The End Of A Villain

The Powered By The Apocalypse engine, and Friendship, Effort, Victory by extension, does not do the "forever campaign" well from a mechanics standpoint. Most believe an ideal campaign for this engine should not go past 10 sessions. However, shonen battle comics tend to be long running affairs.

This conflict would be unsolvable if it weren't for the comics' structure. Characters grow, but, each arc, they sometimes have to go through similar hoops on their new adventure. Sometimes, characters go back on their development or go through a similar development they experienced on their previous adventure.

Whenever a villain is defeated for good, every player "resets" their character. They lose all but two moves, their techniques, and their transformations. They may also choose to change playbook or retire their character. If they change playbooks, the new playbook can get two moves from before the reset, regardless of what playbook they're from, keep any techniques and transformations unlocked. If you retire your character, your new character starts with two advancements.

NPCs

There are four main types of NPCs: the average person, Zakos, generals, and a villain.

Average People

Average People are like you and me: just normal people. They might hold positions of power or be quite smart, but they aren't heroes or villains. They round out the world and hold positions in it. They are people like the ramen shop owner, Teuchi, or Ichigo's sisters, Yuzu and Karin.

While Average People should always, always be named, they don't really get stats.



Zakos

Zakos are the faceless mooks of little importance that serve stronger people. Like Average People, they don't get stats and, probably, won't receive names since the players will probably not talk to them. Not that they don't have names, but, when you're wiping them out in droves, it doesn't tend to come up. If they aren't being destroyed by the dozen, their names should crop up from time to time.



The big, bad NPCs are **the villains**. They are the big bads that everything builds up to. They are movers and shakers, villains put up a battle and can take harm unlike the other two types of NPCs. Then, however, who are the myriad of the lesser bad guys that protect the big bad? They are **the generals**. These two types of NPCs are very important.

Villains have Generals working for them and, as long as the generals are running around, the villain is near invincible. To be more clear, **when a villain still has at least one general who have not been defeated at least once (or killed)**, shonen warriors fighting them must choose this as their 6,7,8 option during a serious battle:

- You cannot avoid their counterattack

In addition, instead of a Knocked-out and Dead box, Villains have a Setback and Flee box as long as they still have generals. Like a PC, they can choose to check off their Flee box to fully heal. If they do so, they must flee when the battle ends. Once all their generals lose at least once (or are killed), Villains get a PC's condition track.

Generals and Villains are built in a similar fashion.

Generals have the same Status Track as a PC, except they do not choose to mark the Dead box, the PC attacking does. Villains have the previously explained status tracker as long as they have active generals, but get a PC's status track when they don't. PCs don't need to kill a General to remove them from play. They simply need to defeat them once: mark their name under the Villain's list to keep track.

Generals and Villains have a varying number of conditions that they can take during the battle. Like PCs, they can choose to take one or the other during a fight whenever they take harm. The number of conditions and what conditions are decided by the MK when making the NPC. Some may make sense to have Angry while others should have Guilty. Generals should have 1-2 conditions, and Villains have 3-4.

In addition, they have a set of their own moves to use during battle known as villain moves. These are like MK moves, but specific. Not “inflict harm”, but “Destroy the environment”, “Threaten innocents”, or “Take On A Stronger Form.” They have 3-5 villain moves. When you make their moves, you are actually making the most appropriate MK move to represent the narrative, as usual. However, these moves should guide you and help reinforce what this villain or general is really like. When they have control of a battle, they use one of these moves then relent control.

Whenever they take a Condition, they make a Condition move based on what Condition is chosen. This move is them responding negatively, foolishly, or rashly to the circumstances and the emotions they invoked.

Afraid

- Put up defenses and obstacles
- Try to make distance between you and your adversary
- Make a distraction
- Plead for mercy with a dagger behind your back
- Try to change your opponent out with someone weaker

Angry

- Destroy something important
- Leave yourself open going after someone they care for
- Waste your energy in a flurry of blows
- Charge head first blinded with rage
- Waste time and energy on a powerful, unnecessary move

Hopeless

- Make a deal to buy time
- Seek a way to increase your power
- Call in reinforcements
- Use a suicide attack
- Burn down the world around you

Insecure

- Doubt your course of action
- Follow someone else's lead
- Admit to their mistakes
- Do something drastic and foolish
- Double-down on a terrible idea

Whenever a move says "take X (condition), regardless of if you have it", you take that condition and erase one of your other conditions. If you only have Angry and Afraid, for example, and you have to take Insecure, you take Insecure and erase either Angry or Afraid. They remain erased until Insecure, in this example, is unmarked.

Outside of that, they also have an Agenda and an emotion.

The main difference is that the Villains list the Generals under their employ. Until every name has been marked off, the Villain still has the previously mentioned bonuses. Generals can be a group of generals. For example, the Ten Blades can be listed as one unit and only count as defeated once all ten members of the Ten Blades have been defeated. Certain Generals can have their own Generals. If they do, they function like a Villain.

Example Generals

Pomelo

Agenda: Serve Lord Refrigerator

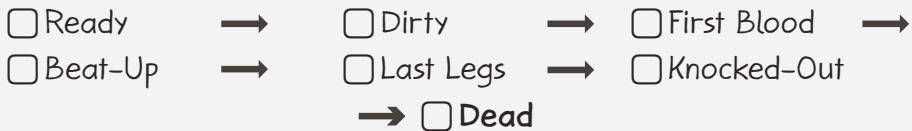
Emotion: Proper Manners

Villain: Refrigerator

Group: Refrigerator's Army

Generals: None

- Transform into an ugly beast
- Strike with elegant or bestial grace or wrath
- Be secretly or overtly menacing



Angry Insecure

Masked Man

Agenda: Make A Better World

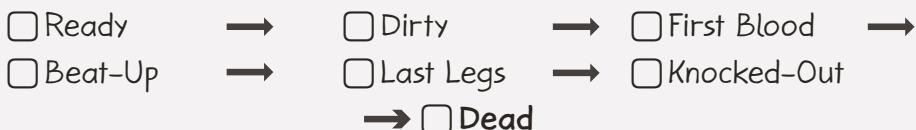
Emotion: Desperation and Cynicism

Villain: Dara

Group: None

Generals: None

- Become incorporeal
- Teleport somewhere else nearby
- Drag into another world
- Reveal hidden strength



Angry Guilty

Grimshaw

Agenda: Rage against the world and the strong

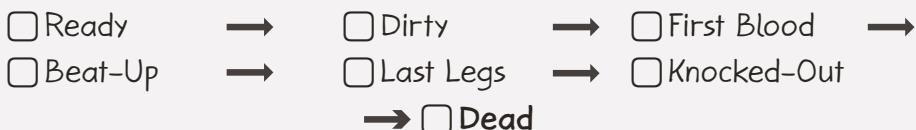
Emotion: Anger

Villain: Aizen

Group: The Ten Blades

Generals: None

- Lash out recklessly
- Rant in a rage
- Hit with a devastating force
- Reveal your resurrection



Angry Insecure

Example Villains

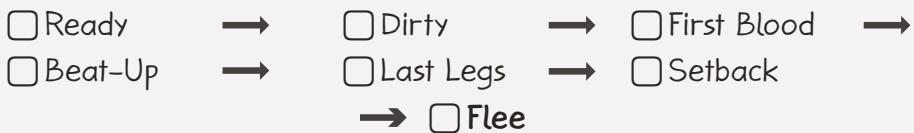
Refrigerator

Agenda: Acquire Immortality

Emotion: Smug Superiority

Generals: Durian, Pomelo, The Breakfast Force

- Transform into a more powerful form
- Threaten an innocent
- Destroy the environment
- Toy with your opponent
- Lash out in desperation with a sneaky strike



Afraid Angry Hopeless Insecure



Dara

Agenda: End Suffering Through A World Of Dreams

Emotion: Cold Determination

Generals: Masked Man, The Undead Army

- Revel in your superior ability
- Unleash an ancient technique
- Reveal the next part of the plan



Taiyo

Agenda: Dethrone The Soul King

Emotion: Smug

Generals: Jin, Sen, The Ten Blades

- Reveal everything was part of your plan
- Reveal things were an illusion
- Make them question themselves
- Reveal more and more of your peerless power



Zakos, Generals, Villains And Harm

When it comes to NPCs, it can be hard to determine how much harm is delivered when they attack. Their moves don't inform it. As such, it is left up to the MK to decide based on the nature of the attack.

1-Harm: A normal strike or blow such as a flurry of punches or single weapons or energy attacks.

2-Harm: A technique of some sort, anything that would have the character screaming its name when they strike.

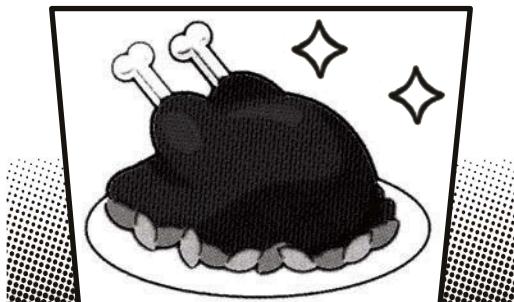
3-Harm: A supermove. Something that would be devastating and take a long time to charge-up. Something that would alter the battlefield when it struck or alter the nature of the fight from that moment onward.

It is left to the MK to decide what makes sense in context. Remember, it's rare for more than one supermove to be done in a Shonen battle, techniques happen often but are not every attack, and normal flurries and minor attacks are plentiful and almost ever-present. Try to keep a tempo that keeps the battle interesting without feeling monotonous and try to match the tone of the fight.

Using a supermove every attack is, as previously explained, out of genre and the Shonen heroes would likely grow annoyed with a MK who does so. After all, no one liked that when Kubo pulled it in the 100 Year Blood War arc. Using a bunch of techniques, especially ones that are creative such as making duplicates, trapping people in explosive cages, or transforming another's form, are like a spice: they make a meal delicious but overspiced food makes people sick. Jumping off that metaphor, it's also true no one liked boiled chicken and doing nothing but punches and kicks is the boiled chicken of shonen battles.

You should also consider the type of foes:

- **Zakos** can never deal more than 1-Harm
- **Generals** should have techniques, but only some should have supermoves.
- **Villains** should rarely do anything that isn't at least 2-Harm.



WHY AREN'T THERE STATS?

ONE MIGHT BE WONDERING WHY THERE AREN'T STATS. A LOT OF THIS COMES DOWN TO ACCOMMODATING LONG-TERM PLAY.

WHENEVER A VILLAIN ENDS, THE ARC RESETS AND YOUR CHARACTER GOES BACK TO BASICS. THIS IS TO EMULATE THE FIGHT-TRAIN-FIGHT-TRAIN DYNAMIC OF SHONEN BATTLE COMICS. IN THE PREVIOUS DRAFT, STATS WERE RETAINED AS IS SO YOUR CHARACTER DIDN'T FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE. AN ISSUE THAT INTRODUCES, HOWEVER, IS THAT ONE CAN EVENTUALLY END UP WITH A +3 IN EVERY STAT, IF THE GAME IS PLAYED LONG ENOUGH.

+3 IS A POWERFUL BONUS IN THESE KINDS OF GAMES. YOU NEED ONLY A 4 ON 2D6 TO PARTIALLY SUCCEED AND WILL, ON AVERAGE, GET FULL SUCCESSES (THE AVERAGE OF 2D6 IS 7 THEN ADD 3), WHICH ARE A LITTLE BORING. GETTING EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT ALL THE TIME IS AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THIS ENGINE AND LEADS TO BORING PLAY.

THERE WERE TWO SOLUTIONS THAT I COULD SEE TO THIS PROBLEM. THE FIRST WAS TO RESET STATS IN SOME WAY AND THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED SOMEWHAT GENRE APPROPRIATE. HOWEVER, AS STATS REINFORCE NARRATIVE AND CHARACTER, IT CAN BE ODD TO PLAYERS WHO WONDER WHY THEIR CHARACTER'S PERSONALITY SUDDENLY CHANGED WITHOUT IMPETUS. ONE COULD LOOK TO THE EVENTS OF THE STORY, AND SHOULD IN GENERAL, TO GUIDE POST ARC DECISIONS, BUT IT MIGHT NOT ALWAYS GEL. I BELIEVE THE TERM IS "DISSOCIATED MECHANICS?"

THE SECOND SOLUTION WAS TO REMOVE STATS SO AS TO REMOVE THE PROBLEM AT ITS CORE. THIS HAS ITS OWN BENEFITS AND FLAWS. ON ONE HAND, IT FOCUSES THE GAME LESS ON NUMBERS, REMOVES ALMOST ALL MATH, AND CAN BE SEEN TO ALLOW MORE FREEDOM IN HOW YOU INTERPRET YOUR CHARACTER'S PERSONALITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT CAN NEGATIVELY AFFECT HOW PLAYERS VIEW THEIR CONTROL OVER SUCCESS, LOSE THE NARRATIVE REINFORCEMENT OF ARCHETYPE, AND MAKES THE MAIN BATTLE MOVE LOSE SOME KICK.

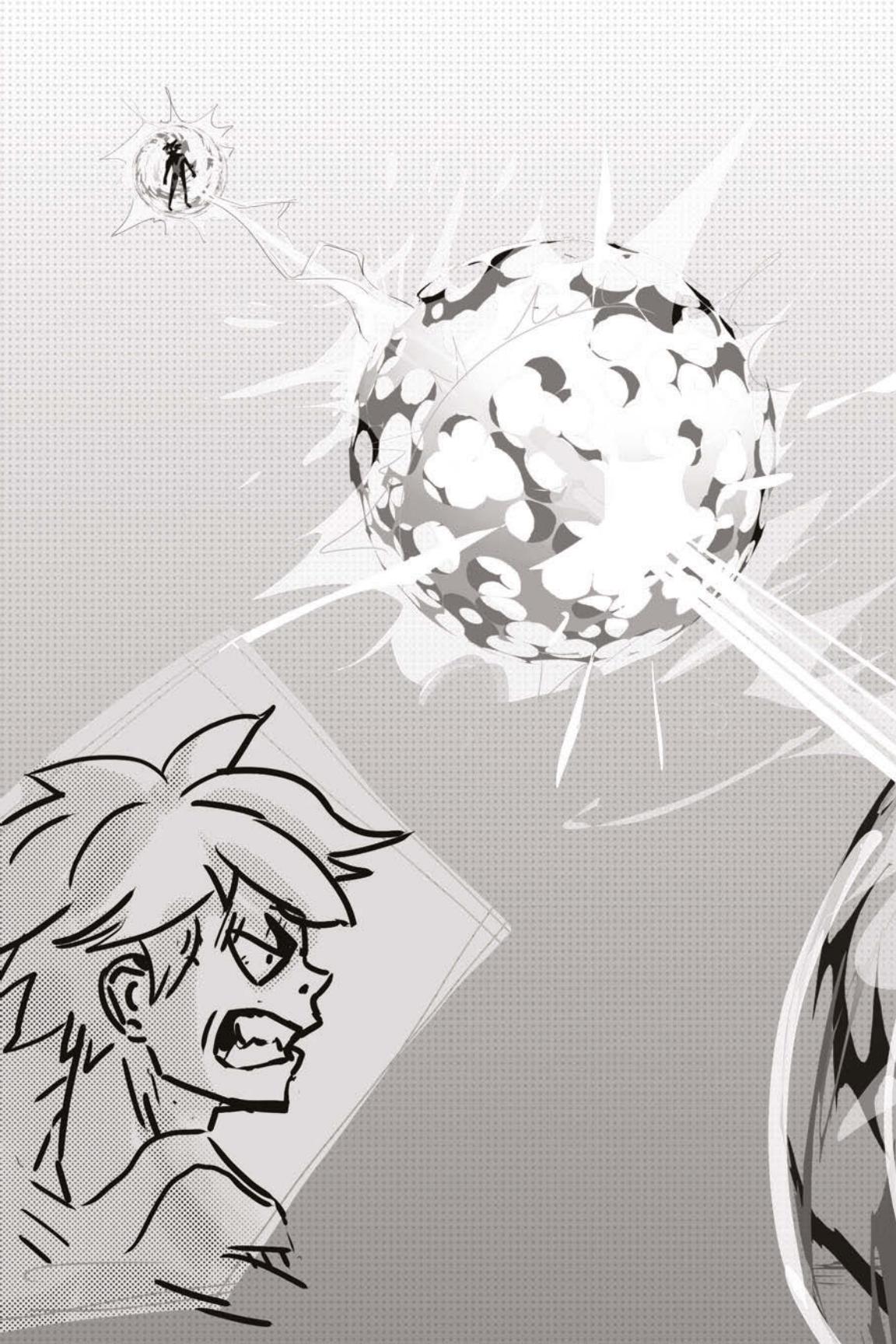
I DECIDED TO USE THE LATTER.

IF YOU'RE WORRIED IF THIS MEANS THE GAME WILL GET VERY SWINGY, IT WON'T BE AS MUCH AS YOU MIGHT THINK. TO ACCOMMODATE THE LACK OF STATS, THE RANGES HAVE BEEN CHANGED. A 5(-) IS A FAILURE, 6+ IS NECESSARY FOR A PARTIAL SUCCESS, AND A 9+ IS A FULL SUCCESS. THIS IS ESSENTIALLY A +1 BONUS TO ALL ACTIONS FROM THE OLD SYSTEM.

切れ目!

HMM







BASIC MOVES

Battle

When you engage in battle, choose the appropriate battle moves with the MK and resolve them.

This move is pretty self-explanatory. It is just telling you to look at the Battle Moves to resolve fights. Not that one can't use Basic Moves in a battle, but Battle Moves are really the only way to fight and end a battle.

Act Under Tension

When you act under tension, roll 2d6. On a 9+, you do it. On a 6, 7, 8, you flinch, hesitate, or stall; the MK will tell you what bad thing will occur if you are to succeed.

Act Under Tension (formerly, Dodge, but that name didn't get across how you can use it actively) is the "default" move. In other words, you can use it whenever you just need a move, nothing else fits, and you don't want to make a custom move.

If Fighting A Serious Battle is your battle bread-and-butter, this is your general bread-and-butter. This can be true even in battle. Sometimes, you'll need a move in a fight that isn't covered by the general battle moves. The loose and narrative nature of the overall game can lead to this.

To give an example from a playtest, the shonen warriors were fighting a villain with acid powers. The villain, when he had control, had the entire floor covered in acid. To avoid being burned, everyone had to Act Under Tension.

To give another example from the same playtest, the shonen warriors were just about to finish that guy. However, he threw the jobber into a precarious situation to buy time for an escape. The jobber got control and acted under fire to neutralize the acid with baking soda, a fact added to the scene by a previous Figure It Out move.

Keeping It Basic explains how to handle this in regards to control: if you initiated it (or any basic move) you cede control, if you didn't initiate it it's as if you never had control.

Get up!

When you try to inspire someone to ignore their pain, roll 2d6. On a 6+, they heal 1-Harm and you gain a tie on them. On a 9+, they are inspired. On a 5(-), they still heal 1-Harm, but you left yourself open: you end up in shock.

This move used to be a playbook move in a very early version of the draft, but was made generic. It's a support move and it's all about healing people and inspiring them. How is up to you, but the main intention is a strong speech or cheering their name.

Think of those scenes where the hero is down. Maybe physically, maybe emotionally. They are on defeat's doorstep. All hope seems lost. Then, someone starts talking to them. Maybe it's an older fellow, a mentor, reminding them what they taught them and how it tells them not to give up. Maybe it's someone in love with the hero or just naive who begins begging them to keep going. Maybe it's someone who is a rival or a friend and just reminds them how they're better than this and too much is on the line to lose. Maybe it's all the memory of someone or a mental image. Then, the hero just smiles and, despite being covered in blood and wounds, gets up and continues fighting.

Or, for the inverse, think of when one of the hero's allies is down. Up against something they can't beat. The hero comes up and reminds them of their loyalty and friendship through words, a gesture, or some combination. Maybe putting their signature hat on their crying friend's head. They go off to fight that threat or agree to help that friend and, suddenly, their friend can fight again, or gets the confidence they need, or, just generally, can go on.

Heck, it could even just be a hurried attempt to heal them with some basic healing ability, as long as it's frantic, tense, and involves a lot of "you can't give up now" statements. This scene happens a fair amount in shonen comics, especially when things get real, and that's what this move is all about.

It is one of the few moves that defines a 5(-). That's for when things have a dramatic twist.

Think of a villain turned friend, gravely wounded from fighting the big bad, giving a speech on the history of their dead people to the hero. Barely breathing, they try to tell the hero what they believe they need to know to fight and save the day. Then, the big bad attacks the wounded friend and kills them mid-speech.

Figure Things Out

When you try to figure things out, roll 2d6. On a 9+, hold 3. On a 6, 7, 8, hold 2. Spend these holds to ask the MK the following questions. They must answer honestly.

- Where is this person from and what is their fighting style?
- Who is really in charge here?
- What should I be most worried about?
- Is this person really on my side?
- What is my enemy vulnerable to?

On a 5(-), hold 1 and ask anyway, but you left yourself open..

This one is the “knowledge check” of FEV, to use common tabletop roleplaying game terms. It is how you know things that your character cannot be generally assumed to know. It shouldn’t be used willy-nilly. As a matter of fact, most of the time, you should just ask the player most likely to know the answer. This helps in shared worldbuilding.

But, sometimes, it’s important for the MK to have an answer, even if it’s fluid and subject to change, and have the player try to discover it through this move. It also helps establish details or handle situations where no one could know in advance.

The questions are tailored to the genre and try to steer “knowledge checks” to what matters in this genre. They can be a little constrictive and, if it’s really a problem, houseruling in an option of “what do I need to _____” can help a lot. I would argue, though, that its constructiveness is beneficial.

Once again, this move defines what happens on a 5(-). Just like with Get Up!, this is due to you retaining the main benefit, but in a reduced capacity. To be more clear, you only get to ask 1 question and the MK gets to make a move against you, like on a normal 5(-). It’s technically better than most 5(-), but it still isn’t a 6, 7, 8.



Listen To Me...

When you try to convince or manipulate someone or get them to believe in you, tell them what you want and roll 2d6. For NPCs, on a 6+, they ask you to promise something first, and do it if you promise. Your argument leaves an impression on them: get a tie on them. On a 9+, whether you keep your promise is up to you, later. On a 6, 7, 8, they need some concrete assurance right now. For PCs: on a 9+, both. On a 6, 7, 8, choose 1:

- If they do it, they mark experience.
- If they refuse, they need to act under tension.

What they do then is up to them. Regardless, gain a tie on them.

This move is all about getting things from people. This is something that is more important in a roleplaying game than in the genre it's emulating. A move is here to handle things that will just inevitably come up in a game.

In shonen battle comics, these scenes do happen, but they're more rare. A move to handle them could be considered unnecessary if you only went for genre emulation, but players might feel cheated that way.

Scenes where this happens often set the plot of an issue or maybe a mini-arc, but they are pretty rare in shonen battle comics. Well, except for that one shueisha shonen battle comic where the joke is the main cast are all terrible people (except when the chips are down) and often swindle and steal from others.

Someone doesn't believe in the hero and this affects the hero's self-esteem. Maybe someone won't train the hero, but the hero wants this training. Maybe they need someone's assistance to defeat the villain, but they won't give it easily. The hero tries to convince them and ends up agreeing to a task. Fulfilling this task takes up the rest of the issue.

It's not the most common scene so it may not be a "basic move" for this genre, but a roleplaying game benefits from having this in the forefront.



What's Your Story?

When you try to understand or read a person, roll 2d6. On a 9+, hold 2. On a 6, 7, 8, hold 1. Spend these holds to ask the MK or the player the following questions. They must answer honestly. If you want, you can opt to gain extra hold, by giving them 1 hold as well.

- What do you believe?
- Who do you work for?
- Why do you do what you do?
- Are we friends or enemies?
- What are you trying to protect?
- What are you afraid will happen here?

On a 5(-), ask 1 anyway, they hold 1 on you.

This is Figure It Out, but for people only. Specifically, their personalities. Shonen battle comics may be cheesy and they aren't high literature, but they aren't works where people walk up to each other and immediately tell all their flaws and features in a big text block when they first meet each other. They often have elements be revealed or develop later on or are straight-up hiding secrets that only the reader knows about (the MK, in this case).

Perceptive people, or people who are willing to risk it, might get a feeling something important is under the surface and try to read a person, figure out where they stand and what drives them.

It is always a risk, by the way. The 5(-) might not seem important, but consider the questions. If they are an enemy, being able to ask "what are you trying to protect" or "what are you afraid will happen here" to you is a lot of power, especially since you must answer honestly. If the NPC didn't know what to do before, they do now. If you had a secret, they can know it and use it against you like you planned to.



BATTLE MOVES

Battle A Mob

When you battle a gang of faceless goons, you defeat them and choose 1:

- You get a good warm up: you're inspired
- You come out unharmed and unhindered

This move is all about ignoring mooks. Mooks have no place in shonen battle comics except for when they get beaten in a flurry and a flash by the hero. They don't pose any threat to the hero and can't defeat them.

Sometimes, they may get a hit in or hurt the hero. It's rare, but it can help establish how the following fight isn't going to be so easy: it gives the villain a handicap. However, this means the hero goes into the fight knowing things are serious.

In other words, you can either go through this unharmed and unhindered or you get hurt, but are inspired. If the former, the mooks were just fluff and flash. If the latter, they helped set the mood that this fight is serious.

Prove Them Wrong

When you have your opponent's ears, roll 2d6.

For NPCs: On a 6+, they take a moment to consider your thoughts and you choose 1:

- They will change their beliefs after the battle
- Feel Inspired
- Heal 1-Harm as you reassert your determination
- Get a tie on them

On a 9+, your words hit hard: choose 3.

For a PC, on a 6, 7, 8, choose 1. On a 9+, take both:

- If they do it, they mark experience.
- If they refuse, you hold 1. You can spend that hold to leave them in shock.

Remember all those times a shonen protagonist would call out their opponent on their beliefs. When they would defiantly point out how wrong they were about something or someone. That is what this move is emulating. Those triumphant, bombastic scenes where the character goes "you're wrong about them: they may fail a lot, but they always get back up and work harder than anyone; you don't know the first thing about their struggles and have no right to talk about anyone's problems!"

There are two key things to remember about this move. First, the trigger requires you to "have your opponent's ear." That's not just clever wording, it means you need to first fight a serious battle against the opponent then choose to have their ear. Secondly, you need something narrative to prove them wrong about.

Now, the second factor shouldn't be too hard to have. Most shonen villains are egotists in some capacity and tend to have strong motivations, even if they're two-dimensional. As such, there should be something you can focus on. It could be something as simple as thinking someone or something is such and such (weak, pathetic, corrupt, etc.) or something as complex as their entire belief system (the world would be better off as a perfect dream, for example).

It can be harder when fighting other player characters, but intra-party conflict should be rarer and for good reason. As such, the reason of the conflict could be all you need to prove them wrong.

Most of the effects of the move are pretty normal and mechanical except for one: they will change their beliefs after the battle. To be clear, this isn't a mind control move. Changing your opponent's beliefs is more nuanced. The MK must alter their beliefs with what you tried to change in mind, but there is no guarantee it will go exactly how you expect.

The main deciding factor in this is: will the character still be a threat afterwards. To be clear, if you use this move on a Villain who still has Generals, then it would be anti-climatic if it just ended the Arc early. Instead, the Villain will need to incorporate the beliefs, but it won't completely change or neutralize them.

Perhaps they now agree someone is no longer weak, but that doesn't mean they'll stop being a Villain. Perhaps they agree their plan is flawed, but this only changes their plan to something else.

Of course, the goal is for this move to be to the player's benefit. It is only caused by success, after all. As such, the MK should consider it being a net-gain for the shonen heroes, even if it doesn't end the Villain.

Outside of Villains who still have Generals, the MK should stick much closer to the original intent of the move. They can still direct things in a way where the change is more subtle (they agree that maybe humans aren't worthless, but they are still pretty cold) as that would make more sense than a full 180, but it should be the player's intention. The only reason, really, to dilute stuff is to avoid negating a Villain and ending an Arc early.

Alternatively, you can have them turn a Villain early with this move, but only for one of their Generals to view them as soft or as a traitor to the cause or whatever and have the General dispose of them and become the new Villain of the arc, taking the old Villain's remaining Generals for their own.

The point is that this move should never end an Arc early, but it should always have its intended effect.

Fighting A Serious Battle

When a sequence leads up to a big spot or a key moment in the fight, such as a scene that would be a two-page spread or be zoomed in on in a manga, narrate what you do and roll 2d6.

On a 6+, you hit them hard. Your opponent takes harm and you are hit by their counter-attack. On a 9+, pick two. On a 6, 7, 8, pick one:

- You opponent is winded and staggered: you're inspired against them
- Your strike is powerful and breaks their defenses: they take +1-Harm
- You block their counter-attack: take -1-Harm from their attack.
- Your display of prowess impresses them: gain a tie on them
- You have their ears: prove them wrong

If you're having a serious battle with a villain with active generals, you cannot choose to block their counter-attack.

This move is your bread-and-butter in a fight. This is your main way of fighting your opponent. It's also a little elaborate.

The first part of the move makes it clear that you shouldn't roll the dice until something big happens.

Think of it this way: some shonen series, especially in their anime adaptations, will have a lot of build up to the big moment. There will be a flurry of punches exchanged between the parties, they will knock one of them away and through scenery, they will fire projectiles at each other, etc. You don't roll the move then.

Instead, you wait until you hit those big moments. Like, when you pull out a powerful technique or when you just feel the moment is right. It's very subjective and it's best to judge by ear, but the dice only come in when that big hit is coming. Frankly, just wait until you feel you hit that moment and do it.

It's also this moment where I should remind people that the MK never rolls dice and, as such, neither do Villains or Generals. If the Villain or General hits that big moment in the fight, throws an attack that would be very dangerous to dodge, or anything of the sort, the MK should ask the Shonen Hero to *Act Under Tension* and interpret the results from there.

However, the MK should reserve this for a big, interesting moment for the Villain as well. Like the Villain using the technique or the such. Using it for everything the Villain did would bog down the fight with moves (or turn it too much into a traditional RPG where players just roll when it's their turn) and would really screw over the player.

It's loosey-goosey, I'll admit. But, the best way of thinking about it is thinking what would actually matter in a shonen battle manga. What action would leave onlookers going "!!" or get a two-page spread. That's when the dice come out.

To be clear, getting hit by a counter-attack doesn't necessarily mean you take harm, but it probably will be the most common effect. It can be anything the MK thinks is appropriate including narrative restrictions to your actions (being bound by a paralyzing attack so you need to attack around this narrative hindrance), but taking harm is the easiest go-to.

That said, it can be boring and, frankly, defeating the player is not really the MK's goal. The MK's goal is to have fun and ensure everyone else is having fun. The shonen hero being defeated can be fun, but the back-and-forth narrative of a fight is the main fun of battle. Keep that in mind on both sides and try to keep things like a really good conversation.

Most of the move is self-explanatory, but I'll take this time to reiterate that fights should be one-on-one and have scenes inter-cut to show other fights going on so everyone gets some spotlight. I'd say never linger on one interaction for more than 5 minutes before switching.

Alternatively, you can look at Spectating The Big Fight. That move governs how to handle it when two people fight and everyone else just watches.

Making An Opening

When you want to put someone at a disadvantage or affect the environment, roll 2d6.

On a 6+, you get your advantage: inflict 1-Harm, inflict a condition on someone of your choice or remove a condition from yourself or others. On a 9+, do both.

This move may seem like it has dubious utility as taking any harm can lead to someone taking a condition, but it does have usefulness.

First off, it's one of the only ways to heal a condition in the middle of a fight, though it does require a high roll.

Secondly, condition moves are to a villain's detriment, narratively, and one may wish to purposefully coax them out of a villain.

Thirdly, one may want to get the conditions out of the way in a fight so they can't be used when they have means of dealing additional harm to their opponent as one only needs take one condition to negate all harm taken.

It helps to remember that FEV is not meant to be a hyper-tactical game where both sides are trying to win a rules defined struggle. It's a narrative game where it's more about describing and experiencing your favorite moments from shonen battle comics and it's not always about choosing the optimal action, but the action that is most fun or genre appropriate.



Spectating The Big Fight

When you choose to comment on a fight instead of participating, you can explain how a person's ability works, a person's health or mental state, or a person's motivations. If the explanation has a negative effect, the affected has a chance to Act Under Tension to avoid being inflicted with a condition, if a PC. NPCs must take the condition. If the explanation has a positive effect, the affected heals 1-Harm, removes a condition, or deals +1-Harm the next time they would deal harm, spectator's choice. One does not need to be present in a scene to be a spectator.

This move is the other way to handle combat, in a sense. Since most fights should be one-on-one, you can either have multiple fights going on at once or you can use this to give the spectators power.

Remember all those tournament arcs? They are a common staple in shonen battle manga. Mainly since it's a classic strategy to drum up sales. I could go into that whole spiel, but it's irrelevant. Point is, they almost always result in a lot of characters ending up on the sidelines while two people fight.

While the focus is on the two fighters, the manga-ka often, especially in the anime adaption, have the characters not fighting comment on the battle. One could argue this is padding and others could argue this is to make up for art and actions the manga-ka worries is vague and needs explicit explanation. Like, if they don't think you'll realize one of the characters is tiring out or that another is about to fall into a trap. Perhaps it's just to build tension and foreshadow.

Regardless, this move is all about those scenes. It's all about the spectators on the sidelines commenting on the action. The point of this move is to allow them to stay involved in a supporting role. When they comment on the action, they influence it. If they jump in after an exchange and go "wow, that attack must have really hurt him" only for another spectator to go "perhaps, but it took a great toll on his body; I'll be surprised if he doesn't fall down", then they have altered the narrative of the fight.

As you can see, this is handled through a few mechanical dials, so to speak, the spectator is allowed to twist and turn.

It's important to note that the spectator need not be in the scene to do this. It's not at all uncommon for shonen battle manga to do scenes where a character is in another place going "but, if he's fighting him, then he might use that technique and, if he does, then...oh no! He'll get hit by his counter-attack technique!" Those are just as valid for triggering this move and a way of blending the inter-cut fight format and the spectating format for handling battles.

Transform

When **you transform** for the first time in a fight, you are inspired.

Transformations usually only matter in shonen battle manga when they first come out. Either when they first appear altogether or when they're first taken in a fight. The transformation is used as a signal that the battle is heating up and that one side is getting stronger/ raising the stakes. Afterwards, it just becomes the new normal and its importance becomes moot.

To model this, a transformation simply makes you inspired to act.

As a reminder, you will likely not have a transformation until you have your first Awakening.

Also, it only matters the first time you transform in a fight. So, don't expect to just keep transforming and reverting to remain inspired forever. You simply can't.

Harm

When **you take harm**, you may either move down the status track by the appropriate amount of harm or negate all harm taken by taking a condition.

This move is pretty self-explanatory. It's just a rules reminder of how taking Harm works. It's only a move, really, to be a reminder. You know, since it will go on the player aid and be facing the players at all times to make their experience easier.

Ultimate Technique

When you're on your last legs and you and your opponent go at each other with your ultimate moves, roll 2d6. On a 6+, you defeat your opponent, or, if they're a villain with generals, force them to retreat. On a 6, 7, 8, you fall unconscious or into a similar state. On a 5(-), you are defeated: your last hooray wasn't enough, but the war isn't over.

This move is a pacing mechanic and made for one particular situation that actually happens quite a lot in anime, it's rather iconic.

The hero is down to the last ounces of his strength, his opponent is still strong or in a similar state. The hero draws on the last of his power for one final attack, the villain does the same. They charge at each other with all their might and only one is left standing.

It shows up in a lot of shonen battle comics, in some form. The hail mary play, basically. Maybe it's just "this attack I've been charging up for multiple issues is our only hope", but it's the same principle: this is the last ditch, clinch hitter, hail mary move.

It is a gamble you take when you have only one unchecked harm box left and know you can be taken out on your next roll and the villain is virtually unscathed. It's how you risk everything to turn victory from the jaws of defeat through effort, friendship, and luck.

Or fail to do so.

It is also a pacing mechanic. Battles are important, but shouldn't go on forever. You don't have to use this when you're on your last legs, but you can to wrap things up if they were going on too long. To be honest, this is sometimes why mangaka use it in real manga.

Remember, this might be a game where combat is important enough for its own subsystem, but not one where battles should take an hour: if it's passing the thirty minute mark, consider this option. Once again, if the battle is dragging on, it's genre appropriate to try to finish things this way.

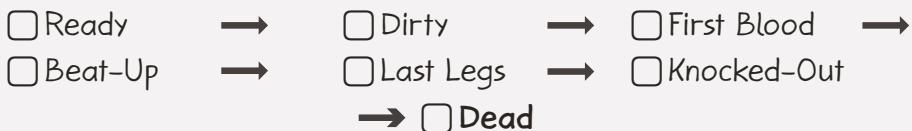


Status Track

Shonen warriors progress pretty methodically through a battle:

- They start out fresh and **ready** to battle –
- They skirmish until they get hit hard and end up **dirty** and scratched up –
- The fight progresses until **first blood**. Almost always a straight cut across the cheek or a nice amount of coughed up blood –
- If the shonen warrior keeps getting beat, they find themselves **beat-up** and weak –
- If they can't turn things around, they end up on their **last legs** –
- If they were not meant to win, they end up **knocked out**.

To emulate this battle progress, we use the Status Track. It appears in every playbook and looks like this:



Everyone starts off with the Ready box checked off. As the **warrior takes harm**, they check off the boxes in succession until they are Knocked-Out.

Once their Knocked-Out box is checked, a shonen warrior may either fall unconscious or choose to keep fighting. If they **choose to keep fighting**, they check off their Dead box, they clear their Condition Track down to Ready, and they get +1 ongoing against their Opponent. During the rest of the battle **if the Knocked-Out box is checked again after the Dead box is checked**, they die then and there.

Once a battle ends, a shonen warrior's Status Track clears down to Ready unless they were Knocked-Out.

If they were Knocked-Out and their Dead box wasn't checked, they awaken a little later with their Status Track cleared down to Ready.

If their Dead box was checked, they fall unconscious and die after the battle. They might hold on long enough to have a final farewell with friends and loved ones, but they are on borrowed time.

It's worth noting that unchecking your boxes after a battle may not mean you are "fully healed." You might still be scratched up and dirty, but you're ready for another battle.

Remember, battles don't have to go until one person is Knocked-Out. Sometimes, you just need to beat some sense into the other person so they realize they were wrong.

Conditions

Battles don't just test one's body; they test one's mind and emotions. Every shonen warrior carries their emotions into battle. It is their fuel to keep fighting and a source for their power. Conditions represent those emotions. The conditions are:

Each condition gives you a -2 penalty to two of your moves. This

- Afraid (-2 to What's Your Story? and Get Up!)
- Angry (-2 to Figure Things Out and Make An Opening)
- Hopeless (-2 to Act Under Tension and Fighting A Serious Battle)
- Insecure (-2 to Listen to Me and Prove Them Wrong)

remains in effect until you unmark the condition.

Whenever **you take harm**, you may mark a condition instead of taking harm. The trade-off is that harm resets after a battle, but conditions need to be unmarked in a different way. However, you do not lose a fight by taking conditions, even if you mark all your conditions.

You unmark conditions by doing something during a scene:

- **For afraid:** freeze up in an important moment and fail
- **For angry:** say something you really shouldn't to someone you like
- **For hopeless:** fall onto your knees, metaphorically, and scream about your doom
- **For insecure:** curse at yourself about how pathetic and cowardly you are

At the end of the scene where you do the appropriate action, you unmark the condition. You may only unmark one condition per scene regardless of the number of actions taken.

Ties

Ties bind people together. They are the unshatterable bonds that keep people from going their own ways. Shonen warriors make many, many bonds throughout their lives by making ties.

Ties work like a special type of hold that shonen warriors can place on others or that others can place/have placed on them. When someone has a tie to you, they hold some kind of influence over you. They have touched your heart and left a piece of themselves in it.

This doesn't mean you like a character who has a tie with you. You could very well hate them. Or have a begrudging respect for them. The point is that their words and actions matter to you and can influence you.

When you spend a tie you have on a PC, you can:

- **Choose before rolling**

- Inspire them with your words or actions
- Shock them with your words or actions

- **Choose at any time**

- Offer them experience if they do what you say
- Deal +1-harm when you deal them harm
- Protect them: -1-Harm when they are dealt harm

- **Choose after rolling**

- Add 2 to their roll
- Subtract 2 from their roll

When you spend a tie you have on an NPC, you can:

- **Choose any time**

- Ignore their counterattack
- Deal +1-Harm when you deal them harm

- Choose after rolling

- Add 1 to your roll against them
- Add 2 to your roll to make them listen to you
- Add 2 to your roll to Prove Them Wrong

Whenever you spend a tie, there must be a fictional event that occurs. You need to call out to the person about their former comrades, remind them of their lost friends, or other such events that would lead to the desired effect. You can't just spend it like a resource: you need a reason.

Once a tie is spent, it is lost. This doesn't mean your tie is weakened; just that you can't use it to influence the person again unless you have more ties to spend.

Techniques

Unlike other *Powered By The Apocalypse* titles, **Friendship, Effort, Victory** doesn't use gear. In its stead, shonen warriors collect techniques. The point of techniques isn't to give a mechanical advantage, but to move the narrative forward and add spice to your actions.

Techniques are made simply: you name it and give it a one-sentence description. For example, *Clock Stopper: The world around me stops for a second and I can do as I wish.*

You also get an Ultimate Technique. Ultimate Techniques are made the same as any other Technique, but are marked with an asterisk (*). Ultimate Techniques are the ones you only pull out to end a fight; they work with the battle move of the same name.



Awakening

There comes a time when the chips are down and all seems lost. It's the moment when the villain stands triumphant and no hope is left. Defeat is assured and death is looming. But, then, from the depths of despair comes a swell of valor that carries the fight to victory. That's an Awakening.

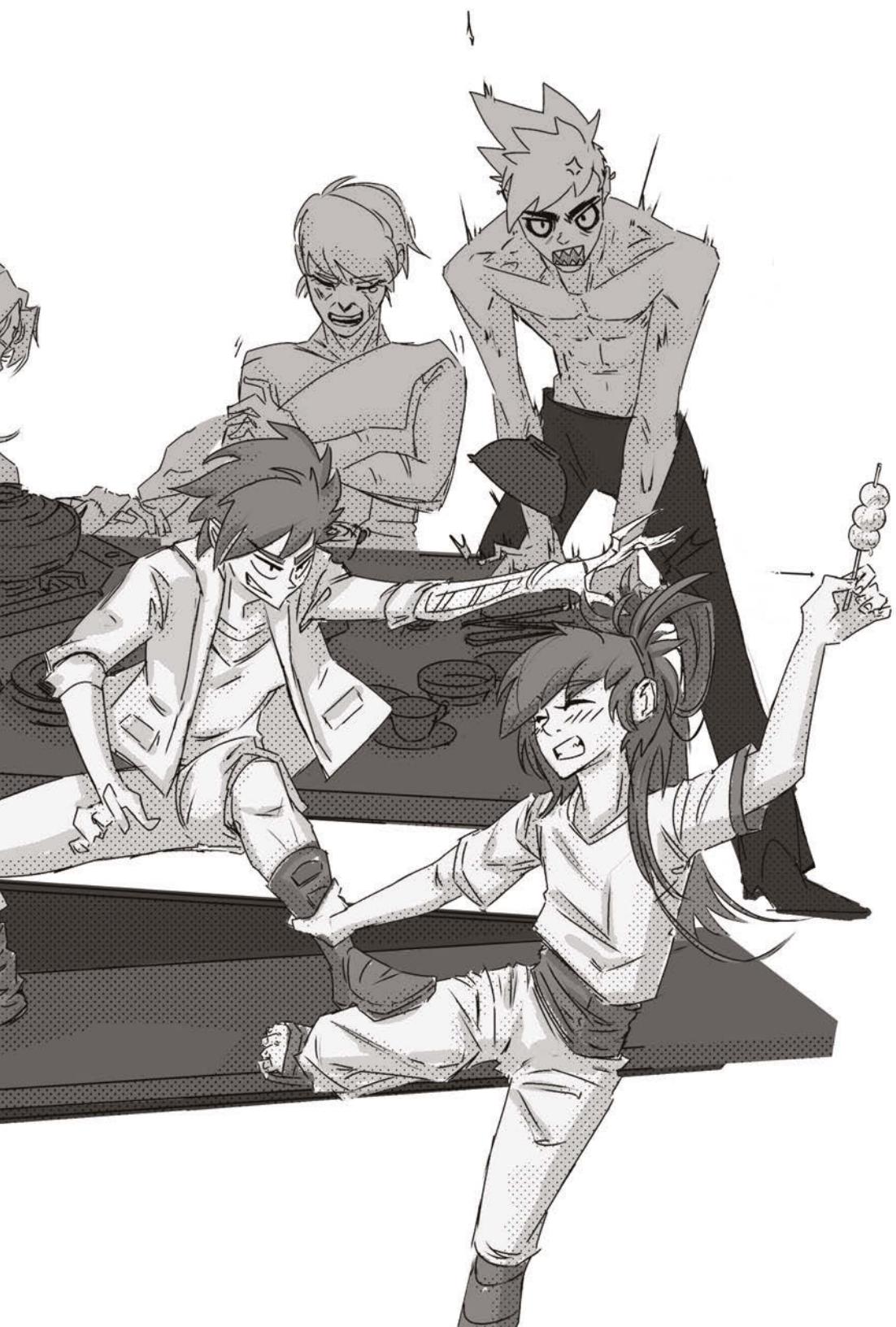
Every Playbook gets an Awakening, but it isn't unlocked at the start of play. You need to unlock it through advancements. Once you do, you can use it at any time, but only once. Afterwards, you unlock a transformation.

When an Awakening is active, you essentially get to narrate how a situation ends without needing to roll. You can beat your opponent, accomplish any task, and essentially do whatever you need or want to do, within reason.

However, the rules for Villains still apply. You can defeat him this one time with no issue, but he will still escape if his generals remain.







PLAYBOOKS



FRIENDSHIP, EFFORT, VICTORY!

If you've ever played a tabletop roleplaying game or computer roleplaying game before, you should know what it means is when it says your playbook is your class. To everyone else, your playbook defines your archetype in the narrative. It is what - and generally, why - you do what you do.

It gives you your playbook moves: moves built for that playbook that grant you specific narrative powers. It also gives you a list of advancements: benefits you can take once you have enough experience. Playbooks give you an overview of how you make friends and enemies among other PCs and NPCs, as well as help you discern your look.

Essentially, playbooks are how you build your avatar into the world.

Your playbook will guide how you build your character. Think of it like a checklist or form. Step one is picking a playbook. Every playbook starts with a title and a short description to help you get a feel for it. You can obviously peek down for more information.

Then you go down and see the suggestions for where to draw inspiration from when you need to come up with your character's name. Working off the archetype and this suggestion, you should be able to come up with a name. But if you can't, you can come back to this later. The suggestions are meant to give you an idea of what the name should sound like or be like. It isn't a definitive list, however.

Moving on to Look, you pick one option from each line to get the general aesthetics of your character. This is how they look and the vibe they give off. This might change over time, especially with playbook changes, but this is how it starts.

Now comes the big decision: your starting moves. Every playbook will tell you what moves to pick from. Follow those rules and read carefully. Try to think what moves support the playstyle and mindset of the character you're going for. MKs should be okay with some swapping around after the first session if you felt it didn't fit, so it's not the end of the world if it's not perfect.

The rest is pretty self-explanatory. You are told what your awakening will be once you unlock that. You are told how many techniques to take. You are told your Friendship and Enemy moves. And, finally, the playbook tells you how to advance and what you can spend advances on.

Overall, playbooks should help you keep character generation all in one spot.

THE AVENGER



You're a loner with a dark past. Hell, a pretty dark present as well. You were wronged and left to wander the world, thinking of nothing but revenge. You use people left and right, not caring who you hurt in the process. Life has been hard and empty, but you know that, one day, you will get your vengeance.

CREATING AN AVENGER

To create your Avenger, choose your name and look.

NAME

Depressing name, historical name, or mythical name



LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous

Assassin's clothes, black clothes, or off-putting clothes

Dark look, reserved look, or stoic look

AWAKENING

You have a destiny; a dark one. You are to get revenge for those who have fallen. You can't fail on this path. You can't let things end early. You could never accept such shame. It's time to fight for the fallen with all your might! You are their sword and you will cut all down in your bloody path!

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

Your dark and brooding nature is attractive and infuriating. Someone has a crush on you while another wants to pound your face to dirt. Who is who? You get a tie on both of them.

You keep to yourself and care little for others. Ignore others' attempts to take ties on when first establishing ties.

AVENGER MOVES

Take These:

Revenge!: Create an NPC who wronged you. Detail them. They start with a tie on you. When **you face this NPC and lose**, take an advancement. When **you defeat this NPC**, either retire your character to safety, change your character to a new playbook or create a new NPC to seek vengeance against: the one truly behind it all.

Name: _____

Crime: _____

I'll Do What It Takes: Whenever **you meet a general or villain**, they get a tie on you. They can spend the tie on you like a PC could.

Choose 2:

Don't Pretend to Understand Me!: When **you feel someone thinks they know you or is trying to manipulate you**, roll 2d6. On a 9+, choose 2. On a 6, 7, 8, choose 1:

- You confuse them and make them question themselves: get a tie on them
- You push them away and make them leave you alone: they don't get a tie on you
- You make them realize their mistake: you turn the deal back on them

I'll Cut Through You If I Need To!: When **fighting alongside another**, you can treat a 5(−) on a battle move as 6,7,8 by inflicting 1-harm on your ally.

Dark Philosophy: When **you prove someone wrong**, on a 6(+), in addition to your choice for that battle move, you can inflict a condition on the target.

Assassin: When you **attack an unsuspecting target**, roll 2d6. On a 6+, they take 1-Harm, but your opponent deals you 1-Harm. On a 9+, choose 3. On a 6, 7, 8, choose 1:

- They take +1-Harm
- They are taken by surprise: you're inspired against them
- They lose hold of an advantage: clear a condition
- Your opponent doesn't deal you harm

On a 5(−), choose 1, but you leave yourself open.

All According to Keikaku: When **you try to make an opening**, you are inspired.

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When someone truly empathizes with your plight or helps you in your revenge, hold 1. If you're present, you can spend that hold to lower the harm they take by 1-Harm when they take harm as you deflect or mitigate the strike.

ENEMY MOVE

If someone tries to stop you from committing revenge, lose your holds with them.

AVENGER IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever a move says so or you roll a 5(-), mark experience. Also, mark experience whenever you do one of the following three things:

- Make a deal with a dangerous person
- Betray someone in pursuit of your revenge
- Harm an innocent in the direct pursuit of your revenge

When you mark the 5th experience, take an improvement and erase your marked experience.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- Get a new Avenger move
- Get a new Avenger move
- Get **Fight me in your perfect form** from the rival playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Unlock your awakening

After you take four improvements, you can take the following advancements:

- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook

THE FOREVER YOUNG



You are young at heart and always will be. You keep a light, chipper attitude and always see the bright side of things. Life can still get you down, but you always bounce back. Your innocence tends to have a charm that draws people in, but it can also push people away.

CREATING A FOREVER YOUNG

To create your Forever Young, choose your name and look.

NAME

Food name, silly name, or weird name



LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous

Bright clothes, childish clothes, or training clothes

Cheery look, determined look, or out-of-place look

AWAKENING

Life is like an eternal spring to you. You always look on the bright side of things. But you know things aren't always like that. You know things can be dark. That's why you try to be strong for your friends. Now is that time. Your friends need you. You can't fail here. For them, draw on your strength and claim victory!

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

Your beaming personality touches everyone. Get a tie on everyone except one. Who is it and why does your personality not affect them?

You're an open book and easily make friends. Everyone gets a tie on you.

FOREVER YOUNG MOVES

Take This:

Nakama: Whenever **you meet a new person or share a close moment with them**, you can choose to forge a strong bond with them: name it something appropriate to your relationship. Your relationship may change, but you can only hold one bond with one person. They can mark the bond they have with you to:

- Take 1 less Harm when they are attacked
- Heal 1-Harm
- Make their opponent take a condition

The bond unmarks when you two share a moment and you reaffirm your bond. Whenever they mark the bond, you get a tie on them.

Choose 1:

Disarmingly charming: When **you try to read a person**, you are inspired.

A Shining Light: When **you prove someone wrong**, you can take an additional option, regardless of your result, and take an option twice.

Bottomless Stomach: When **you gorge yourself with a ludicrous amount of food**, roll 2d6. On a 9+, you are fully satiated: hold 2. On a 6, 7, 8, you're only a little full: hold 1. You can spend these holds to heal 1-Harm until the end of your next big fight.

Living Life By Your Own Values: When **you live by your own rules when it's dangerous or inconvenient**, you are inspired.

Stay Away From My Friends!: When **you charge into battle to save a friend**, get a tie on your friend and either you or your friend become inspired (your choice).

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When someone gets in a friendly competition with you, hold 1. You can spend that hold to appear in a battle that person is in, if you are not present.

ENEMY MOVE

If someone seriously harms your friends, lose your holds with them.

FOREVER YOUNG IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever a move says so or you roll a 6-, mark experience. Also, mark experience whenever you do one of the following three things:

- Get in trouble for being a child
- Charge into battle alongside another
- Spout a sappy, but heart-filled speech

When you mark the 5th experience, take an improvement and erase your marked experience.

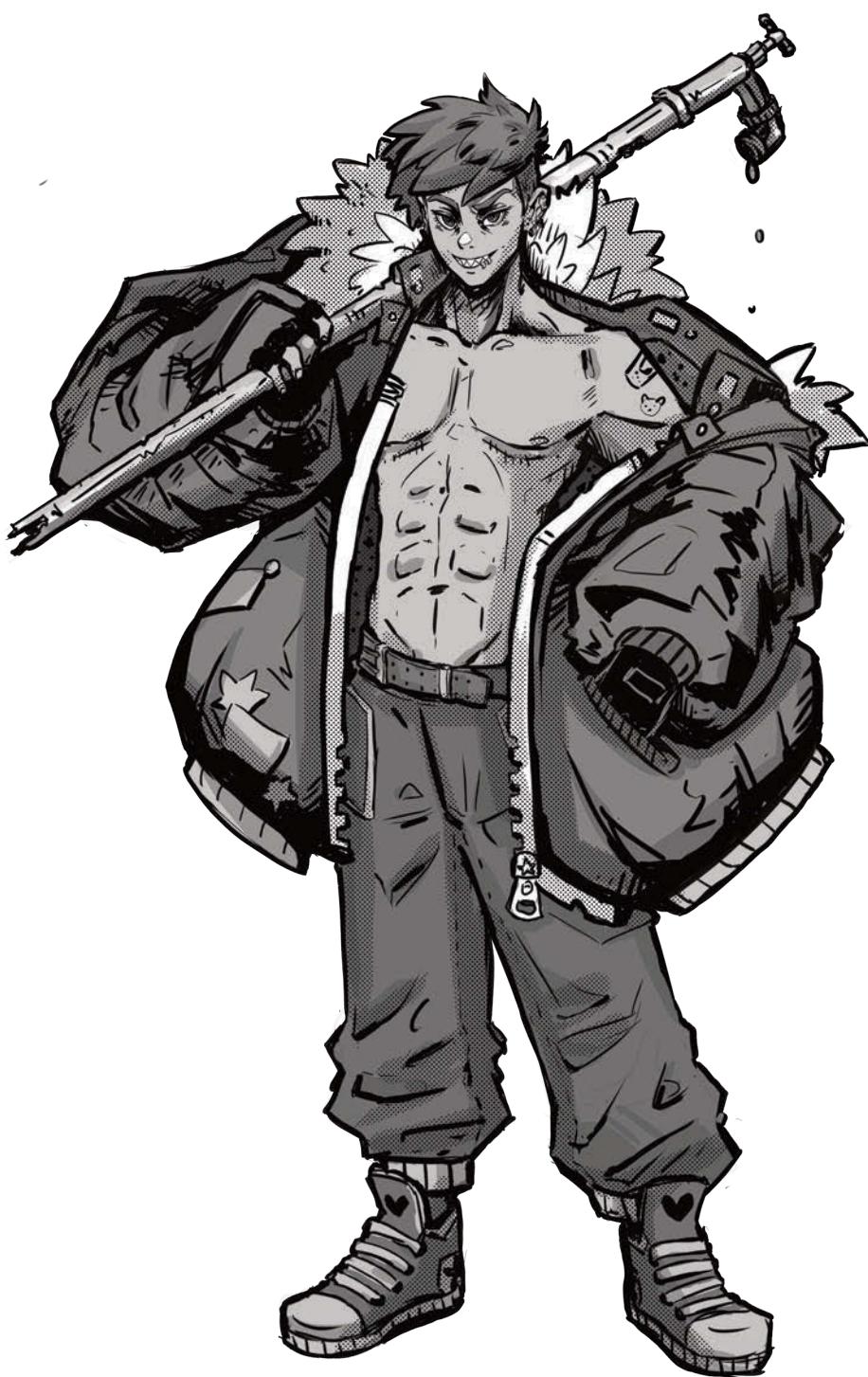
Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- Get a new Forever Young move
- Get a new Forever Young move
- Get A **personal battle** from the jobber playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Unlock your awakening

After you take four improvements, you can take the following advancements:

- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook

THE GUARDIAN



You look tough, you act tough, and you mean to be tough: but you secretly got a soft side. It's clearly all an act to anyone who knows you: you're a big softie. Nothing wrong with having a heart; you don't always have to be tough.

CREATING A GUARDIAN

To create your Guardian, choose your name and look.

NAME

Embarrassingly silly name, hero's name or tough name

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous



Historic clothing, tough clothing, or worn clothing

Badass look, serious look, or stoic look

AWAKENING

You always like to act tough, but everyone knows you care. Deep down, you want to help people. You want to protect those you care about. But now, that might all slip away. And if you slip away, who will protect them? You can't just fade away, especially not like this. You have to shine brightly. Not just for yourself, but for them as well!

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

Someone here has helped you protect your VIP once; who and how so? They get a tie on you.

Your VIP is the most important person in your life. They get a tie on you.

GUARDIAN MOVES

Take This:

Big Softy: Pick a PC to be someone you want to protect: this PC is your VIP. Detail why. If that PC dies, retires, or becomes your enemy, you can pick a new PC to protect. You could have many reasons for this drive. When the VIP is harmed, you are inspired against the source of the attack and deal +1-Harm on your next attack against them.

Name: _____

You protect because: _____

Choose 1:

There's No Way to Beat Them!: When your blood first spills in a battle, you inflict a condition on all of your opponents.

What? You Think I'm Some Kind of Punk?: When you try to get someone to listen to you through intimidation, you can treat a result of 6,7,8 as a 9+.

I'm Not Letting Anyone Get Hurt: You can change who your VIP is at the beginning of a session.

A Living Tank: You have two additional boxes on the status track: Unphased and Laughing. These go, in the order listed, between Ready and Dirty.

Guardian Angel: When you fight alongside your VIP, the VIP feels inspired.

Your Last Mistake: When your VIP is harmed in front of you, hold 1. You can spend that hold to either deal 1-Harm on the one who harmed your VIP or heal 1-Harm.

Sixth Sense: When your VIP is harmed while you're separated, hold 1. You can spend that hold to appear in the scene with them.

Heart of Gold: When your VIP is about to be Knocked-Out, you can take harm in their stead. If you do, gain +1 ongoing against the source of that harm until the end of battle.

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When **you come to respect someone's strength**, hold 1. You can spend that hold to treat that person like your VIP until the end of the scene. If **they are your VIP**, you can spend it to have them heal 1-Harm.

ENEMY MOVE

If **someone threatens your VIP**, lose your holds with them.

GUARDIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever a move says so or you roll a 5-, mark experience. Also, mark experience whenever you do one of the following three things:

- Do something against your nature for your VIP
- Take harm while protecting your VIP
- Ignore something important or valuable for your VIP

When you mark the 5th experience, take an improvement and erase your marked experience.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- Get a new Guardian move
- Get a new Guardian move
- Get **Snapped** from the Straight Man playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Unlock your awakening

After you take four improvements, you can take the following advancements:

- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook

THE HOST



You have a beast within you. It's growing and gnawing away at you. Its power is vast and, if you learn to control it, you can soar to new heights. But this power may come at the cost of your very soul.

CREATING A HOST

To create your Host, choose your name and look.

NAME

Food name, serious name, or strong name



LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous

Dreary clothes, ostentatious clothes, or plain clothes

Emo look, plain look, or slightly inhuman look

AWAKENING

You don't have a typical Awakening. See the Host Moves and Host Improvement rules for more information.

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

You're shunned because of your parasite: either due to your actions or others. You have no ties on anyone.

Except, however, for the one person who knows about your parasite. Who is it? They get a tie on you.

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

HOST MOVES

Take This:

Parasite: A beast lives inside you and calls your soul its home. It's not under your control, as much as you wish it was.

Parasite's Features:

Choose one from each of the following to form your host's stats.

Choose your host's type: Elemental, spiritual, bestial, alien, primal, mental, demonic, or mirror

Choose its strength: Courageous, tough, funny, fast, smart, scary, cheerful, tireless, skeptic, eldritch, knowledgeable, observant

Choose its best trick: "Good friend," manipulative, intimidating, painful, cunning, wise, tempting, hungry

Choose its weakness: Arrogant, foolish, short temper, weak, naive, lazy, too trusting, greedy

You start with Berserk and one Parasite Move.

Berserk: When you're Knocked Out, you don't need to check your Dead box to reset your status track down to ready. Instead, you can let the beast take control. You still play your character, but you remain berserk and dangerous until someone can calm you down or knock you out; you will lash out at allies like a wild beast when there are no enemies.

ENEMY MOVE

If someone aids in your parasite taking over, lose your holds with them.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When someone helps you overcome the parasite, even if only for a moment, hold 1. You can spend this hold to stop yourself from lashing out at them when you are berserking. They get a +1 ongoing to attempts to calm you down.

PARASITE MOVES AND IMPROVEMENTS

Unlike other playbooks, you have a different system of improvement: marking parasite stats and taking parasite moves. You can not advance normally until you find out who is the king and who is the horse.

Choose one Parasite Move:

- **High-Speed Regeneration:** Mark a feature to heal 1-Harm. (You do not take harm when triggering this Parasite move.)
- **Transformed Form:** Mark a feature to ignore all harm taken. (You do not take harm when triggering this Parasite move.)
- **Devil's Whispers:** Mark a feature to ask the MK any question that they must answer honestly.
- **Terrible Power:** Mark a feature to inflict +1-Harm.
- **Hidden Power:** Choose one of the Mentor's Forbidden Techniques. Mark a feature to use this technique.

At any time, you **may mark a feature** to use a parasite move you have.

If you do, you take 1-Harm and you are in shock. You may mark one more feature to ignore the harm and one more feature to ignore the shock. Describe how these features manifest in your actions.

Whenever **mark all your parasite's features**, clear the marks and take another parasite move. When **you take all the above parasite moves**, take the following move the next time you would get a parasite move:

King and His Horse: Time stops and you enter your internal world. You must finally decide who runs this body. Do battle with your parasite. Your Dead box is automatically checked.

- If you **win**, you are in complete control; change playbooks, unmark your Dead box, keep your parasite moves, but lose Berserk. Using your parasite moves will still leave you in shock and inflict 1-Harm, unless you mark a feature. You may control the power, but it is still great. Your body can't handle the strain for too long; you can only mark your parasite's features three times a session. Clear the marks at the end of a session.
- If you **lose**, you are lost for good and your body belongs to the parasite. Your old character becomes a general for the current villain.

THE INVENTOR



You're as smart as they come. If you can dream it, you can build it. You might have a screw that needs tightening and you sometimes go too far, but why should you let that hold your genius back?

CREATING AN INVENTOR

To create your Inventor, choose your name and look.

NAME

Brand name, kooky name, or smart name



LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous

Fancy clothing, plain clothing, or scientist clothing

Innocent look, genius look, or mad scientist look

AWAKENING

You are the brains of the team. That bit of grey matter is always working overtime to pull things along. What most people don't realize is that you could go farther. You have inventions that are more outlandish than people realize hidden away. And that isn't getting into how you think: to you, everything's in slow motion. A lot of people don't think brains matter in a fight, but you're going to prove them wrong. You're going to let loose with every trick you know, every forbidden bit of science you discovered, and every innovative strategy you just came up with.

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

You have a good friend who trusts and/or fears your knowledge. Who is it? Get a tie on them.

Someone here has saved your life once before. Maybe more. Who is it? They get a tie on you.

INVENTOR MOVES

Take This:

Super Science: You have a Laboratory to do your work in. Choose which of the following your laboratory includes.

Choose 3: *skilled labor, warehouse, storeroom full of raw materials, wealthy backing (detail), garage full of vehicles, pocket dimension, enhanced training rooms, med-bays, advanced tech (detail), endless piles of data on history, enhanced tracking systems, a forbidden/intentionally forgotten relic (detail).*

When you go into your Laboratory to make some things or figure something out, decide what and tell the MK. The MK will tell you, "Sure, no problem, but..." and then 1 to 3 of the following:

- It's going to take hours/days/weeks of work
- First you'll have to get/build/fix/figure out _____
- You're going to need _____ to help you out
- The best you'll do is a shoddy version: weak and unreliable
- You're going to have to take _____ apart
- It won't come cheap
- It's going to take several/dozens/hundreds of tries

The MK will connect these requirements with "and" or "or" and, once the tool/work is complete, either stat-up the tool as a technique or explain the information; whichever is necessary.

Choose 1:

Crazy Doohickey: You have a slew of crazy gadgetry just lying about. When you want to use one of your gadgets, roll 2d6. On a 9+, it sure helped out. On a 6, 7, 8, you got most of what you wanted, but there was an unforeseen malfunction or complication. On 5(-), you probably shouldn't have used it.

Perceptive and Knowledgeable: When you try to figure things out, you get an additional 1 hold, regardless of your result.

They Call Me the Strategist: When a battle begins, write a condition in secret. When you take First Blood, reveal the condition and inflict it on your opponent.

How Troublesome: When you are inflicted with a condition, you can take -1 forward to remove the condition.

Thinking Five Steps Ahead: When you make them fall for it, you can inflict an additional condition.

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When someone comes to you for your brains and knowledge or defers to your knowledge on a subject, they hold 1. They can spend that hold to heal a harm and take +1 forward.

ENEMY MOVE

If someone destroys and curses your inventions with true spite, they lose the holds you gave them.

INVENTOR IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever a move says so or you roll a 5(-), mark experience. Also, mark experience whenever you do one of the following three things:

- Baffle or frighten others with your inventions
- Put yourself at risk for research
- Have an invention blow up in your face

When you mark the 5th experience, take an improvement and erase your marked experience.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- Get two new features for your laboratory
- Get a new Inventor move
- Get a move from another playbook
- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook

After you take four improvements, you can take the following advancements:

- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook

THE JOBBER



You aren't the star; you aren't even that good: you're just a jobber. You exist solely to make other people look better. It isn't the best position in the cosmic food chain, but it's your place and you do it well. No one may ever thank you, but you play an important part.

CREATING A JOBBER

To create your Jobber, choose your name and look.

NAME

Meek name, silly name, or wimpy name



LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous

Dapper clothing, flashy clothing, or normal clothing

Ironically badass look, overdone look, or weak look

AWAKENING

People think you're a joke. They always mock you. Even if they don't, you can feel the pity in them for how weak you are. But not today. Today, you're going to win. Today, you're going to show everyone what you're made of. Today, you are the hero! With belief in yourself and some self-respect, you can achieve anything!

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

You may be weak, but you still try. Even if they mock you, people respect your courage. Get a tie on everyone.

One person believes in you. It isn't pity, it's an honest belief. Who is it? They get a tie on you.

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

JOBBER MOVES

Take This:

Build Up Others: When you perform a battle move, you may choose to not roll and just take a 5(-). Whenever you get a 5(-) on a battle move, every PC in the scene, except you, becomes inspired.

Choose 1:

A Personal Battle: Whenever someone mocks your pride with cruel intentions or truly hurts those you care about, hold 1 against them. When you do battle with that person, you can spend that hold to be inspired against that person until the end of battle and heal 1-Harm.

Comic Relief: When you embarrass yourself horribly in battle or life, ask any character present if their character found it amusing. They must answer honestly. If they do find it amusing, get a tie on them.

Lucky Break: Once per session, you can turn a 5(-) into a 6, 7, 8. Things still go badly and you get messed up, but you get by with a bit of luck.

Why Me?: Whenever people are looking for someone or something dangerous, you will always be able to find them (by chance), be the first to find them and be able to alert others to their presence. Always. Doesn't mean they will come quickly enough.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When **someone you respect defeats you in battle**, hold 1. Whenever you fight alongside this friend, you can spend the hold to clear their damage track down to Ready by allowing yourself to be Knocked-Out.

ENEMY MOVE

If **someone mocks you for your weakness**, lose your holds with them.

JOBBER IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever a move says so or you roll a 5(-), mark experience. Also, mark experience whenever you do one of the following three things:

- Act tough when you really shouldn't
- Give in to fear for the sake of comic relief
- Be humiliated in front of everyone

When you mark the 5th experience, take an improvement and erase your marked experience.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- Get a new Jobber move
- Get a new Jobber move
- Get **In Distress** from the straight man playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Unlock your awakening

After you take four improvements, you can take the following advancements:

- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook

THE MENTOR



You're wise, perhaps beyond your years. You seek to teach others and ensure that they grow into the women, men, noninaries or otherwise they ought to be. A part of you knows that you teach because your own time in the limelight is over, if it ever even began.

CREATING A MENTOR

To create your Mentor, choose your name and look.

NAME

Master name, plain name, or wise name



LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous

Casual clothing, training clothing, or unremarkable clothing

Elderly look, disarming look, or overblown look

AWAKENING

This ain't your first rodeo. You've been at this for a while. You've got a student. You've got to set an example. Being a mentor isn't just about sitting around and giving out pearls of wisdom: it's about living those lessons for the next generation to follow. Time to use every trick you learned and every move you used to know to end this thing like a true master!

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

You and your student have allowed each other to grow stronger and better as people. Get a tie on each other.

Everyone respects you in some way, even if they often get annoyed with your antics. Get a tie on everyone.

LIFESTYLE

Choose 1:

The Head: You run an organization of some kind. Detail it. At the beginning of every session, as long as your organization is well and your rule untested, you roll 2d6. On a 6+, hold 3. On a 6, 7, 8, hold 1. You can spend this hold to have them solve a minor problem messily. On a 5(-), choose 1: your organization is simply busy or mark experience twice and have your organization be in trouble.

Name: _____

Goal: _____

The Wanderer: At the beginning of every session, as long as you aren't engaged in active turmoil, you can begin the session inspired by engaging in your vices. It won't end well, however.

Vices: _____

FORBIDDEN TECHNIQUES

You know a set of forbidden techniques. Choose 3:

- A powerful attack to destroy large swaths of the environment
- A super form that greatly enhances what you can physically perform
- A technique to summon beings to your aid
- A technique to seal away supernatural monsters
- A technique to make minor illusions
- A technique to bend the elements

These techniques can be called upon when you need them to give you an edge. When **you use one of these techniques**, mark the technique and take a 6+ on your next move. When **a session ends**, unmark your techniques.

When **you die or retire**, your student gains this move, but only chooses 1 of the 3 options you originally chose.

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

MENTOR MOVES

Take This:

Master and Student: Pick one of the PCs to be your pupil, with their approval. If this PC dies or retires, you can choose a new pupil. You always consider your pupil to be a friend, no matter what they do.

Choose 1:

Anything For My Student: When **you fight alongside your pupil and they would mark harm**, you can choose to take the harm for them.

Let's Get Back to Basics: When **you sit down and spend time training with your student**, get a tie on each other. When you trick your student into helping you engage in your vices, get a tie on them. If your student enjoys themselves when engaging with your vices, they get a tie on you.

Respect Your Elders: When **you prove someone wrong**, you also inflict a condition.

Reformed: When **you tell your student about your troubles or past**, roll 2d6. On a 9+, you can feel that issue resolved: you are inspired and get a tie on each other. On 6, 7, 8, you feel a little better, but you know your troubles aren't gone: you are inspired. On a 5(-), you left yourself open.

I Won't Let You Hurt Them: When **your student is in a fight and you want to help**, roll 2d6. On a 9+, you arrive on the scene before another blow is exchanged. On a 6, 7, 8, it takes some time.

Font of Wisdom: You give this move to your student. When **your student focuses on your lessons and advice** (their choice), they get an additional hold to figure things out, regardless of their result and you get a tie on them.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When **someone trains under your guidance**, hold 1. You can spend that hold to treat the PC as your Student. If they are your student, you can spend that hold to make them feel inspired until the end of the scene.

ENEMY MOVE

If **someone corrupts the wisdom you impart to your students**, lose your holds with them.

MENTOR IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever a move says so or you roll a 5(-), mark experience. Also, mark experience whenever you do one of the following three things:

- Ignore obligations to engage in vices (student also marks experience if you trick them into helping)
- Train alongside your student
- Step aside and let your student stand on their own two feet

When you mark the 5th experience, take an improvement and erase your marked experience.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- Get a new mentor move
- Get a new mentor move
- Get All according to keikaku from the Avenger playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Unlock your awakening

After you take four improvements, you can take the following advancements:

- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook



THE RIVAL



You have a lot to prove. You have a need to strive and be better than others: to make sure everyone knows how strong you are. Or, at the very least, you need to prove yourself to one person.

CREATING A RIVAL

To create your Rival, choose your name and look.

NAME

Food name, title name or tough name



LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous

Armored clothing, badass clothing, or training clothing

Pathetic look, serious look, or tough look

AWAKENING

You can hear him laughing smugly now. He thinks he's better than you. He thinks this is another sign of how weak you are. He thinks this is pathetic. You can't stand that laughing, even if it's just in your head. You will end things on your terms. You're going to win and win big! Because you're the strongest in the universe and no one else is mightier than you!

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

Your personality makes you get in everyone's face. Like you or hate you: everyone has an opinion on you. Get a tie on everyone.

Your rival gets a tie on you.

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

RIVAL MOVES

Take This:

Not In Front of You!: Pick a PC to be your Rival. Detail why. If the PC retires or dies, you become a Mentor. This PC considers you a friend no matter what you do. Whenever **you fight alongside your rival**, you can get +1 ongoing while you try to show them up. As long as you do, your emotions lower your defenses: take +1-harm whenever you take harm.

Rival's name: _____

You despise them because: _____

Choose 1:

No, I'll Be the One: Whenever **you hinder your rival**, even if it is a bad idea, get a tie on them.

Only I'll Defeat Them: Whenever **you stand between your rival and a clear threat**, you get +1 ongoing and deal +1-Harm.

The World Is My Rival: You have a lot to prove. You can change your rival to any PC at the beginning of a session.

Fight Me In Your Perfect Form: Whenever **you help a villain**, you are inspired and get a tie on them and anyone present.

Finally, We Fight: When **you fight your rival**, get a tie on each other. If it's **at the most inopportune time that puts a lot at risk**, get an additional tie.

I Won't Lose to You!: When **you begin to fight your rival**, you are inspired.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When **someone admits to hating your rival as well**, they hold 1. They can spend this hold to deal an additional harm until the end of a scene.

ENEMY MOVE

If **someone takes away your chance to fight your Rival**, they lose the holds you gave them.

RIVAL IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever a move says so or you roll a 5(-), mark experience. Also, mark experience whenever you do one of the following three things:

- You fight your rival
- You hinder your rival
- You are defeated by your rival

When you mark the 5th experience, take an improvement and erase your marked experience.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- Get a new rival move
- Get a new rival move
- Get **I'll Cut Through You If I Need To** from the Avenger playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- **Unlock your awakening**

After you take four improvements, you can take the following advancements:

- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook

THE STRAIGHT MAN



You may live in a wacky, wacky world, but you have none of it. People around you may make themselves out to be fools, but you stay pretty serious: most of the time. Sure, you have your moments like anyone else, but you certainly are not the loon your friends are.

CREATING A STRAIGHT MAN

To create your Straight Man, choose your name and look.

NAME

Normal name, plain name, or unremarkable name



LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous

Normal clothing, plain clothing, or unremarkable clothing

Normal look, plain look, or unremarkable look

AWAKENING

You just want to live a normal life! But everything around you is just so weird! It's like you live in some wacky comic book or something. Nothing makes sense, everything is so dramatic, and the laws of physics have no sway here. So, why not embrace it this one time? Go wild like everyone else and show the world what happens when you decide to play by its nonsense rules!

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

There is one person you secretly have a crush on. It's a secret, though. This affection makes you quick to point it out and reprimand them for being silly. Who is it? They get a tie on you.

Someone here has a crush on you. It could be your crush and you're both too shy, or it could be someone else. Who is it? You get a tie on them.

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

STRAIGHT MAN MOVES

Choose 2:

In Distress: If anyone comes to your aid in a fight, they are inspired when they first come to help.

Grow Up!: When you attack a friend or teammate to set them straight, roll 2d6. On a 9+, choose 2. On a 6, 7, 8, choose 1:

- You manage to hurt them: they take 1-Harm
- You're frustrated and in a frenzy: you are inspired
- You choose who comes out looking like the responsible one: get a tie on them

On a 5(-), you still smack them good, but you leave yourself open.

Snapped: When you become absolutely fed up with someone's antics, roll 2d6. On a 9+, hold 2. On a 6, 7, 8, hold 1. You can spend these holds against the person you're fed up with: to be inspired to prove them wrong, fight a serious battle with them, or make them listen to you.

Loosening Up: Once per session, if you let yourself be a little silly and have fun for a change, ask who is the most shocked or surprised. You get a tie on that person. If any characters are equally surprised, you get a tie on all of them.

Unthreatening: When you run into a hostile individual, roll 2d6. On a 6+, they consider you nothing worth fighting and turn their back to you: you're inspired to do a serious battle with them and you deal harm regardless of your result. On a 9+, they feel so casual around you, they reveal something important: you can ask the MK any question about them and they will answer honestly.

Friendship Speech: When you give someone a rousing speech about friendship, roll 2d6. On a 6, 7, 8, they hold 1. On a 9+, they hold 2. They can spend that hold to be inspired to prove someone wrong or make someone listen to them.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When **you come to rely on someone**, hold 1. You can spend this hold to feel inspired when you fight alongside them or protect them.

ENEMY MOVE

If **someone makes you look like a fool**, lose your holds with them.

STRAIGHT MAN IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever a move says so or you roll a 5(-), mark experience. Also, mark experience whenever you do one of the following three things:

- Stop/hurt someone for being silly or stupid
- Mock/put down others for their silliness to others
- Get respect for your maturity

When you mark the 5th experience, take an improvement and erase your marked experience.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- Get a new Straight Man move
- Get a new Straight Man move
- Get **Lucky Break** from the jobber playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Unlock your awakening

After you take four improvements, you can take the following advancements:

- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook

THE TIRELESS



Fight, train, fight, train: is that all there is to life for you? You're the self-improvement type, but you take it a tad too far. You may have become powerful, but is that all you want?

CREATING A TIREDLESS

To create your Tireless, choose your name and look.

NAME

Food name, reference name, or serious name



LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgynous

Battle clothing, training clothing, torn clothing

Determined look, deadly look, or strange look

AWAKENING

Every day, you push your body to its limits for something more. Every day, you give it your all. Every day, you suffer, hope, and fight to be greater. You can't give up; you can never give up; it's not even in your vocabulary. You have to take the next step, try something new, and give it your all. People like you move the world forward and today you're gonna make it quake with fear!

TECHNIQUES

Create three techniques and your Ultimate Technique.

TIES

Someone here is stronger than you and you know it. You've seen it and it makes a fire burn in your soul. Who is it? They get a tie on you.

Someone here looks up to your spirit, your determination. Who is it? You get a tie on them.

TIRELESS MOVES

Take This:

Lust for Battle: You are addicted to fighting and training. You live to grow your own power. You have one additional condition:

- Determination (-2 to Listen to Me, Figure Things Out, and What's Your Story; you can not use your Ultimate Technique)

You can not mark this condition normally. You can only mark it when a move says to do so. Marking Determination will not clear your harm track, unless otherwise stated.

Choose 1:

Daredevil: Whenever **you take a dangerous risk**, ask anyone present if their character was impressed. They must answer honestly. If they were, get a tie on them. If they were not, take XP and mark Determination. Unmark it after your next fight.

Demon's Grin: When **you run headlong at your opponent with no consideration for yourself**, mark determination. As long as your determination is marked, you may pick an additional option when you fight a serious battle, but you take +1-harm when you take harm. Unmark determination when on your last legs or the battle ends.

Friend or Foe?: When **you arrive on the scene of trouble in a dramatic fashion**, the MK will ask you if you did it for yourself or to aid others. If you did it for yourself, say how it helps you and deal +1-harm until the end of battle. If you did it to aid others, take XP, unmark Determination, and get +1-armor until the end of battle.

Grit Those Teeth: When **you would be knocked-out**, you may mark Determination and use your ultimate technique with a +2. Regardless, you will be knocked out afterwards; Determination remains marked until the end of your next battle, and you are left in shock.

Unbreakable Spirit: When **you would be on your Last Legs or worse for the first time in a scene**, you ignore the harm taken.

Wounded Pride: When **you are put on your Last Legs in a fight**, hold 1 after the battle. You may spend the hold on the following:

- You become frustrated at yourself for being so weak and lash out: you're inspired when you use battle moves until the end of the battle.
- You refuse to let yourself be beaten: ignore 1-Harm.
- You're excited to know there is still a challenge out there and things to explore: you're inspired to prove them wrong.
- You realize, begrudgingly, this is more than you can handle: +1 ongoing to help people until the end of battle and take XP.

BASIC AND BATTLE MOVES

You get all the Basic and Battle moves.

FRIENDSHIP MOVE

When **you train with another**, they hold 1. They can spend that hold to mark experience and gain +1 ongoing against an opponent until the end of battle.

ENEMY MOVE

If **someone holds you back** in your training or in battle, lose your holds with them.

TIRELESS IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever a move says so or you roll a 5(-), mark experience. Also, mark experience whenever you do one of the following three things:

- Ignore obligations to grow your power
- Harm yourself training too hard
- Continue battling when on your last legs

When you mark the 5th experience, take an improvement and erase your marked experience.

Each time you improve, choose one of the following. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

- Get a new Tireless move
- Get a new Tireless move
- Get **Is That All You Got!?** from the Guardian playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Unlock your awakening

After you take four improvements, you can take the following advancements:

- Retire your character to safety, and create a new character to play
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook





EXAMPLE OF PLAY

To close off, let's go through an example of play for FEV. This will be set in the middle of a session. The general theme is a world where martial artists are practically superhuman. To show off their ability, they have gathered in an International Martial Arts Tournament. However, shortly after the tournament, martial artists began going missing and there is a sense that someone nefarious is behind these disappearances.

The players are Joseph, Kevin, K-Lo, and Marcus.

Joseph is playing **Carrito**, the Forever Young.

Kevin is playing **Pork Bun**, the Jobber.

K-Lo is playing **Tetsumaru**, the Guardian.

Marcus is playing **Go**, the Host.

The **Mangaka** is Nicholas.

Nicholas (MK): So, we'll open on all of you around the television watching the news. The newscaster is saying, "After the 23rd International Martial Arts Tournament, there have been many disappearances from attendees from both the present year and prior years. Authorities are currently unsure who could be behind these disappearances." He goes on to talk of unimportant things. What are you guys doing and what do you guys do?

Kevin (Pork Bun): Well, I'm sitting in front of the TV when this is on and I go to change the channel. It's a boring conversation to me, anyway. I turn it to a wrestling match.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): I'm sitting on the couch with my friend Jiaozi and I basically want to snatch the remote from you. "Hey, Porky, that was probably pretty important."

Kevin (Pork Bun): "Why? It's just the news. Some martial artists going missing isn't the end of the world. If they try to go after me, I'll just use my patented pork tusk fist and send them flying."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "Yeah, sure, and, what about some of us who have, you know, not martial artist friends."

Kevin (Pork Bun): "What? Like your little vampire?"

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "D-don't talk about Jaozi like that. It makes it sound weird."

Joseph (Carotto): I'm going to jump in here and say I was preparing myself some dinner while this was going on. I begin to scarf it down by the truckload.

Nicholas (MK): Sounds like you've got a bottomless stomach.

Joseph (Carotto): What? Why did you say it that way?

Nicholas (MK): Did you take that move?

In FEV, characters have moves. Some all characters have, while others must be taken from your playbook. In this case, Nicholas (MK) is referring to the Bottomless Stomach move from the Forever Young playbook, Joseph (Carotto)'s playbook.

Joseph (Carotto): What? Oh wait, yeah, I did. Huh, I was just saying that to say that like Go--

Nicholas (MK): We're going to transcribe this later so don't say anything copyrighted. Like, I don't want to get sued. Like, I don't know how Kickstarter works on that, but no need to open doors for lawyers.

Joseph (Carotto): Aren't you being a little paranoid?

Nicholas (MK): Let's just get back to the game.

Joseph (Carotto) rolls two six-sided dice to determine the outcome of the move. He adds the numbers on each die together to get his result.

Joseph (Carotto): Okay, so, I got a 6.

Nicholas (MK): That means you hold 1 and can spend that hold to heal--

Joseph (Carotto): I can read.

Joseph (Carotto) and Nicholas (MK) resolve the move by following the text of it. In this case, it's rather self-explanatory and doesn't need MK intervention. Hold 1 means that Joseph (Carotto) gets to activate the effects of the move for as long as he still has holds and it still makes sense in the game.

Nicholas (MK): It's for the transcription later. It's going to be the example... You know what, forget it.

Marcus (Go): Can we focus? Like, I only got three hours today.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Joseph (Carotto): Right, what was I doing again?

Nicholas (MK): Eating.

Joseph (Carotto): Oh right, yeah, so I'm like, "What you guys arguing about over there?"

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "Well, backyard wrestler over here doesn't think we should be worried about martial artists going missing."

Joseph (Carotto): "People go missing all the time! I'm sure they just got lost. They'll be found eventually."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "Yeah, found dead... also, that's not how this works."

Marcus (Go): Go is training outside the house while this is going on. He's trying to meditate and concentrate on his inner peace. He doesn't want to lose control like during the tournament. But the sounds inside are starting to get to him so he levitates around to face the house and goes, "Hey, keep it down in there! Some of us are actually training!"

Joseph (Carotto): "Oooo, do you want a sparring partner! I am itching for a good sparring match."

Marcus (Go): "Not that kind of training! Not everything is about fighting!"

Kevin (Pork Bun): "Yeah, Carotto, sometimes it's about money and girls."

Marcus (Go): "That's not what I meant! Not even close! How did you even get that from what I said!?"

Joseph (Carotto): "Why would girls matter? I mean, if they can fight, sure, but that's true of most people anyway."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): Really going with the abridged series version of the character, huh?

Nicholas (MK): Alright, it's at that moment when Jaozi buts in and says, "Tets, I don't know if we should be afraid, but, if someone is defeating all those martial artists, he has to be really strong, right?"

Joseph (Carotto): Carotto's ears perk up at the sound of that.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Oh, Pork Bun is down for this!

Joseph (Carotto): "You're right, Jaozi! We should try to get the guy who did this. He's probably really tough!"

Marcus (Go): Go actually doesn't like the sound of that. Since the tournament, he's been afraid of getting into fights. He doesn't want the demon to take control again. He goes, "Hey, actually, maybe I can sit this one out."

Kevin (Pork Bun): "What? But, Go, you're our strongest fighter. After what you pulled off in the tour--"

Marcus (Go): Go is going to cut him off there and say "No! Don't talk about that! I don't want to talk about that at all!" And I'm going to fly off and run away.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Pork Bun is flabbergasted. I know he's in the house, but he's going to chase after Go.

Nicholas (MK): Act Under Tension.

There isn't a move specifically for chasing after someone. As such, Nicholas (MK) suggests Act Under Tension. By design, this move can slot into any situation and handle events that lack proper rules clarification. If the event were recurring and very important to this particular campaign, Nicholas (MK) could spend time between sessions making custom moves using the rules in this book. However, that isn't necessary here. It could be necessary, however, to model fights in a tournament where ring-outs are a possibility, for example.

Kevin (Pork Bun): I got a 3.

Kevin (Pork Bun) got a result lower than 5. This means that Nicholas (MK) can make a soft or hard move. A soft move would be one where the action can still be interrupted. "He is going too fast to keep up and is getting away, what do you do?" Soft moves are made throughout play and often without a roll prompting them: they are necessary to keep a game moving along. A hard move would be one where the action just happens. "He is going and going and...he's out of sight. You lost him." Which to use is up to the MK's judgement from what makes sense for the scene. However, the MK is limited to the options present on their own move list. The MK was going to go easy on Kevin (Pork Bun) and just use Separate Them as it makes sense for the scene. On the positive side, the player marks XP if they get 5 or lower.

Nicholas (MK): Alright, so you go speed off after him and--

Kevin (Pork Bun): Wait, wait, wait, I'm going to use Lucky Break on this one.

Kevin (Pork Bun) activated a move that allows him to change a failed result into a partial success. This move is limited in the number of times it can be used. He could only do it because he took the move from his playbook and because he used it before Nicholas (MK) really described the outcome. Had Nicholas (MK) fully described the events, Kevin (Pork

Bun) would not have been allowed to use that ability. It is also worth noting that by changing the result, Kevin (Pork Bun) does not mark XP.

Nicholas (MK): You sure?

Kevin (Pork Bun): Yeah.

Nicholas (MK): Okay, so, you chase after him, but he's pulling away. Going as fast you can, you barely keep up. Deep down, you know you did something wrong and you feel insecure.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Do I have to take that?

Nicholas (MK): It's your choice. You can let him get away or you can take the condition.

Kevin (Pork Bun): I'll take the condition.

Act Under Tension gives players a choice on a partial success. The MK will make a cost of some kind, be it narrative (you drop something important, you offend someone, etc.) or mechanical (condition, status track, etc.), and the player then has the choice of accepting it or refusing it. In this case, Kevin (Pork Bun) accepts it and marks the Insecure condition on his character sheet. He now has a -2 to Listen to Me and Prove Them Wrong for as long as he has that condition. Pork Bun will only unmark the condition at the end of the scene where he berates himself or use the Make an Opening move.

Nicholas (MK): Alright. And, Marcus, right as you're flying away, you feel a sudden, huge power right in front of you. As a matter of fact, you can see it: it's someone standing right in front of you.

Marcus (Go): I stop immediately and try to figure him out. Not every day someone is just standing in the sky.

Nicholas (MK): Okay, but right after we resolve this, we go back to the other two.

Marcus (Go): Alright.

Nicholas (MK): Can you try to figure out what's his story?

Marcus (Go): Alright, 9. So I hold 2.

What's His Story allows you to ask questions. Marcus (Go) could ask them all upfront and still get an answer, but it's more interesting and natural to use them in a dialogue with the NPC and figure things out this way. For every hold Marcus (Go) has, he can ask one question from the list. It must be one of those questions. The MK, Nicholas, must answer the question honestly, but also consider how it makes sense for Marcus (Go) to get that information from this scene. Sometimes, that

can be easy, like in this case, but other times it could be hard. Asking Marcus (Go) how his character might know is one method to solving this problem.

Nicholas (MK): Alright, so he looks like a man with giant bats. Kind of demonic, but not red skin. Caucasian with bat wings. And he goes, "Ah, the wolf kid from the tournament. And to think I had you lower on my list."

Marcus (Go): "Lower on your list? What list? Are you one behind the disappearances?"

Nicholas (MK): He just laughs.

Marcus (Go): I want to spend a hold to ask, "Who do you work for?"

Nicholas (MK): Phrase it in-character.

Marcus (Go): "Something funny? People have gone missing and I'm wondering who's behind it."

Nicholas (MK): He closes his eyes and goes, "That would be my employer, the monster prince, Flute."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): Really?

Nicholas (MK): Shut up.

Marcus (Go): "Flute, huh? Not much of a name."

Nicholas (MK): "Coming from a man named after a board game?"

Marcus (Go): That's not what my name's from.

Nicholas (MK): He doesn't know that.

Marcus (Go): "Alright, so, what is it then? Money? Power? The thrill? Why is this happening?" I'm using my last hold on 'why do you do what you do.'

Nicholas (MK): He gives you a cold stare and goes, "I was just born to do this. Father made sure of that." He laughs heartily before charging at you! And, that's when we go back to Tetsumaru and Carotto. You guys just saw Pork Bun and Go run off; what do you do?

Joseph (Carotto): "Huh, what is his problem?"

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "Isn't it obvious?"

Joseph (Carotto): "Is that a trick question?"

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): I sigh and say, "I talked to him after his fight during the tournament. I knew something seemed off. He acted like a wild animal out there. He said he wasn't himself, that something took control of him, and that he didn't know what to make of it. He's scared and he doesn't know what to do."

Joseph (Carotto): "That's silly. I mean, he's still the same person as before, right."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): That actually sets me off. I slam my fist on the table, startling Jiaozi, and go, "Dammit, Carotto, don't you get it? He almost killed his opponent! That's no laughing matter! What would you be saying to me if I laughed off your concerns when your body didn't do what you told it to? What if it wasn't almost and you actually killed someone!? Live!? In front of millions!?"

Joseph (Carotto): Is that enough to trigger my improvement, Nick?

Nicholas (MK): Yeah, that's enough for the XP on Get In Trouble For Being a Child.

Joseph (Carotto): Alright, that's the last XP I needed. So give me one second. Gonna take Shining Light. Anyway, Carotto is going to be taken aback and go, "I didn't think about it, like. That actually sounds really bad. We should probably talk to him."

Joseph (Carotto) has marked five XP. As a result, he unmarks that XP and picks an option from his playbook's improvement list. He chooses Get a New Forever Young Move and decides to take Shining Light from the options in his playbook.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "I did already. That won't solve the problem. What he needs is someone to help him get that power under control. And neither of us know how to do that."

Joseph (Carotto): You mind if I make up something from my backstory that could be relevant here?

Nicholas (MK): Like what?

Joseph (Carotto): I was trained by a master martial artist, right? Like, a hermit. So, maybe I can suggest him. I want to say he's a frog hermit who lives on a tiny island.

Kevin (Pork Bun): You know, your character doesn't need to one-for-one be **** from *****, right?

Nicholas (MK): If he finds it fun, he finds it fun and go for it. Honestly, you don't need to ask. I'll veto it if you do something a little b.s., but otherwise feel free.

FEV has collaborative world-building. Players should feel encouraged to speak their mind or add a detail to the setting. Some MKs might prefer some tighter control, but I suggest giving it a shot. To avoid things getting out of hand and player abuse, the MK does have a sort of soft veto on things. It's mainly there for players to feel more invested in the world and help explain how their character relates to the world they live in.

Joseph (Carotto): Right, so I go, "Tetsu-san, I think I know someone who can help. My old master, the Frog Hermit."

Nicholas (MK): And, actually I think that's when we'll go back. So, Kevin, I think you'll come in to the scene in just a little bit and we'll start with Go on his own against the mysterious fighter.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Alright, works for me.

Nicholas (MK): So, Go, this guy charges right at you. What do you do?

While it has been described before, this is one of the more obvious uses of a soft move to move play forward. Nicholas (MK) is giving Marcus (Go) a chance to react to a situation that he, frankly, needs to react to. Nicholas (MK) could have potentially done a hard move where Marcus (Go) was just hit, but that would have been unnecessary and out-of-place as no dice had been rolled. Generally, reserve hard moves for 5 or less results on moves unless they really feel appropriate.

Marcus (Go): I'm afraid of fighting, but don't think running is going to work. So, I use the multi-form technique and split into two people and try to double-team him. I unleash a flurry of punches against the guy.

Marcus (Go) is doing two things here. First off, he's begun the narration that will eventually lead to the move, Fight a Serious Battle. Secondly, he's using one of his techniques. Combat in FEV is mostly narrative. Players and MKs spend a lot of time describing actions without needing to roll dice. Techniques help define what the players' characters can do and give a fallback for when someone can't decide how to narrate a battle.

Nicholas (MK): He dodges them effortlessly as quickly as you can throw them and knocks you in the chin with a high kick. It sends one of you flying up. In the same flurry, he kicks the other you with a low kick and sends them flying down.

Marcus (Go): I stop both of my selves from going any further. One of my selves begins charging up the demon cannon while the other goes to distract. I super speed right behind the guy and go for a kick.

Nicholas (MK): He turns in time, but still takes a hit to the face. He brushes it and the blood aside and says, "Not bad; faster than I expected."

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Marcus (Go): "There are a lot of things you're probably underestimating about me."

Nicholas (MK): "What, like this awful distracting job you're pulling?" he says as he turns around and fires an energy blast at the other you.

Marcus (Go): I panic and fire my demon cannon at him.

Nicholas (MK): Alright, you're fighting a serious battle.

Nicholas (MK) feels that now is the time for dice to be rolled. It's very subjective in FEV, but the general rule is to consider when the manga would use a two-page spread or otherwise focus on a particular clash. It's about those big moments, as those tend to be the only moments that actually matter in a shonen battle manga; the rest of the exchange is filler. Either side can call for the roll if they think it's time, but MK has the final call.

Marcus (Go): Got a 7. Going to avoid their counterattack.

Nicholas (MK): Alright, so the beams clash in the air and push against each other. At first, it seems like he has the upper hand, but you start to push back. Eventually, with a mighty push, you get through his attack and hit him. However, when the dust clears, he appears mildly scuffed up and mostly unharmed. "Is that all? I was hardly using my full power there."

Nicholas (MK) turns the mysterious fighter's status track from Ready to Dirty. Marcus (Go) does not do so for his own character as he avoided the counterattack, an option available due to his result.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Can I say I see the beams hit in the sky and spectate this big fight?

Nicholas (MK): Sure. Frankly, feel free to jump in when you think it's appropriate.

In FEV, characters who are not in a battle may choose to spectate the fight. By doing so, they can influence the characters in the fight through their narration and observations. Players are invited to do so at any time, but the MK may veto it if it is disruptive in that instance. Technically, K-Lo (Tetsumaru) and Joseph (Carrotto) could ask to spectate the fight as well. They could do so justifying it as sensing the battle from afar or just nonchalantly thinking about one of those involved in the fight ("I hope Go has been taking care of his leg since the tournament. It got pretty messed up during that fight").

Kevin (Pork Bun): So, I'm flying towards the battle when I see two chi beams hit in the sky. I think to myself, "Is that the demon cannon? Who is fighting Go? How can they push back the demon cannon like that? Who is he fighting!? Wait, I can feel it: that guy...he's got more there

than he's letting on! I've got to get to Go quickly!"

Nicholas (MK): Thanks for picking up what I was trying to throw down with this guy.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Yeah, I get it: he's supposed to show how tough these new guys are.

Nicholas (MK): Okay, so, Marcus acts under tension against feeling insecure during the beam volley.

When a spectator says something negative about one of the actors, the MK then inflicts an appropriate condition. The spectator may suggest a condition, but the MK has final say. However, if the person affected was a PC, then they may Act Under Tension to avoid the condition. This, however, carries the risk of a 5 or lower result and what that entails. That said, FEV is a lighter, narrative-based game where failure isn't that bad. Every failure results in marked-off XP and the costs of losing are lower. After all, unless Marcus (Go) marks his death box, he can't die in his fight. Lastly, it might seem weird that Kevin (Pork Bun) remarked something that harmed his teammate, but he felt that would make a more interesting narrative. Players in FEV are encouraged to go with what they think works best and not take things like this personally.

Marcus (Go): Got it. 2.

Marcus (Go) marks XP.

Nicholas (MK): Alright, so, not only do you feel insecure, but the guy appears right behind you and gets you in a tight grab. You can't move and can feel him crushing you unconscious. You aren't out yet, but you can't fight back against this strength. And that's when Pork Bun arrives.

Marcus (Go) marks the Insecure condition on his character sheet.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Alright, I burst in a mighty charge against the guy and go right at him to free Go. And ... I get creamed the second I get close as he super speeds in front of me and kicks me into the waiting ocean below. But, it frees Go in the process, since he had to let him go to do it.

Nicholas (MK): Alright, I can go with that.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Can I get one for Acting Tough When I Really Shouldn't?

Marcus (Go): Could also go for Being Humiliated in Front of Everyone.

Nicholas (MK): You can only get 1 XP from an action, anyway. And, besides, you don't gotta ask: just mark it when you feel it's about right.

Kevin (Pork Bun): marks an XP for fulfilling one of his XP actions.

Kevin (Pork Bun): So I pop my head out of the water, take a big gasp of air and go, "Who's your friend, Go?"

Marcus (Go): "Servant of the monster king. Gigantic prick."

Kevin (Pork Bun): "Yeah, he certainly gives that vibe."

Nicholas (MK): "Personally, I think I'm charming to be around. Don't you agree?"

Kevin (Pork Bun): "Nah, you're just too batty."

Nicholas (MK): ...

Marcus (Go): ...

Joseph (Carotto): ...

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): ...

Kevin (Pork Bun): What? It was fun--

Nicholas (MK): He fires a beam at you suddenly.

Kevin (Pork Bun): is bad at puns.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Can this be Fighting a Serious Battle and I use it to build up Go in this fight?

Nicholas (MK): I can accept that.

As stated previously, players can suggest for a move to be called. The MK has final say, but it works here as it helps to establish how powerful this mysterious fighter truly is. As a jobber, Pork Bun has a move that lets him take a 5(-) on a battle move automatically to inspire every other player in the scene. Thus, Go is now inspired.

Nicholas (MK): The beam blasts you right in the face and pushes you deep under the water. You can feel the water's clammy depths crush you as you go down. Go, you feel a fire in your heart as you watch this unfold. And I think we'll go back to the other two. So you guys were just discussing how to help Go with your old master, the Frog Hermit.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "So, how are we going to contact this old master of yours? I imagine a hermit like him would be hard to contact. Living all alone on a small island makes me think he doesn't like visitors."

Joseph (Carotto): "I'll just call him on his cellphone. He gave me the number last time I was there."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): Tetsumaru and Jiaozi pratfall when they hear this.

Joseph (Carotto): "Briiinnng, briiinng!"

Nicholas (MK): "*Click* Hello? You've reached the Frog Hermit residence. What can I do for you, lad?"

Joseph (Carotto): "Master, it's me, Carotto."

Nicholas (MK): "I know, lad, I got caller ID on this thing. You sure as hell can bet if I didn't see your name pop-up, I would have screened you first."

Joseph (Carotto): "Screened?"

Nicholas (MK): "Let it go to voicemail then call you back. Lets me pick and choose who I talk to."

Joseph (Carotto): "But what if I screened you when I called you back?"

Nicholas (MK): "Why would you do that?"

Joseph (Carotto): "I mean, isn't that what you're doing?"

Nicholas (MK): "Man, you always were a few light-bulbs short of a Christmas tree."

Joseph (Carotto): "It's not Christmas."

Nicholas (MK): "Jesus! Why did you call me?"

Joseph (Carotto): "Oh, one of our friends almost killed a man and is afraid he might do it again."

Nicholas (MK): "..."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): Smooth. "Give me the phone. Hello, is this the Frog Hermit?"

Nicholas (MK): "Listen, kid, if you think you might kill someone, call the police or a psych; don't call me."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "I'm not the guy! The guy is a friend of our's and I'm pretty sure it has something to with his power. I think he's chi might have a mind of his own. It only happened when he was in a losing battle."

Nicholas (MK): "Well, why didn't you just say so? Sounds like your friend is suffering from a strong killing intent in his aura. Could be brought on by many things. I'd have to take him on as a student to really find out."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "Perfect!"

Nicholas (MK): "I never said I'm taking him on as a student."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "But you just said..."

Nicholas (MK): "I'm not in any market for students. Carotto is enough of a handful."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): Testsumaru gets mad. He can't believe this guy is abandoning his friend, Go, to going wild just because Carotto is too much to handle on his own. He begins barking into the phone, "Listen to me, old man, you're going to help our friend or we're going to come over there and show you what happens when you put dynamite inside a frog's asshole!"

Nicholas (MK): Try to Make Him Listen to you, then.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): ? I got What? You Think I'm Some Kind of Punk? so that counts as a 10 since I used threats and intimidation.

Some moves allow you to increase the range of your results. In this case, the move counts partial successes as full success, thus making it much easier to succeed. Moves like this usually have some sort of requirement to them, however, that may not always be in your best interest. Using threats and intimidation may turn out fine now, but other people may hold grudges that they can spring on you later, even if they do what you asked in the moment.

Nicholas (MK): There is a laughter on the other side of the line before the old codger starts up again. "I like your spunk, kid. I'll let your friend join, but you guys better help me find a girl to liven this place up. No need to get anyone before you show up, but I could use some company for this island. Must like old men and the smell of bengay."

Because K-Lo (Testumaru) got a full success on Listen to Me, he doesn't have to keep to the promise the NPC offers. However, that doesn't mean they won't be expecting it at some point. K-Lo (Tetsumaru) will get the training that Marcus (Go) needs and the Frog Hermit won't deny them that, but he might still pester them for what he asked and K-Lo (Tetsumaru) could always comply.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): Ugh, I hate this archetype. "Alright, you got a deal. And, thanks."

Nicholas (MK): "Don't mention it, heh!" And we got back to Go. You just saw Pork Bun eat it and you can feel his presence going deeper into the water's depths. What do you do?

Marcus (Go): I can feel the anger welling up inside me and I can hear that same voice from before: "Rip, tear, destroy. Don't let them escape. Give no quarter." And, like an animal, both of me burst forth at the guy. We do a flurry at first, but use the distraction for one of me to grab him while the other me fires a demon cannon.

Nicholas (MK): He gets out of the hold at the last second and throws the other you at you. He super speeds away from the cannon as both of you knock into each other and merge.

Marcus (Go): "That only makes me twice as strong!" I quip before super speeding below him and grabbing his feet. I spin him around and around before letting him go flying.

Nicholas (MK): He stops his flight with his wings, but feels disoriented.

Marcus (Go): If he looks for me, he won't see me as I'm crashing from above with a fully charged demon cannon. My aura and demon cannon has turned purple again, like it was in the tournament. It fires with the sound of a cannon and barrels towards the guy.

Nicholas (MK): You're Fighting a Serious Battle now.

Marcus (Go): I'm feeling pretty inspired too. 10.

When moves or ties allow it, you can be inspired to perform an action. Being inspired means you take three six-sided dice instead of two and use the two highest numbers from that roll for your result. This only applies to your next move, however.

Marcus (Go): I'm going to mark my Parasite's feature of Scary to use Terrible Power. This attack deals an additional harm.

Nicholas (MK): You also take 1 harm from it.

Marcus (Go): Right; the explosion was bigger than expected and Go ended up in the splash zone. Then I'm going to use my result from Fighting a Serious Battle to do another additional harm and impress them to get a tie on them.

Nicholas (MK): Alright then; you take another harm since you don't avoid his counterattack.

Marcus (Go): I'll take the Angry condition to negate it.

Marcus (Go) was going to go from Ready to First Blood, but took a condition to negate the harm he took. He got out of this unscathed.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Nicholas (MK) could use the mysterious fighter's conditions to negate it, and it could serve well to establish the new enemy's strength; but he also wants to build up how dangerous the demon inside Marcus is and how incredible its power is. He decides to forgo it and take the mysterious figure from Dirty to Beat-up. He can always use the remaining conditions later in the fight to keep things going.

Nicholas (MK): The demon cannon explodes like a nuke and illuminates the entire sky. Tetsumaru and Carrotto even feel the energy radiate through the air and earth as their house shakes and the wind rocks.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): What is that? That power! It's unreal!

Joseph (Carrotto): W-who could be behind that? Is that energy--?

Nicholas (MK): From the clearing smoke, the mysterious fighter emerges covered in blood and breathing heavily. His smug demeanor has passed. He looks haggard and is covered in purple blood. Through strained breaths he goes, "Nothing in my records suggested a power this big from a normal human. You must be part monster; it's the only explanation. Who would have thought I'd find monster-kin among this little mission?"

Marcus (Go): "Monster? Is that what I am?"

Nicholas (MK): "Just my best guess, but it seems to fit." The mysterious figure tenses up his body. "I guess you're actually worth introductions before I kill you. The name is Castanets and I'll be your murderer today." And I think I'll count those remarks you two made earlier as spectating on the fight. What do you want to happen?

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): I think that it makes the most sense if we go with Marcus (Go) doing additional harm the next time he deals harm. We were definitely playing up his power there.

Joseph (Carrotto): Yeah, definitely that.

Nicholas (MK): Alright, I think we'll go back to Pork Bun, who is sinking to the depths of the water. You've just regained consciousness and water is filling your lungs. You can feel the waves pushing you deeper; what do you do?

Kevin (Pork Bun): That's easy, I use my Pork Tusk Punch again and again to swim my way back to the surface.

Nicholas (MK): You'll be acting under tension.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Ah shit, 2.

Nicholas (MK): You fight your way back to the surface and finally get a good breath of air. Your lungs, thankfully, are not full of sea water so you can actually breathe. However, during it, you felt like you almost weren't going to make it. You could feel your lungs seizing up and you were terrified: take the afraid condition.

While Kevin (Pork Bun) got a 5 or lower, having them remain underwater or drown would have been boring and kept the player out of the action. Instead, Nicholas (MK) did a hard move on them while still letting them reach the surface. In some ways, this is similar to results of that move on a partial success. However, the main difference is that Kevin (Pork Bun) is no longer given a choice and must accept that punishment. The real difference is a lack of player agency and the fact that Nicholas (MK) could really do whatever he wanted. In this case, he just used the inflict a Condition MK move, but he could have used some others to enhance the punishment.

Kevin (Pork Bun): "Ah, Jesus! I really thought I was going to die down there. I could see my life flashing before my eyes! Damn, I really should have paid more attention in science class. Then, I might have more regular income than just fighting in tournaments."

Marcus (Go): "Pork Bun, is that you? Oh, thank God; I thought you drowned under there."

Kevin (Pork Bun): "You could have come flown me out!"

Nicholas (MK): "I probably would have killed him, if he tried that. So many openings."

Marcus (Go): "Come on; I don't think I can beat this guy alone."

Kevin (Pork Bun): I fly back up to be on level with Go and go, "I feel you have this under control. He looks pretty much on his last legs."

Marcus (Go): He's only at beat-up.

Kevin (Pork Bun): Figure of speech.

Marcus (Go): Right. Anyway. "You have no idea. This guy survived one hell of an attack. Anyone else would have been vaporized."

Kevin (Pork Bun): "Wait, and you used something like that on someone?"

Marcus (Go): "I-I wasn't in the right state of mind. I don't know what's happening to me."

Kevin (Pork Bun): "We do a lot of things, but we don't use lethal force."

Marcus (Go): "Don't you think I know that!? I didn't mean to! I just lost it when I thought you drowned!"

Nicholas (MK): "How touching. I think I can hear the ship-fic being written right now. But I think you two need to remember that I'm here and ready for another round." And I think we're going to go back to Tetsumaru and Carrotto.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): No need. I'm going to use the hold I have on Go since he's my VIP. He got harmed when he was away so I'm using Sixth Sense to appear on the scene.

Nicholas (MK): He used a condition to mitigate that so it doesn't count for Sixth Sense. His status track actually has to move from Ready for that to trigger.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): Alright, that makes sense.

Nicholas (MK): So, you two just felt the entire world shake and shatter under the pressure of that attack. Everything, the house, the ground, the wind, was all a torrent that almost knocked you both over. It sounds like one of you identified the source of the energy. What do you guys do?

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): "What was that?"

Joseph (Carrotto): "It was Go. I recognize that energy from the tournament. I never forget the presence of people I really want to fight and prove myself against."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): There is no way that was Go! That blast... it was so far away, but it almost destroyed our home!

Joseph (Carrotto): "We need to get him to the Frog Hermit. This is getting serious."

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): I'm surprised how serious Carrotto is being.

Joseph (Carrotto): "I mean, think of how powerful he'd be in a sparring match once he has full control of that power! I can only imagine!"

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): And there it is. I sigh and go, "Let's go. I think I got a good guess where that attack came from." And we both fly off in the direction of the attack.

Nicholas (MK): Alright, I'll say you guys get there real soon, but first, let's go back to the other two. What do you guys do?

Kevin (Pork Bun): I rush forward and try to hit him with a flurry of punches and kicks, but he effortlessly dodges them.

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Marcus (Go): "That won't work!" I shout out as I charge to get him out of there.

Nicholas (MK): He waits out your flurry and hits you right in the gut with a single, powerful punch.

Kevin (Pork Bun): I spit up blood as the punch collides and knocks the wind out of me.

Nicholas (MK): He follows with a side kick and sends you flying away.

Marcus (Go): Right as he flies out of his line of sight, I appear right in front of him with my index and middle finger extended on each hand. I start flying those out at him in a torrent of blows trying to pierce his flesh.

Nicholas (MK): He super speeds behind you and kicks you in the head, sending you flying after Pork Bun.

Kevin (Pork Bun): I stop my fall and catch Go. "Got any ideas?"

Marcus (Go): "Yeah, one."

Kevin (Pork Bun): "Which is?"

Marcus (Go): "Play to his pride," I say as I get back onto my own two feet. "Castanets, why don't we do this one-on-one? We both know I'm the only one here who can give you a real fight. This guy is just slowing me down."

Kevin (Pork Bun): "Hey, I thought we were a team!"

Marcus (Go): I look back and wink.

Kevin (Pork Bun): I wink back.

Nicholas (MK): "I do tire of fighting that pathetic human. Come at me, monster-kin and, human, do restrain yourself or I will make my next attack lethal."

Marcus (Go): I charge at him and go right for the face.

Nicholas (MK): He stonewalls the hit and grabs your arm. He flips you around and spines you over his head. "Ha, is this all you can do? What happened to that power earlier?" He throws you into the water and prepares to hit you with a beam.

Kevin (Pork Bun): That's when I jump in and hit him with my Pork Tusk Punch right to the back of his skull.

Nicholas (MK): The fight is getting serious.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Kevin (Pork Bun): 7. I want to leave him winded and staggered so I'm inspired against him.

Marcus (Go): And I want to spend my tie on Pork Bun to say he deals an additional harm to Castanets because I fire my demon cannon while he's distracted by the punch.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): And remember the benefit from our earlier spectating: the attack deals another additional harm.

Nicholas (MK): Castanet takes his Angry condition to negate all of that harm. When your attacks hit, they all slam at once. The fist knocks him hard in the back as the beam blows up on his chest. But, as the smoke clears, all that is left is a very angry Castanet. "You said you would fight me with honor, one-on-one. You lied." He begins charging up a purple aura. "You lied!" And a wave of energy burst from him in all directions: you two need to act under tension to avoid it.

Castanet took the Angry condition. This means he must make an Angry move. In this case, he's wasting his energy on a powerful, unnecessary attack. This will mess a lot of things up and leave him a bit haggard which, considering his superiority, is really wasteful. The effects will mostly be narrative, but it does serve to make it clear that this was a poor decision.

Kevin (Pork Bun): 9.

Marcus (Go): 5.

Nicholas (MK): Okay, so Pork Bun manages to avoid the attack.

Kevin (Pork Bun): I freak out and buzz off the second he starts charging up. It was scary.

Nicholas (MK): And Go takes harm as he is hit by the wave and slammed into the waters below.

Marcus (Go): I'll just take that hit.

Marcus (Go) takes Go's status track from Ready to Dirty.

K-Lo (Tetsumaru): And I'll use that hold to appear on the scene.

Nicholas (MK): Alright, this fight is really heating up.

And that's where we are going to end that Example of Play. It went over some of the basics, handled a bit of battle, how to do a split party, and showed you the kind of storytelling we're going for with this game. I hope this helped shed some light on things about the game and will make it easier for you to run your own adventures.



EXAMPLE OF PLAY

APPENDIX: CUSTOM MOVES AND RULES HACKS

Custom Moves: Overview

Sometimes, a threat or other circumstance may need a custom move. They are simple to make. Use this template:

WHEN A PLAYER CHARACTER DOES [SPECIFY],
ROLL 2D6. ON A 9+, [SPECIFY]. ON A 6, 7, 8,
[SPECIFY]. ON A 5(-), [SPECIFY].

Generally, on a 9+, they're fine. On a 5-, it all goes wrong. On a 7,8,9, they are somewhere in-between the two.

For example, these moves would work well as a custom move for a tournament match. These will be expanded on, funny enough, in a later section.

Serious Ring Battle

On a 9+, you can choose the following in addition to the normal options for Make An Opening:

- You put them in a spot: You get advantage on your opponent
- You get out of a spot: Your opponent loses advantage

Rules Hack: Tournaments

Tournaments are a huge part of shonen battle manga. Tournament arcs are a go-to staple to bring the series up whenever the series is having ratings trouble. They are a series of battles where every member of the main cast gets at least one big fight to endear themselves to the readers. They often have clear rules and a stipulation to ensure that not every battle is until submission.

Since they are so ubiquitous, they will likely show up in your game. You could just handle them with the basic rules, but I suggest a series of custom moves here to improve the experience. This will include moves for the matches themselves as well as rules for character development.



Advantage

To handle the reality of a tournament fight and its ebb and flow, we introduced the concept of advantage. Advantage is a vague concept that governs the idea of having your opponent on the ropes or generally in an unpreferable situation. It can mean everything from having them close to the edge of a ring to just in the perfect place for one of your techniques. You can gain and lose advantage through many ways, depending on what basic and MK moves the MK decided to add to emulate the tournament.

Additional Basic Moves

Some additional basic moves are needed to really get the properly feel of a tournament. Now, not all these moves might fight in your idea for the tournament. Use any or none of the basic moves you think will help you with your tournament.

Serious Ring Battle

On a 9+, you can choose the following in addition to the normal options for Make An Opening:

- You put them in a spot: You get advantage on your opponent
- You get out of a spot: Your opponent loses advantage

Ending This Quickly

When **you have advantage and try to abuse a battle's rules to win**, roll 2d6. On a 6+, they are staggered back: keep your advantage, or inflict a condition. On a 9+, you defeat them through a technicality.

Technically Legal

When **you break the rules of the tournament**, roll 2d6. On a 9+, you are allowed to continue. 6, 7, 8, you lose advantage or take a condition. On a 5(-), you are disqualified.

Watch The Show

When a **match between two NPCs occurs**, the General or Villain will always win. If one isn't present in the match, the PCs choose one person to support and roll 2d6. On a 6+, their favorite wins. On a 9+, the next PC in a match starts the match inspired. On a 5(-), their favorite loses.



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Retreat

When you're in a free-for-all tournament and try to flee your current opponent, roll 2d6. If you have advantage, add +2. If your opponent has advantage, add -2. On a 6+, you get away. On a 6, 7, 8, you will not have time heal your wounds before your next opponent appears.

Surrender

When you want to lose the match, you lose the match. If you want to make it look like a legitimate victory, roll 2d6. If your opponent has advantage, add +2. If you have advantage, add -2. On a 6+, they bought it. On a 6, 7, 8, you hurt yourself doing it: take a condition or start your next match in shock.

Additional Character Advancement:

If an entire arc will take place during a tournament, it can be worth it to add this to everyone's option at advancement. It will help people act and allow them to play with the unique rules of a tournament.

- **Sigh, Amateur!**: When you start a battle, you begin with advantage.
- **Keep It Up, Champ!**: When you spectate the big fight, you give or take away advantage. If you try to take advantage away from a player character, they make act under pressure to keep it.

Additional MK Moves

To properly be the mangaka for a tournament arc, you will need two additional MK moves to handle the situation. Nothing too complex. Your additional MK moves focus on advantage and are the primary way opponents get advantage and players lose advantage.

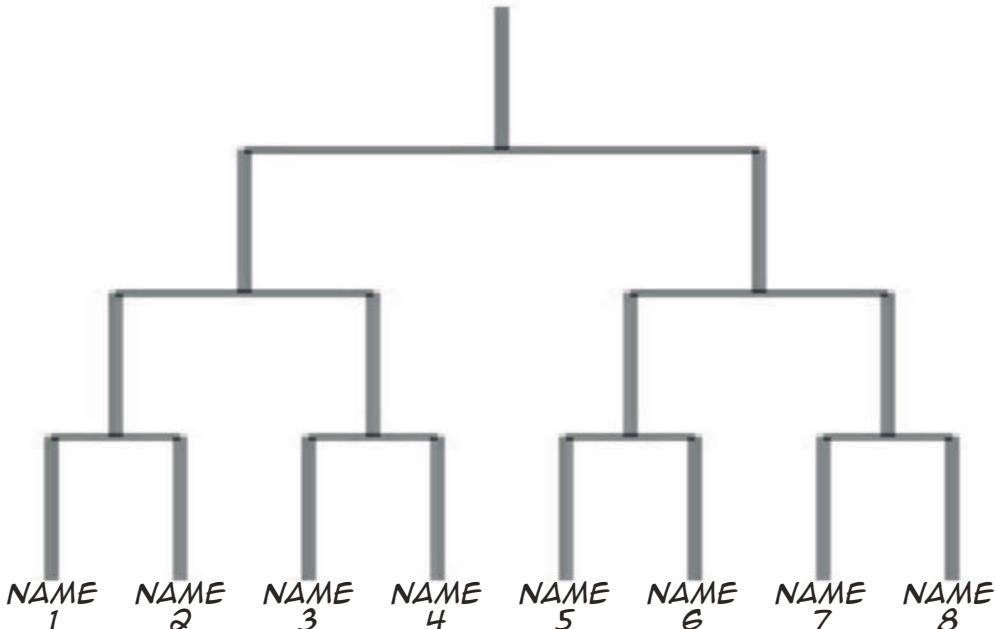
- Give advantage to someone
- Take advantage from someone

Doing a Bracket

Tournaments will likely feature a bracket. Not necessarily, of course. But the default standard in shonen battle manga is not a free-for-all tournament. Doing a bracket doesn't require new rules, but a little advice may help.

First off, if you are doing a tree design, single elimination structured bracket where each fighter's match is predetermined, you should start by writing all the PC's name on the bottom of paper. Put the paper horizontal when doing it. Make sure there is a space between each character's name. Next to each PC, write an NPC next to them. It's best for no PC to face each other in the beginning of a tournament.

Then, put arch on top to connect the names. Then go on and on from there until there is a clear line to the finish.



When a PC is knocked out, remember they can always spectate and contribute to every future match. Shonen battle manga never has a loser's bracket, but you can consider it for your games to keep players doing things.

If you're doing a round-robin, survival style, I suggest letting the players decide the order for themselves and you decide the NPC's order. They say who goes first and who follows them if they're defeated and you announce that upfront as well. You will then proceed as agreed upon.

Round-robin has the risk of there being a lot more sitting around and that not everyone can play. I recommend against using round-robin style tournaments.

The last style featured in shonen battle manga, though extremely rarely, is a free-for-all. At that point, it can be handled just by the MK announcing who appears before you and having matches arise and finish organically, not always having a winner-or-loser.

Rules Hack: Control

Some people may not like the free-form nature of battles in FEV and would prefer an initiative system, like in most tabletop RPGs. That is where Control comes in. Control is an optional system you can add in to give battles some more structure. As this was once part of the system, I will just say that I personally think things run better without it. But, that is up to you.

Control is just an intangible concept representing the idea of “controlling the battlefield.” It just means your actions are the ones directing things. Think of it how some characters are the ones hitting the other guy down and getting all the good hits in in a row before the other guy can act.

To handle control, use this new battle move.

Battlefield Control

When a battle starts or after you take control from your opponent, you have control of the battle.

When **you have control of the battle**, you narrate the transitional sequences, working with your opponent to fill in the details. If **you're fighting alongside others**, you share the descriptions of the transitional sequences, but only one of you describe the next part and resolves the move. Even if you're sharing, you're the one in control: you're the star of the moment. The story of this battle is about you and you get to control the spotlight and its turn.

As you can see, the move works like a serious fight in how it governs narration.

You will also need this new battle move to cover basic moves in battles:

Keeping It Basic

When you use a basic move in a battle, you do so and cede control, if you had it: say who gets control next; no repeating until everyone goes once. If you didn't have control or were asked to do it by the MC, you can still be picked to have control, if you haven't gone already.

From this point on, we just need to tweak the existing battle moves to keep control in mind.

For most of the moves, simply alter the trigger to include “when you have control” and end the move on “afterwards, cede control: say who gets control next; no repeating until everyone goes once.”

However, one move gets special treatment: **Fighting A Serious Battle:**

You retain control on a 9+. On a 6,7,8:

- Take either a condition or a harm to retain control and transition into the next sequence
- You lose control and clear a harm: say who gets control next; no repeating until everyone goes once

And that pretty much covers it. The last thing to keep in mind is that whenever you use a playbook move in a battle, cede control like normal.

Rules Hack: No Status Track

The Status Track is a simple refluffing of *Apocalypse World*'s Harm Clock. The main difference lied in giving a name and narrative beat to every part of the clock. And not making it a clock anymore.

Some may not like that and would like an alternative system.

Going back to the traditional harm clock is possible with no hacking, but your game will turn from a Shonen Battle Comic into more of a Seinen (adult male oriented) Battle Comic with shonen tropes: in other words, very bloody and very lethal as you can no longer rely on the Dead box's narrative protection. It would also have the perplexing nature of discouraging battle as it's both hyper lethal and hard to heal by. As such, I'd suggest having the harm clock, if you brought it back, to reset to 0 quickly (after a fight, after a day, etc.).

The big issue would be conditions. Keeping as they are here actually makes them more protective: get taken out by conditions and you aren't dead, just incapacitated. That could work just fine and may actually help aid the missing narrative protection of the Dead Box. Alternatively, you could make it so conditions still work as is, but mean character death when they fill up: if you feel like having a hyper lethal game (don't personally see the appeal).

Further Reading

If you want more information on customizing a **Powered By The Apocalypse** game's moves, check the Advanced Fuckery chapter of **Apocalypse World** by Vincent Baker. He is a lot better at describing these things than I am and I'll likely just end up quoting him a bunch if I try to make it its own chapter here.

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