THE CORE SYSTEM

JUDGEMENT CALLS:
When you play, you'll make several key judgment calls. Everyone contributes, but it's either the players or the GM gets final say for each:

- Which skills are reasonable as a solution to a problem? Can this person be *Swayed*? Must we get out the tools and *Tinker* with this old rusty lock, or could it also be quietly *Finessed*? The players have final say.

- How dangerous and how effective is a given skill in this circumstance? How risky is this? Can this person be *Swayed* very little or a whole lot? The GM has final say.

- Which consequences are inflicted to manifest the dangers in a given circumstance? Does this fall from the roof break your leg? Do the mercenaries merely become suspicious or do they already have you trapped? The GM has final say.

- Does this situation call for a dice roll, and which one? Is it your character's turn in *initiative*, or must they wait before the NPC with higher *Speed* goes? The GM has final say.

- Which events in the story match the experience (xp) triggers for character advancement? Did you express your character's beliefs, drives, heritage, or background? You tell us. The players have final say.

ROLLING THE DICE:
1(800)Bizarre uses six-sided dice. You roll several at once and read the **single highest result.**

- If the highest die is a **6**, it's a **full success**—things go well. If you roll more than one **6**, it's a **critical success**—you gain some additional advantage.

- If the highest die is a **4 or 5**, that's a **partial success**—you do what you were trying to do, but there are consequences: trouble, harm, reduced effect, etc.

- If the highest die is **1-3**, it's a **bad outcome**. Things go poorly. You probably don't achieve your goal and you suffer complications, too.

  > *If you ever need to roll but you have zero (or negative) dice, roll two dice and take the single lowest result. You can't roll a **critical** when you have zero dice.*

All the dice systems in the game are expressions of this basic format. When you're first learning the game, you can always go back to a simple roll to judge how things go and look up the exact rule later when you have time.

To create a dice pool for a roll, you'll use a skill or attribute (like your *Finesse* or your *Prowess*) and take dice equal to its rating. You'll usually end up with one to four dice. Even one die is pretty good in this game—a 50% chance of success. The most common traits you'll use are the **skill ratings** of the player characters. A player might roll dice for their Skirmish skill rating when they fight an enemy, for example.

There are four types of rolls that you'll use most often in the game:

- **Skill check.** When a PC attempts a skill that's dangerous or troublesome, you make a skill check to find out how it goes. Skill checks and their effects and consequences drive most of the game.

- **Downtime roll.** When the PCs are at their leisure after a job, they can perform downtime activities in relative safety. You make downtime rolls to see how much they get done.

- **Fortune check.** The GM can make a fortune check to disclaim decision making and leave something up to chance. How loyal is an NPC? How much does the fire spread? How much evidence do you steal before the rival faction breaks down the door?

- **Resistance check.** A player can make a resistance check when their character suffers a consequence they don't like. The roll tells us how much stress their character suffers to reduce the severity of a consequence. When you resist that "Broken Leg" harm, you take some stress and now it's only a "Sprained Ankle" instead.

THE GAME STRUCTURE:
1(800)Bizarre has a structure to play, with four parts. By default, the game is in **free play**—characters talk to each other, they go places, they do things, they make rolls as needed.

When tension erupts—be it combat, an argument, a chase, or a surreal mental confrontation, players describe their approach using their skills, stats, and Id abilities and make rolls to overcome obstacles, call for flashbacks, and complete the **mission** (successfully or not).

The GM frames the opposition, the consequences, and the narrative pressures at play, and the conflict ends when narrative goals are met, someone yields, or the stakes shift dramatically. When the **mission** is finished, the game shifts into the **downtime** phase.

During the **downtime** phase, the GM engages the systems for payoff, wanted level, and entanglements, to determine all the fallout from the **mission**. Then the PCs each get their downtime activities, such as indulging their vice to remove stress or working on a long-term project. When all the downtime activities are complete, the game returns to **free play** and the cycle starts over again.

The phases are a conceptual model to help you organize the game. They're not meant to be rigid structures that restrict your options. Think of the phases as a menu of options to fit whatever it is you're trying to accomplish in play. Each phase suits a different goal.