



# アニメ シング

## ANIME THING

A STORY GAME  
OF LARGER THAN LIFE HEROES  
FACING LARGER THAN LIFE THREATS  
INSPIRED BY EPISODIC ANIME

FOR 3-5 PLAYERS

VERSION 3/9/2016

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Because you're the one who has the book you'll probably be facilitating the game, but you shouldn't need to read the instructions first. When you're playing, the players who aren't familiar with the instructions (including you if you haven't read the rest of this yet) will take turns reading out loud and teach each other the game that way.

If you want to avoid some confusion you could read the instructions ahead of time and check out the examples and clarifications at the end, but it's possible to just start playing.

You will have to prepare some before play: besides having a copy of the instructions, you'll want to print out one or two of each playbook and the double sided sheet of Ideas.

You'll also need a lot of dice - about thirty to be safe. Having them be two or three different colors will help. It's also useful to have a twelve-sider, for rolling on the random idea tables.

## PILOT EPISODE

*Read aloud. As you're the first reader you can set an example for the other readers to follow, reading clearly and slowly so everyone can hear.*

### What kind of anime is this?

"This game is inspired by certain mainstream episodic televised anime. It's intended to be 'TV-14' and be about larger-than-life—usually teenage—heroes who come together in the end despite their flaws and differences. It borrows a lot of character and story tropes from these shows regardless of whether they're about magicians or mecha pilots. The shows that inspired this game switch back and forth between being campy, gonzo or silly to serious, dark, or heartfelt. How our game will turn out will depend on us, but we can't expect it to be completely serious or completely silly. This game doesn't aspire to be Studio Ghibli but it has more depth and character development than Pokemon.

Let's let those of us who have not played read the instructions aloud to everyone. We'll take turns with each section and we'll all learn—or be reminded of—the instructions. If we're confused there are examples and some clarifications to frequently asked questions at the end.

*Hand the instructions to the next reader.*

### Listen and build

"There's something more important than following these instructions and that is to listen to everyone else and build upon what they've said.

Of course it's impossible to listen with full attention the whole time. So if you realize you've spaced out, or if something doesn't make sense, ask what you missed. And we all can help; if a player suggests something that doesn't seem to fit, go ahead and ask them about it. "Wait, I thought Timmy was in the well?"

If another player introduced something and the instructions tell you to do something unrelated ignore the instructions. Hopefully we'll be able to follow the instructions *and* build upon the other players' contributions, but if we have to choose we should choose to build.

### The premise

"We'll start by creating a premise. Let's discuss what our anime show is going to be about. If we're stuck for ideas or short on time, there are tables of ideas in the play materials.

After we've chosen a premise we drill down and get more specific.

What time period does this take place in?

Where does it take place?

What is magic or technology like in this world?

There's no need to discuss it for long. We'll find out about our world as we play.

*Once you've created a summary of what our show is about hand the instructions to the next reader.*

## The Characters

*Put the playbooks in the middle of the table.*

"Everyone choose a playbook. Once you've chosen a playbook think about how your character fits the premise. Let's talk about our ideas and decisions as we go.

Everybody should also two dice, and we'll set aside four for the Threat of this episode.

Fill out your name and check off the bubbles that you feel fit your character. If you can't think of a name, there's a table in the play materials.

*Make sure everyone has two dice each. Once everyone has filled out the front of the playbook hand the instructions to the next reader.*

## Skill Sets And Powers

"A 'skill set' is a category of abilities like ice magic, street racing, or being a sexy alien.

Powers are discrete, specific abilities within that skill set like 'create blizzard' or 'tokyo drift' or 'undress provocatively.'

We'll each have one skill set—that's permanent. We'll start with one power, and reveal or learn more as we play.

Let's write down our skill set and invent one power now. It can be anything. If you're stuck for ideas, there's a bunch of examples in the play materials. You can use one of those or make up your own.

We don't answer the Questions in the playbooks yet. We'll do that as we play.

*Once everyone has come up with their skill sets and powers hand the instructions to the next reader.*



## TITLE SEQUENCE

"Let's imagine what the opening sequence for our show might look like.

Let's answer these questions one at a time:

- What kind of music does our title sequence have?
- What establishing shots of our world do we see?
- Let's take turns saying what our characters look like when they're being awesome.
- What poses are we in in the final still image?

We don't have to, but do we want to name our show? If we want to name it but aren't sure what there's a table of ideas in the play materials.

*Once you've created the title sequence hand the instructions to the next reader.*

# CHARACTER SCENES

## Framing and playing a character scene

“During the first half of our anime episode we’ll be learning about our characters by seeing them interacting with each other and the world. We do this by taking turns playing character scenes. Who wants to go first?”

*After someone has volunteered, keep reading to them:*

To start you hand your playbook to another player of your choice.

They will ask you one of the “starting questions” from your list.

Once you’ve been asked a question, it can be tempting to just blurt out an answer. Don’t! Also, don’t frame a scene which answers the question in the setup, before we even get to roleplay.

If you have an answer to the question in mind, you may frame the scene in a way that will telegraph the answer you’re looking for, stacking the deck in your favor. You can also just frame a scene arbitrarily and see what happens.

If you’re stuck for ideas, there is a table in the play materials.

To frame a scene, describe where we are and who is there. This is a good opportunity to describe your character. If there are supporting characters, ask who wants to play them.

Give us a descriptive detail or two.

Say what’s going on as the scene begins. And then we’re roleplaying!

When playing the scene, we all drive towards an answer to the question. We can kill or harm supporting characters all we like but our own characters can’t die.

We can use our powers all we like.

Anyone can call ‘Scene!’ when it feels right to end, even if we haven’t answered the question yet. These scenes are supposed to be short; if this were an anime episode it would be over in half an hour.

*Play the scene. Once someone has called ‘Scene!’ hand the instructions to the next reader.*

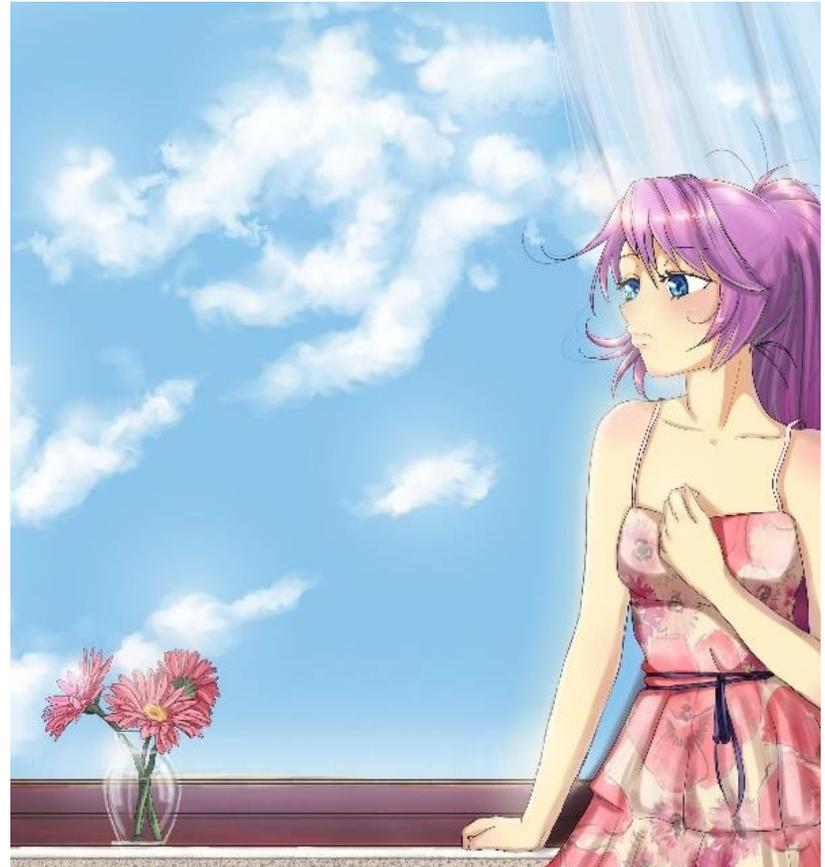
## After a character scene

“If you’ve answered the question check it off.

Now we decide which player’s character, on the basis of that scene alone, seems to be shaping up to be this episode’s protagonist—the character who it seems this episode is going to be mostly about.

That player gets a die for their pool, unless there was just one player character in the scene. In that case they have to Roll Against the Threat to see.

Just to see how that works, let’s pretend just this once that the scene’s protagonist was the only one in the scene, even if they weren’t.



## Rolling Against the Threat

To Roll Against the Threat you roll your dice, and someone else will roll the Threat’s dice. You add together your top two dice, and the Threat adds together their top two. Whoever has the highest total wins. You win in the case of a tie.

In this case if you win you get a die for being the protagonist.

If you lose the Threat gets one.

*Once you’ve decided who gets a die pass the instructions to the next reader.*

## The character scenes keep going

"We take turns following the same steps: ask a question; frame; play; and decide who the protagonist of that scene was.

If it's a three player game, we'll do three scenes each.

If it's a four or five player game, we'll do two scenes each.

A bunch of unrelated scenes will feel disjointed and won't make a lot of sense. So can we each frame scenes that not only lead towards an answer to the character question, but also feel like they proceed naturally from what came before? Don't stress it, but do it when you can.

*Play the requisite number of scenes, then hand the instructions to the next reader.*



## Time is running out

"The Big Conflict sequence that our episode is going to climax with is rapidly approaching.

If it's your turn to frame, you decide whether to try to keep going with character scenes or jump straight to the Big Conflict sequence. Just to see how it works let's have you try to frame another character scene now.

To do that you have to Roll Against the Clock. It's just like rolling against The Threat but we use a different die pool to represent The Clock. It starts at two dice and gets an additional die every scene. Roll and compare the top two dice. Ties go to you.

**If you win**, you get to frame another another character scene.

**If you lose**, time has run out. The Big Conflict sequence begins.

*Keep framing character scenes until someone wants to start the Big Conflict or loses the roll. Then hand the instructions to the next reader.*

# THE BIG CONFLICT SEQUENCE

## Glorious failure

"It's time for the Big Conflict sequence. This is the second half of our anime episode, where we will face the enemy, execute the heist, or race the gauntlet.

There's no turn-taking to this part; anyone can jump in at any time to describe the scene, say what happens, suggest an idea, play their character or a supporting character, or cut to a different scene.

But whatever we describe, we don't describe our characters succeeding at what they're doing. We can be avoiding the conflict, preparing for it, moving or charging ahead, but we're not winning. If we do have some success it's temporary or costs more than it's worth.

Supporting characters on our side can be hurt and killed. The threat's disposable minions can be hurt and killed. But we can't kill each other's characters or the Threat's main opponents.

Let's play that way for a while, enjoying getting ourselves beat up and watching things go from bad to worse. Then we'll try out the next rule.

*Play for a while this way and when everyone has enjoyed that enough, hand the instructions to the next reader.*

## Powers

"It's time to try to turn things around a bit and use one of the powers we wrote on our character sheets.

To use a power, you simply say that you're using it, maybe narrating how the situation evolved so that it made sense, and describe it in action.

Don't say whether it helps us or not yet. You'll Roll Against the Threat to find out.

Who wants to use their power now?

*Once they've described their power and Rolled Against the Threat read the appropriate section:*

**If you win**, you get to say how you strike a serious blow against the enemy or make significant progress. It's a good time to have the enemy voice their surprise.

You may choose:

- You get two dice
- The Threat loses a die

**If you lose**, the player who rolled for the Threat says how, despite your power being and looking awesome, your opponents are even more awesome. The Threat gets a die.

Although you can only use a power to Roll Against the Threat once, you can describe yourself using powers all you want as long as they're always stymied or make things go from bad to worse.

*Let them narrate the outcome and hand the instructions to the next reader.*



## Sacrifice Play

“There’s something else you can do to turn the tide of battle in our favor, even if you don’t have any powers that make sense or don’t want to risk Rolling Against the Threat: the sacrifice play.

You say how you sacrifice yourself to strike a telling blow or make significant progress. Say how you’re knocked out of the conflict for now and the Threat loses a die.

You can use a power *or* do a sacrifice play in the Big Conflict, not both.

Who wants to do a sacrifice play now?

*Let someone describe a sacrifice play, remove a die from the Threat, and hand the instructions to the next reader.*

## Finishing Moves

“It’s probably time to do a Finishing Move and end this episode.

Finishing Moves are usually one-two punches where one player’s character sets things up for this episode’s overall protagonist—the player with the most dice—to deliver the final blow or solve the final problem. Only one player gets to do a Finishing Move each episode.

Each playbook has its own Finishing Moves which describe various things that character might do in the story to set up the protagonist for the win.

They describe what has to happen to be eligible for the Finishing Move to be executed.

A character can still execute a Finishing Move if they’ve been taken out of the Conflict. Sometimes you’ll have to make something up to get you back into the Conflict for the Finishing Move to make sense.

If we’re not eligible to do one yet, or nobody wants do it now, let’s keep playing the Big Conflict sequence until someone is ready.

*Keep playing until that happens.*

When you’re using a Finishing Move follow the instructions on the playbook about what you should narrate and who to give dice to.

There’s an optional instruction described in your playbook that allows you to put your life on the line when executing a Finishing Move, but let’s skip that this episode.

*Let the player executing their Finishing Move say what they do.*

## Resolving The Conflict

“The Finishing Move will say who is going to Roll Against the Threat; it’s usually the overall protagonist of this episode. If that’s you, describe how—thanks to the help from the character who executed their Finishing Move—you attack the final problem with gravity and finality, possibly revealing a new power.

Then you Roll Against the Threat to see if it actually works.

*Roll the dice and read the appropriate section:*

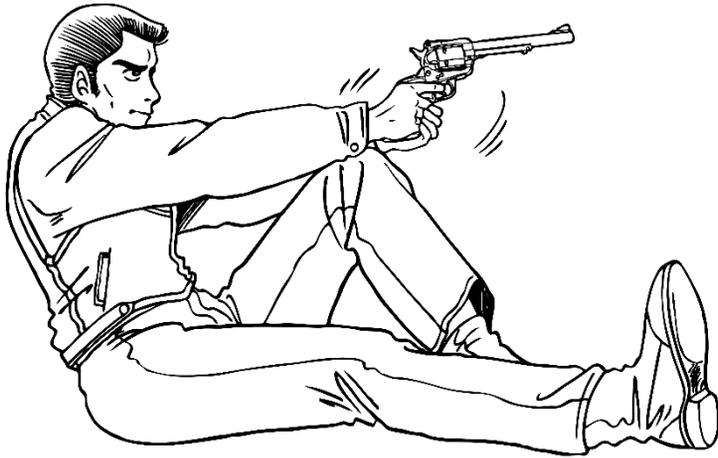
**If we win**, the protagonist gets to say how they defeat the Threat. The world is saved; the heist is pulled off; the big bad is “dead.”

**If we lose**, the Threat player gets to say how the Threat’s plans come to fruition. They’ve won the Grand Prix; they’ve captured the heroes; they’ve destroyed the world.

But even if the world is destroyed the players’ characters do not die or suffer permanent injury unless their player wishes it.

Whether we win or lose, if other players want to embellish the outcome of the Big Conflict, they certainly may.

*Resolve the Big Conflict sequence and hand the instructions to the next reader.*



## EPILOGUE

"We may or may not want to do an epilogue. If we lost the big conflict, maybe it will continue in the next episode, and we won't need an epilogue.

If we had a happy ending, we may want a heartwarming or bittersweet epilogue. Anybody can make suggestions and we can play it out together.

And that's it! We'll have completed our first episode.

*If you have time you should play another episode. It will go a lot quicker! If some of you are familiar with the game, you may even want to start using the optional Ties or Supporting Characters rules. Also, here's a few details you should pay attention to before your next episode.*

## NEXT ON . . .

### New character?

If your playbook isn't doing it for you, switch. Turn your current character into a supporting character and create a new one with a different playbook.

### New Power

If you revealed a new power during the episode, maybe in the character scenes or when striking the final blow against the Threat, you may add it to your list and it will be something you can use in the Big Conflict of the next episode.

### Questions

You may erase one of the checkmarks on your questions list if you'd like someone to ask you that question again.

You've no doubt noticed that there are some questions that don't get unlocked until you've played for a while. You also

### The Threat grows

If you beat the Threat this episode, it gets one more die the next episode. So you'll have to learn to game the system to keep on winning. You may even need to put your life on the line...

### Sharing the spotlight

Try to let a player who wasn't the protagonist in the last episode be the protagonist in the next episode. You can do this by letting someone else frame the first scene and by putting the last episode's protagonist in fewer scenes. And if you want to be the protagonist act like one; if you play just for laughs then you're not the hero, you're comic relief.

### Future Big Conflicts

A thing we can do from here on out is mix things up the Big Conflict sequence: maybe we'll narrate failing for a while, someone will do a sacrifice play, we'll fail some more, someone else will use a power, and so on until someone wants to use their Finishing Move.



## OPTIONAL INSTRUCTIONS

Here are some additional ideas that you might want to roll into your game after you've played it a few times. Rolling in Ties and Supporting Characters would be pretty good for the second episode in a one-shot.

### Ties

This works best with six-sided dice because you'll get more ties and they can be fun. Whenever you roll ties, interesting things happen:

During the character generation scenes, if you're Rolling Against the Threat because you're the sole player character, on a tie you *both* get a die.

When you're Rolling Against The Clock and you get a tie, you have to choose: frame your scene *and* The Threat (not the Clock) gets a die, or go straight to the Big Conflict.

And with the final roll at the end of the Big Conflict, if you tie against the threat:

- Both you and the Threat lose a die from your pools.
- You have to roleplay a conversation with your main opponent. Usually this conversation will be about how your opponent can't possibly win because they're a lesser person than you, because they wronged you in the past, or subscribe to an inadequate philosophy. If the Threat doesn't speak, you have to roleplay your inner monologue. If you can't hear each other (driving different race cars, for example) you have to switch back and forth between your inner monologues.
- Once your conversation comes to an end someone who hasn't done a Finishing Move yet does one. The protagonist can be the same or different. And then you roll again. If you get a tie *again* the process repeats.

### Supporting characters

We see a lot of recurring supporting character types in anime, whether it's the villainous mastermind, the old sage, the captain of the ship, or the ridiculous minion. These characters are very rarely the protagonist of any given episode, so they aren't really fun for a player to play, but they keep coming back so it's nice to give them a little extra weight.

If you want to play with this rule, print out a couple of the Supporting Characters sheets. It's okay to have multiple characters that are the same type.

Whenever you introduce a new supporting character that you expect to see in more episodes, go down the list and see if they fit one of the

existing supporting character archetypes. You can also wait and see if a character you've introduced warrants inclusion on the list.

The list will give you some bubbles to describe them, a sentence of description, and a couple of questions. Together, decide on appropriate bubbles to check and write some notes if necessary.

Keep the sheets in the middle of the table. After each round of the player's character scenes, do a supporting character scene: one of the players with the least dice will frame a scene. They have someone ask a question from the sheets, about any of the supporting characters in play, frame a scene to answer it, and you play it out.

You can roll in this rule in after you've already played a few episodes; you may find that a bunch of the characters you've already introduced fit the supporting characters sheet nicely. Work together to fill out the sheet with them.

### Character Development Episodes

Sometimes you'll want to take a break from action and have an episode which just explores the characters and their relationships. Maybe it'll be comic relief or a not-necessary-to-the-overall-plot OVA episode; maybe it'll be slow and introspective; maybe it'll be an episode where the characters throw down with each other, beating each other up without doing any real damage. Play to find out.

If you've decided to have this kind of episode, play as normally, awarding protagonist dice at the end of each scene and Rolling Against the Threat (which won't really be a Threat this episode.) Play five scenes each in a three player game; four scenes each in a four player game; or three scenes each in a five player game. After that each player may choose to Roll Against the Threat to keep it going or simply roll credits. There is no Big Conflict sequence.

### Action Dialog

It's a staple of anime television: it never seems to be enough to just show us on screen what's happening; the characters need to explain it at the same time, just in case the viewer doesn't get what's going on.

We can emulate this by in the game. When any of us describe something, we also provide a line of dialog.

Sometimes we'll just reiterate what we've already narrated: after I say "Particles are flowing into the vents on its main cannon" I might say, in character, "It's charging up its main cannon! Look out!"

Maybe we're speaking our inner monologues out loud. "Even though I saw them kissing I have to focus!"

Or we may speak for the Threat or an NPC: "Don't make me laugh! No human can penetrate my armor."



Other uses of dialog might include telegraphing things we haven't seen yet: "Guards are coming this way!" "Multiple targets appearing on radar" or using other senses besides the visual: "I smell blood in the air!" "Agh! It burns!"

## Changing Playbooks

Sometimes it will make sense to change playbooks completely. Maybe the Innocent isn't so innocent anymore – maybe now they're a Weapon. Maybe the Weapon becomes the Veteran (and vice-versa.) We try to keep it so there's no more than two of each playbook in play at a time. If you change playbooks, you keep your skill set and powers but have a new set of questions to answer and Finishing Moves to do.

## Season Finale

If a player's character has died, or the Big Bad of several episodes has been defeated, or someone has changed playbooks, maybe that was the end of the Season, huh?

If you want to start a new Season, have the Threat go back to its initial level plus one.

## Between Sessions

The long breaks between sessions are a good time to search for anime images online that are close to your idea of your character and supporting characters, to get everybody on the same imaginary page. (And it's fun.)

# EXAMPLES

## Example of coming up with a premise:

*Jay, Nathan, and David are playing. Nathan scans the list of ideas and immediately says, "5! Martial artists and magicians in a fantasy world."*

*Jay and David have no strong feelings so they agree.*

*That immediately begs the question, "What do we mean by a fantasy world?" After some discussion they decide that it is mid-Samurai era Japan, gunpowder has been introduced, but magic is common. They don't care about realism or getting history right.*

## Example of creating characters:

*Jay takes the Innocent playbook; Nathan takes the Veteran; David takes the Scoundrel.*

*David: "Sunglasses or a scarf wouldn't be appropriate for Samurai era Japan, but I have a mop of hair and a cape. Hmm, all the anime I can think of has male scoundrels, but I'm going to try a female one. (Checking all the bubbles under Personality) I'm a legend in my own mind, lewd, and a joker. You know, I think I'm a magician who pretends to be a geisha. I don't have a cape after all. (Rolls on the name table.) I'm Erika."*

*Jay: "I think I'm a girl who dresses up as a guy. From a noble family. I learned how to do a perfect tea ceremony but also some swordplay, though I've yet to try it out. Then my village was overrun, they killed my family, left me for dead. Now I go around in my brother's armor. I'm Sochiko, but when undercover as a boy I'm Mitsuru."*

*Nathan: "I have armor and beard or stubble. I think in the first episode I'll have stubble. I'm a ronin. I think I'm dead. Or a ghoul, or something. And the ghost of my murdered wife travels with me, and gives me powers. Like she whispers to me and warns me of danger, and that can include an upcoming sword strike. I'm Ichiro." (Writes down "Foresight – Aiko warns me of impending danger.")*

*David: "I think my skill set is summoning spirits. My go-to power is I can summon a wolf spirit. (Rolls on the name table.) The wolf's name is Satoshi."*

*Jay: "What's cooler, shapeshifting or wind powers?"*

*David: "Shapeshifting's always cooler."*

*Jay: "That's my skill set then."*

## Example of creating a title sequence:

*Nathan: "I think your family and mine were killed in the same fight, when our village was overrun and burned. So that would be in the opening."*

*David: "So how about it's peaceful at first, wind across the rice paddies, people about their business, maybe the music is soft and sweeping – and then the music turns kind of metal as the village is attacked and burning?"*

*Nathan: "I think we see a shot of me drilling some soldiers."*

*David: I'm imagining the camera revolving around me as I'm casting a spell, and then Satoshi appears, and the camera follows him as he dashes towards an enemy and leaps at him.*

*Jay: "I'm thinking we see me as a female, tying my hair in a top knot, strapping on my armor and putting a helmet over my face."*

*David: "What are the final poses? I think the Innocent should be between the other two. Do you have your helmet on?"*

*Jay: "It's under my arm. I think we see boy-me phasing into girl-me as the camera pulls back and there the two of you are."*

*Nathan: "We can see my dead wife behind me, with her hands on my shoulders."*

*They don't bother naming their series.*

## Example of framing a scene:

*It's Jay's turn to frame. He arbitrarily hands his playbook to Nathan, who decides to ask him "Who's been troubling you lately?"*

*Jay thinks for a moment.*

*Jay: "Ok, I have just been bathing in a stream on the outskirts of town, and I'm strapping on my weapons, still in girl-form, when Kazu the noble, encounters me on his walk."*

*(Kazu is a noble that has already been introduced, that one of the other characters has already had problems with.)*

Nathan, why don't you play Kazu again?"

Nathan: "Sure."

Jay: "Action."

### Example of playing a scene:

David has framed a scene answering the 'What inappropriate thing do you do or say?' question and called 'Action!'

David: "Okay, as Ichiro and I are staggering up the stairs, drunk, I put my hand on his package and say, 'Hey, the ghost of your wife realizes you have certain needs, right?'"

Nathan: "You can see the ghost of my wife is appalled. I'm like, screw that noise, and I normally wouldn't hit a lady, but I punch you through a wall."

David: "I'm sprawled out there with bits of broken wood and plaster around me. I shake my head and say, 'Yoshi is going to want us to pay for that.'"

Jay: "Scene?"

It's a gonzo, silly, short scene in an otherwise dark, serious story. And that's fine.

### Example of choosing a protagonist:

After the above scene Jay chooses the protagonist because he was the only one not in the scene.

Jay: "Seems like Ichiro to me. The way he honored his wife and put off Erika's unwanted advances... while Erika was just being selfish."

### Example of putting off the Big Conflict

Since Nathan, David, and Jay are playing a three player game, now that they've played three character scenes each and Nathan is starting his fourth it's getting close to Big Conflict time.

Nathan: "I'm having fun with these character scenes. I don't want to go to the big conflict yet."

Nathan rolls his dice, and David rolls for the Clock, which starts with two dice. Nathan's highest two are 14; David's are 13. They get to frame another character scene, but next frame might not be so lucky.

### Example of beginning the Big Conflict:

David: "Okay, so I think we cut to seeing the inn from the outside, and ... should it be Samurai or Ninjas?"

Jay: "Samurai. Well, it's anime, so it could be ninjas."

Nathan: "This Kazu is an underhanded dude so ninjas work."

David: "I'm liking ninjas. There are a bunch of them, and they're creeping over the rooftops."

Nathan: "We cut back inside to where Erika is still helping me up the stairs and we see Aiko whisper in my ear and I'm like, 'Damn it!'"

I think "Damn it!" is my catchphrase...

Jay: "We cut to a hill outside the village. A bunch of spearmen are driving a post into the ground where they plan to tie us up and execute us and there Kazu Uesegi is watching the village."

### Example of using anime-style dialog:

Jay: "I look up into the rafters above the kitchen. One of the ninjas is there. 'Get Yoshi and Kimiko and run,' I yell to Hiyoko."

Nathan: "We hear glass breaking in the upstairs bedrooms and I'm all, 'Damn it! We've got to leave, now!'"

David: "I jump up on the railing and run down it. Uh, I can't think of some dialog. Um. 'Kimiko! Hurry!'"

Nathan: "The ninjas are all crowding on the upper landing. 'There she is. Get her!'"

Jay: "It's too late. I tell Yoshi, 'Bar the door!'"

David: "Yoshi is hiding behind the checkout counter type area. 'I'm not going out there!'"

Jay: "'Just do it!' So he goes, running and throwing a bar over the door."

Nathan: "Afterwards he leans his back against the door and throwing stars stick through the door all around his head. 'You're going to get me killed!'"

### Example of using a power and losing:

Jay: "I'm going to use my power to face this demon. I turn into a demon myself."

David: "Wait, you can turn into a demon?"

Jay: "I can shapeshift. I'm not actually a demon but I look like one."

(Rolls four dice against five and loses.) "Uh-oh. Hmm. Since I have the most dice, and I don't want the threat to get a die, I'll choose to be taken out of the conflict."

David: "Okay, so you grapple with the other demon, and it says, 'I know what you really are,' and picks you up and slams you through the corner of the inn, and wood cracks and whatnot, and you turn back into yourself, lying unconscious on the ground."

### Example of triggering a finishing move:

Nathan: "I really want to use my 'Trauma Damsel' finishing move. As I'm holding Erika over my shoulder and the ninjas are coming over the rooftops I'm flashing back to when my village was taken, and I'm holding my wife over my shoulder and laying about me with my sword and my armor is all covered with blood. And then I've killed them all, and I lay my wife's body gently down, just as I'm setting down Erika now - and I'm off my game. The ninjas swarm me the way the second wave of samurai did back then, and we cut back and forth between then and now as I get overwhelmed in both scenes. It's up to Erika to save me now..."  
He hands a die to David.

## Example of resolving the Big Conflict:

*David has the most dice other than Nathan (who triggered the Finishing Move) so his character, Erika, is considered this episode's main protagonist.*

*He narrates a bit about how the three of them – all out of the Conflict at this point; that's okay, they can still win the day! – are tied up and carted up to the hill, accompanied by the demon that took out Sochiko.*

*David: "Ichiro is tied up to the post as Kazu watches, and the spearmen get into position, about to execute him. And then my wolf-spirit – invisible to everyone else – starts to nuzzle me, whining. And I open my eyes. And I'm going to reveal a new power now – I start chanting something and the demon? Who has I think a red aura and red eyes up until now? Changes – its eyes are blue and its aura is blue. I've repossessed it. I'll call that power 'Rebind' – and that's what I say after my incomprehensible chant: 'Rebind!' Oh, I guess I should roll the dice now before I narrate more.*

*He has a total of seven dice, including the die that Nathan just gave him. The threat has six. The threat's top two dice add up to 24 and David's top two dice add up to 23.*

*David: "Crap. So Jay gets to say what happens."*

*Jay: "Oh, I think you do bind the demon...and it slays some of the spearmen before the ninja-magician is able to dispel it. So, nobody was really threatened in this episode other than us, but we should still lose, but we can't die... Kazu's father, the head of the Uesegi clan, shows up at this point and is like, 'What the hell are you doing?' And although he dresses down Kazu he can't just let us go, so we're carted off to the Uesegi dungeons... To be continued"*

## CLARIFICATIONS

### Do we have to limit ourselves to stuff in the tables and bubbles on the playbooks?

It almost goes without saying: no, you don't have to limit yourselves to the options presented. You can come up with your own looks, premises, titles, scenes. And if you like a look or personality trait from a different playbook and want it for your own, nothing's stopping you from taking it.

### If I'm this episode's overall protagonist, can I do a Finishing Move?

Yes. But in that case, you're not the episode's overall protagonist anymore; that honor goes to the player with the next highest number of dice. You can't give a die to yourself.

### Is the Threat always a big bad?

The Threat will often be some sort of final boss of the episode and their minions, but it could also represent the forces of opposition in general.

The rival crime gang *and* the police *and* the target you've been hired to eliminate...

The terrorists *and* the ticking time bomb *and* the commissioner who is taking away your gun and your badge...

The security systems and guards around the diamond you're trying to steal...

### What's the point of learning new powers?

You've noticed that no matter how many powers you have, they don't increase your chances of winning against the Threat, because you only get to use one mechanically in the Conflict—and even using one power is usually a risk.

The powers are indeed mostly for flavor and color; but having new or extra ones does make it easier to narrate something into a given Big Conflict.

### By giving me more dice are you incentivizing me to be the protagonist?

It's not a competition. Although it's true that whoever has the most dice at the end is going to try to strike the final blow against the Threat, we'll have to work together to elevate one character above the rest if we want to have the best chance of winning.

Also, strategy-wise, it's not a bad idea for the character shaping up to be this episode's main protagonist to frame themselves in solo scenes, but with other characters it's a risk.

The tension between 'should I frame myself in a solo scene to better answer this question?' and 'should I not frame myself in a solo scene so we have a better chance of defeating the threat in the end?' is intentional.

### Do I *have* to answer the Question they've asked me?

You may have an idea about your character that the scene question doesn't fit. For example, maybe you're a Veteran but you don't see yourself as being hung up on a past trauma. So when you hear 'What trauma can't you get over?' you think, 'Well, nothing.' It's better not to block questions like that, they're on your character sheet for a reason, but if you really want to duck a question you can. Frame a scene to serve your own purposes and keep it short.

### Can I invent my own questions?

Veteran story gamers might want to come up with their own questions. If you want to ask a made-up question someone else, first get their permission to ask something off-list.

And if there's a question you'd like to be asked, you can write it on your sheet as an option.

So what makes a good question? The questions serve a variety of purposes:

They let us show, rather than tell, important aspects of the characters.

They provide backstory and create relationships between the characters.

They reinforce genre tropes, both with characters (the Veteran almost always has some kind of trauma; the Scoundrel is almost always inappropriate) and in general (blushing and secret crushes are an anime staple.)

So if you can think of questions that do some of those things, go for it. You may also want to drill down into more detail about something you find interesting, or borrow a question from another playbook. Count these quest

Try not to use the questions to lower other players or elevate your own character. Questions like "Why did you kill a child?" or "Why are you in love with me?" aren't too cool: "What's the worst thing you've done?" "Why did you do it?" or "Who are you in love with?" are better.

### What if another player goes more gonzo than I like? Or darker than I like?

The anime this is inspired by often switches suddenly from being very serious and dark to silly and over-the-top. A quiet scene about how a character lost his mother might be followed by a scene with an Innocent punching a Scoundrel through a building because he hit on her. Maybe the show you're creating is mostly gonzo, maybe it's mostly dark, maybe it will grow up as it goes along... No need to get on the same page about it; just try to accept the show for what it becomes.

### What happens if I put my life on the line and we tie, using the optional 'ties' rule?

It's up to you: you can sacrifice your life and kick in your dice to try and get a better result, or you can let the tie play out as normal, but if you still lose then you're really dead.

### I get how to do a show that has a big fight every episode, but how do we do a 'big heist' or 'street race'?

There's a couple ways they might play out:

In one, the Big Conflict would be the heist - we'd narrate how we're executing the first steps of our plan and things gradually go awry, with each problem solved, each security system bypassed or guard taken out

leading to another, more difficult problem, until at the very end we've been caught red-handed and it seems that all hope is lost.

In another, the first parts of the heist could be in our last several character scenes. The heist seems to be going smoothly at first and we learn more about the characters in the process... and the Big Conflict starts when things really go pear shaped. It's a double-cross ... or we fall into a trap ... or the like.

When playing several episodes, we'd mix it up, only finding out each episode what kind of episode it is. (And probably have some jailbreak episodes in there too, when our previous episode didn't turn out so well for us.)

### Should we try to incorporate the sexism commonly found in anime?

Short answer: no.

Long answer: if there's one way anime is problematic for me it's the sexism. The women are usually hypersexualized or wear short skirts. There are often badass women, which is awesome, but they often still become the damsels in distress that the badass men rescue. This isn't something you see in Studio Ghibli stuff but it's rife in the B-list stuff that this game is based on.

There's a couple ways I like to approach it in this anime thing:

One is self-aware parody. You'll notice I have 'hypersexualized' and 'lolita' as options in the playbooks; I hope it's clear that I'm mocking that aspect of anime, and we can play with that, having the Innocent guy walking into the girl's bathhouse and being punched out, and everyone at the table is aware that it's one of the lamer tropes. But make sure it's clear; when you're about to have your character do something sexist, it's worth asking first. "I'm going to have my character do something sexist - is that cool?"

The other way is to reverse the gender stereotypes; the Scoundrels in anime are usually men who say lascivious things to the women; we can reverse that and have a Scoundrel woman who says lascivious things to the men. We can have shirtless men with big muscles and a big package, and the women can get nosebleeds when they see him. And best of all, we can damsel or fridge the badass men.

## ROLL CREDITS

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*Names: The Story Games Name Project* compiled by Andy Kitkowski and edited by Jason Morningstar

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# CHEAT SHEET

To roll against the Threat or the Clock: I roll the dice in my pool and add together the top two. The Threat or the Clock does the same.

## Solo Character Scene

I roll against the Threat:

If I win I get a die.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, we both get a die.

## Having Another Character Scene When Time Is Running Out

The Clock starts with two dice and gets another every scene.

I roll against the Clock:

If I win I get to frame a scene.

If I lose we go to the Big Conflict.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I choose: I get to frame a scene and the Threat gets a die, or we go to the Big Conflict.

## Using A Power In The Big Conflict

I roll against the Threat:

If I win, I choose: I get two dice or the Threat loses one.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I get two dice and the Threat gets one.

## Making A Sacrifice Play In The Big Conflict

The Threat loses a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

## The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.



# THE INNOCENT

*I am young and naive and somehow have gotten involved in matters way over my head. But if I believe in myself, I can overcome!*

## Name

### Personality

- Earnest
- Anxious
- Kindhearted
- Starry eyed

### Look

- Teenager
- Cowlick
- Hunched
- Big eyes

### Fashion

- School uniform
- Button down
- Lolita
- Meaningful jewelry

## Who Am I?

## Unique Skill Set:

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

### Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "How do you get involved with us?"
- "How's your family life?"
- "Why do we need you?"
- "Who do you not want to admit you have a thing for?"
- "Who do you look to for leadership?"
- "Who gave you that keepsake that means so much to you?"
- "What's an ordinary moment in your life?"
- "Why don't you believe in yourself?"
- "How do you fake it?"
- "What makes you blush?"

### Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "What hard choice will you have to make?"
- "What new responsibility are you going to take on?"
- "What do you do for your secret crush?"

*Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook.*

### Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you tell your secret crush how you feel?"
- "Why do you believe in yourself?"

*Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.*

## FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem

and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their power

and

I wasn't the last to do one.

### Damsel

I may say how I'm in serious trouble, and it's up to this episode's overall protagonist to save me. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against The Threat.

### Power of Friendship

If I'm this episode's overall protagonist, I can say how we put aside our differences and pool our talents together so someone else can make a focused attack. We \*all\* give a die to the character who has the next highest die pool, and they will Roll Against The Threat. I can't put my life on the line with this move.

## PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed.

I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

**If we win**, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how they rush to my aid and either save me or maybe my eyes flutter open or we cut to a hospital room where I'm recovering.

**If we lose**, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead - we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

# CHEAT SHEET

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## Solo Character Scene

I roll against the Threat:

If I win I get a die.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, we both get a die.

## Having Another Character Scene When Time Is Running Out

The Clock starts with two dice and gets another every scene.

I roll against the Clock:

If I win I get to frame a scene.

If I lose we go to the Big Conflict.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I choose: I get to frame a scene and the Threat gets a die, or we go to the Big Conflict.

## Using A Power In The Big Conflict

I roll against the Threat:

If I win, I choose: I get two dice or the Threat loses one.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I get two dice and the Threat gets one.

## Making A Sacrifice Play In The Big Conflict

The Threat loses a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

## The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.



# THE WEAPON

*I am a living weapon. In the hands of my master I am nearly unstoppable, but without them I have no purpose.*

## Name

### Personality

- Emotionless
- Rebellious
- Prudish
- Loyal

### Look

- Genderless
- Butch or Femme
- Inhuman
- Teenage

### Fashion

- Cheap
- Samurai, Monk, Geisha
- Spiked hair
- Transforming

## Who Am I?

Unique Skill Set:

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

### Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "Who is your master?"
- "Why do you serve your master?"
- "What was your biggest mistake?"
- "Why are you lonely?"
- "Who are you uncomfortable around?"
- "What do you do for your master that you don't agree with?"
- "How do you disobey your master?"
- "What is an interesting facet of our world?"
- "What makes you self-conscious?"
- "How do you train?"

### Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "Which of us is your master now?"
- "What do you teach your master?"
- "Why do you want to escape your master's service?"

*Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook.*

### Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "Why does your master offer to let you go?"
- "How does your relationship with your master change?"

*Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.*

## FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem  
and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers

and

I wasn't the last to do one.

### Soul Bound Weapon

If my master is this episode's overall protagonist, I may narrate how they are about to die and how I risk myself to protect or assist them. I narrate what new power I gain or reveal—writing it in my playbook. I *must* put my life on the line if I use this move.

### Clear The Way

I take out all the enemy minions between this episode's overall protagonist and the big bad of this episode, then step aside to allow them to deal the final blow. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against The Threat.

### Combo!

I say how this episode's overall protagonist and I combine into one fighting unit. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against The Threat. Combining becomes one of our Powers; we both write it in our playbooks.

## PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed.

I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

**If we win**, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how they rush to my aid and either save me or maybe my eyes flutter open or we cut to a hospital room where I'm recovering.

**If we lose**, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead - we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

# CHEAT SHEET

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## Solo Character Scene

I roll against the Threat:

If I win I get a die.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, we both get a die.

## Having Another Character Scene When Time Is Running Out

The Clock starts with two dice and gets another every scene.

I roll against the Clock:

If I win I get to frame a scene.

If I lose we go to the Big Conflict.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I choose: I get to frame a scene and the Threat gets a die, or we go to the Big Conflict.

## Using A Power In The Big Conflict

I roll against the Threat:

If I win, I choose: I get two dice or the Threat loses one.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I get two dice and the Threat gets one.

## Making A Sacrifice Play In The Big Conflict

The Threat loses a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

## The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.



# THE VETERAN

*I've been doing this for a long time:  
I've forgotten more techniques than you've  
learned. But I have scars...mostly on the inside.*

## Name

## Personality

- Sardonic
- Angry
- Confident
- Determined

## Look

- Hypersexualized
- Grizzled
- Blonde
- Faraway eyes

## Fashion

- Beard or stubble
- Shirtless
- Armor
- Bogarted cigarette

## Who Am I?

Unique Skill Set:

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

### Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "What trauma can't you get over?"
- "What reminds you of your trauma?"
- "Why won't you let anyone touch you?"
- "What is your secret?"
- "Who do you believe is our ultimate enemy?"
- "Which of us are you trying to mentor?"
- "What is an interesting facet of our world?"
- "What is your plan?"
- "What habit can't you give up?"
- "Why do I not respect you?"

### Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "What unwelcome figure from your past shows up?"
- "How is your secret revealed?"
- "How does your experience help?"

*Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook.*

### Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you learn to live with your trauma?"
- "What do you teach me?"

*Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.*

## FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem  
and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers

and

I wasn't the last to do one.

### Trauma Damsel

If this episode's threat is related to or reminds me of my trauma, I may narrate how I freeze up or lose my nerve and allow myself to be overcome. It's up to this episode's overall protagonist to save me. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against The Threat.

### Second Guess

I tell this episode's overall protagonist why they're just not ready and they need to sit this one out, and how I'm trusting someone else to finish the job. I give *two* dice to the other player, and they say how they face the final problem and Roll Against The Threat. If they succeed, my wisdom will be praised. But if they fail, we both lose respect.

## PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed. I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

**If we win**, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how they rush to my aid and either save me or maybe my eyes flutter open or we cut to a hospital room where I'm recovering.

**If we lose**, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead - we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

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## Solo Character Scene

I roll against the Threat:

If I win I get a die.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, we both get a die.

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The Clock starts with two dice and gets another every scene.

I roll against the Clock:

If I win I get to frame a scene.

If I lose we go to the Big Conflict.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I choose: I get to frame a scene and the Threat gets a die, or we go to the Big Conflict.

## Using A Power In The Big Conflict

I roll against the Threat:

If I win, I choose: I get two dice or the Threat loses one.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I get two dice and the Threat gets one.

## Making A Sacrifice Play In The Big Conflict

The Threat loses a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

## The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.



# THE SCOUNDREL

*Let's party.*

## Name

## Personality

- A legend in my own mind
- Lewd
- Joker

## Look

- Crooked smile
- Ice blue eyes
- Skinny
- Sexy slouch

## Fashion

- Sunglasses
- Mop of hair
- Scarf
- Cape

## Who Am I?

Unique Skill Set:

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

### Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "Who do you keep getting rejected by?"
- "What is your catchphrase?"
- "What reckless thing are you planning now?"
- "What inappropriate thing do you do or say?"
- "What's your favorite vice?"
- "What is an interesting facet of our world?"
- "How do you hint at your hidden depth?"
- "What trouble follows you?"
- "Who do you really care about?"

### Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "What hidden depth are you concealing?"
- "Who did you used to be?"
- "How does your trouble get the better of you?"

*Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook.*

### Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you reveal your true self?"
- "How do you put your trouble behind you?"

*Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.*

## FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem  
and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers

and

I wasn't the last to do one.

### Believe in me believing in you!

If this episode's overall protagonist is taken out or is losing hope, I give them a pep talk inspiring them to believe in themselves and try harder. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against The Threat. If I put my life on the line this pep talk may turn out to be my last words!

### Let's blow this thing and go home!

If I have yet to narrate my involvement in the Big Conflict, I may appear out of nowhere to protect or assist this episode's overall protagonist. I say how I show up, what I do, and give them a die. They'll Roll Against The Threat.

## PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed.

I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

**If we win**, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how they rush to my aid and either save me or maybe my eyes flutter open or we cut to a hospital room where I'm recovering.

**If we lose**, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead - we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

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I roll against the Threat:

If I win I get a die.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, we both get a die.

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I roll against the Clock:

If I win I get to frame a scene.

If I lose we go to the Big Conflict.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I choose: I get to frame a scene and the Threat gets a die, or we go to the Big Conflict.

## Using A Power In The Big Conflict

I roll against the Threat:

If I win, I choose: I get two dice or the Threat loses one.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I get two dice and the Threat gets one.

## Making A Sacrifice Play In The Big Conflict

The Threat loses a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

## The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.



# THE CONSCRIPT

*I don't want to be here, doing this.  
I'm not ready for this. But I have to be.  
I have no choice.*

## Name

### Personality

- Unconcerned
- Something to prove
- Bottled up

### Look

- Young
- Pale
- Pointed chin
- Faraway eyes

### Fashion

- Glasses
- Doesn't care
- Neat hair
- Tie

## Who Am I?

Unique Skill Set:
-------------------

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

### Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "Why do you have to be doing this?"
- "Why do we need you?"
- "What do you have to prove?"
- "Who are you doing this for?"
- "What wrong did you or do you commit?"
- "What line would you never cross?"
- "How are you socially awkward?"
- "How do you try to get away?"
- "What makes you blush?"
- "What is an interesting facet of our world?"

### Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "Who do you fall for?"
- "Who do you befriend?"
- "How does your wrong come back to bite you?"

*Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook.*

### Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you prove yourself?"
- "Why don't you have to do this anymore?"

*Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.*

## FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem  
and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers

and

I wasn't the last to do one.

### That's Why You Need Me

I say how I figure out our opponent's weak spot and either pass that information on to this episode's overall protagonist, or act on it myself, opening up a core vulnerability to the protagonist. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against The Threat.

### At What Cost

I say how I sacrifice my ideals or compromise my morals to give this episode's overall protagonist a shot at victory. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against The Threat.

## PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed.

I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

**If we win**, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how they rush to my aid and either save me or maybe my eyes flutter open or we cut to a hospital room where I'm recovering.

**If we lose**, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead - we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

# CHEAT SHEET

To roll against the Threat or the Clock: I roll the dice in my pool and add together the top two. The Threat or the Clock does the same.

## Solo Character Scene

I roll against the Threat:

If I win I get a die.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, we both get a die.

## Having Another Character Scene When Time Is Running Out

The Clock starts with two dice and gets another every scene.

I roll against the Clock:

If I win I get to frame a scene.

If I lose we go to the Big Conflict.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I choose: I get to frame a scene and the Threat gets a die, or we go to the Big Conflict.

## Using A Power In The Big Conflict

I roll against the Threat:

If I win, I choose: I get two dice or the Threat loses two.

If I lose the Threat gets a die.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I get two dice and the Threat gets one.

## Making A Sacrifice Play In The Big Conflict

The Threat loses a die and I'm out of the Conflict for now.

## The Moment of Truth

If I'm the one rolling against the Threat:

If I win, the Threat is defeated.

If I lose, we're defeated. The Threat's plans come to fruition.

*(Optional 'Ties' Rule)* If we tie, I roleplay a conversation with our main opponent; we each lose a die; then we execute a new Finishing Move.

# THE RIVAL

*It's wrong that someone so undeserving gets what is rightfully mine. I shall beat them and reveal to the world what they really are.*



Name

## Personality

- Arrogant
- Unflappable
- Driven
- Cruel
- Vocal

## Look

- White hair
- Chiseled features
- Scarred
- Erect posture
- Languid

## Fashion

- Long straight hair
- Regulation haircut
- Crisp uniform
- Expensive

Who Am I?

Unique Skill Set:

Powers (make up one to start)

Name	Description

### Starting Questions (don't answer right away)

- "Which of us is your rival?"
- "Why do you hate your rival?"
- "Who is your gang?"
- "Why are you lonely?"
- "What is an interesting facet of our world?"
- "How are you going to show up your rival this time?"
- "How do you taunt or bully your rival?"
- "What mischief are you up to?"
- "How do you refuse help?"
- "How does your gang embarrass you?"

### Deeper Questions

(can ask once 4 starting questions are answered)

- "What secret are you keeping?"
- "How does resentment get the better of you?"
- "Who do you actually care about?"

*Once a deeper question has been answered, you may use Finishing Moves from any playbook.*

### Deepest Questions

(can ask once 2 deeper questions are answered)

- "How do you learn to accept your rival?"
- "How do you nearly lose the person you actually care about?"

*Once a deepest question has been answered, you may change playbooks.*

## FINISHING MOVES

I may do one of these moves at the end of the Big Conflict if:

We've revealed the final boss or problem

and

at least half of the player characters have either been taken out of the conflict or have used their powers

and

I wasn't the last to do one

*and*

*my rival is this episode's overall protagonist.*

### Sabotage

I reveal how I have sabotaged my rival. They still Roll Against The Threat but they only get half their dice, rounded up. If they lose, they are blamed for our failure and they are the only one who knows I was really responsible. I can't put my life on the line with this move.

### Stealing Glory

I say how I get in my rival's way to try to strike the final blow or solve the final problem instead. I get to Roll Against The Threat instead of them, rolling my own dice without a bonus die. If I fail most will blame me, and even if I succeed I'll be seen as kind of a jerk.

### Bigger Issues At Stake

If the Threat affects me or people I care about too, I may say how I have a change of heart and team up with my rival to defeat the threat. I give them a die and they'll Roll Against The Threat.

## PUTTING MY LIFE ON THE LINE

When I do a Finishing Move, I may also say that I'm putting my life on the line. I narrate how I seem to be killed.

I *don't* give a die to the protagonist and they roll as normal, and:

**If we win**, it turns out I'm not really dead after all! After they narrate our victory we narrate together how it turns out I'm alive after all.

**If we lose**, I roll my dice as well and we look at the result of the protagonist's dice and my dice together to see if we've beaten the Threat or lost. Whatever happens, I really am dead - we narrate the end as normal - but then narrate some kind of realization or funeral scene, and I describe or hint at how I am going to haunt the other characters from now on. Next episode I'll create a new character, but also play the (probably metaphorical) "ghost" of my current character.

# ANIME THING IDEAS

## Premise Ideas

- 1) We're mecha and/or spaceship pilots and support in a defense force
- 2) We're students and faculty at a magic and/or combat academy
- 3) We're professional criminals executing heists
- 4) We're various different supernatural beings brought together
- 5) We're martial artists, samurai, and/or magicians in a fantasy world
- 6) We're race car drivers and their pit crew
- 7) We're a crew of space pirates
- 8) We're a team of spies
- 9) We're mercenaries, detectives and/or bounty hunters working together
- 10) We're a specialized police unit
- 11) We're students in a normal high-school - but some of us are aliens
- 12) It's fanfic in an established setting we all like - doesn't have to be anime

## Title Ideas

1) Alpha, Gamma or Omega	1) A, D, X, Q or Z
2) Argon, Krypton or Xenon	2) Blossom or Flower
3) Cherry or Apple	3) Combination or Chain
4) Destiny or Karma	4) Judge, Hunter or Avatar
5) Exodus, Genesis or Leviticus	5) Machine or Mechanism
6) Silent or Death	6) Maestro, Sorcerer or Demon
7) Snow, Mist, Sun, or Darkness	7) Origami, Kabuki or Sumi-e
8) Soul or Heart	8) Pilot, Bandit or Ghost
9) Steel, Gold, Silver or Diamond	9) Soldier, Ronin or Vampire
10) Sugar or Glitter	10) Symphony, Orchestra or Music
11) White, Black, Blue or Red	11) Testament, Revelation or Psalm
12) Zero or Ninety-Nine	12) (Number of players on team)

## Scene Ideas

- 1) You / We are on patrol or doing reconnaissance
- 2) You meet a companion on the way to your new home
- 3) A stranger arrives at our home
- 4) You / We are caught in the middle of a battle
- 5) You / We are going about your / our daily routine
- 6) It's a duel - pretty much anybody could be in it except The Innocent; maybe we're fighting each other
- 7) The Innocent is being bullied
- 8) *In medias res* battle / quest / race / ritual / heist
- 9) You / We are running away from something or someone
- 10) You / We are doing a training exercise
- 11) You / We witness someone in trouble
- 12) You / We are being tested

## Names

### Surnames

- 1-4
- 1) Asahara
  - 2) Asai
  - 3) Chiba
  - 4) Enomoto
  - 5) Fujita
  - 6) Ishimura
  - 7) Kigure
  - 8) Kogure
  - 9) Kojima
  - 10) Koyama
  - 11) Maebashi
  - 12) Mizutani

5-8

- 1) Murakami
- 2) Numata
- 3) Okuda
- 4) Omura
- 5) Oshima
- 6) Otani
- 7) Saito
- 8) Sasaki
- 9) Shibukawa
- 10) Shimizu
- 11) Suwa
- 12) Suzuki

9-12

- 1) Taguchi
- 2) Takahashi
- 3) Takayama
- 4) Takeda
- 5) Tamura
- 6) Tanaka
- 7) Togawa
- 8) Torimoto
- 9) Uesugi
- 10) Watanabe
- 11) Yamada
- 12) Yoshida

### Male Names

- 1-4
- 1) Akio
  - 2) Daisuke
  - 3) Eikichi
  - 4) Eikichi
  - 5) Genyu
  - 6) Hideyuki
  - 7) Hiroyuki
  - 8) Ichiro
  - 9) Kazu
  - 10) Kazuichi
  - 11) Kazuki
  - 12) Kei

5-8

- 1) Kentaro
- 2) Kohei
- 3) Kunihide
- 4) Makoto
- 5) Manabu
- 6) Masahiro
- 7) Mitsuru
- 8) Motoki
- 9) Naoki
- 10) Naoto
- 11) Nobu
- 12) Osamu

9-12

- 1) Riku
- 2) Ryu
- 3) Saburo
- 4) Satoru
- 5) Satoshi
- 6) Seiji
- 7) Shigure
- 8) Shogo
- 9) Takeru
- 10) Tenyu
- 11) Yoshitomo
- 12) Yuske

### Female Names

- 1-4
- 1) Aiko
  - 2) Chika
  - 3) Erina
  - 4) Fumiko
  - 5) Hidemi
  - 6) Hotaru
  - 7) Kaede
  - 8) Kaori
  - 9) Karin
  - 10) Kotomi
  - 11) Kumiko
  - 12) Kyoko

5-8

- 1) Machiko
- 2) Mari
- 3) Mayumi
- 4) Minako
- 5) Mizuho
- 6) Nanie
- 7) Nanako
- 8) Nao
- 9) Reiko
- 10) Rikako
- 11) Rin
- 12) Ritsuko

9-12

- 1) Sachiko
- 2) Sadako
- 3) Sakura
- 4) Sanae
- 5) Saori
- 6) Sayaka
- 7) Sayuri
- 8) Setsuko
- 9) Taeko
- 10) Wakaba
- 11) Yomiko
- 12) Yukiko

# ANIME THING IDEAS

## Skill Set And Power Ideas and Examples

### *Shapeshifting*

Disguise – morph into someone else

Animal form – turn into whatever animal I choose

Undercover – turns out a supporting character was me

### *Last Of The Martial Artists*

Monkey punch – a flurry of blows; they don't know what hit 'em

Serpent strike – a mortal attack on the enemy's chi

Bear hug – a crushing judo hold

### *Chosen Mecha Pilot*

Faster – coax a higher speed out of my mecha than anyone else can

Harder – spot enemy weaknesses and target them

Deeper – dodge enemy fire to get to the heart of the opposition

### *Telepath*

Read minds - know what they're going to do before they do it

Control minds – take someone over like a puppet

Horrible truth – make someone aware of who they really are

### *Summoner*

Spirit of Wolf – summon wolf spirit

Spirit of Darkness – summon demon

Spirit of Destiny – summon an oracular god who gives us guidance

### *World's Best Marksman*

Bullet ballet – a whirling dance with two guns

Sniper shot – take down an opponent from afar

Headshot – I never miss

### *Master Thief*

Hide in plain sight – people don't notice me until too late

I already stole it – reveal that I've picked your pocket / replaced the treasure with a forgery ... or I'm making you think I have

Concealed carry – reveal an item I shouldn't have been able to get past security

### *Experimental Cyborg*

Hack – hack into computers and robots, make them do what I want

Overclock – everything goes in slow-motion except for me

Tase – hand transforms to become a gun that fires paralytic darts

### *Ice Magic*

Crystallize – cocoon someone or something in ice

Ice surfing – create a slick of ice to skate along

Ice needles – shoot deadly needles of ice

### *Dragon Spawn*

Dragon's breath – breathe fire

Form of the dragon – take the shape of a human-sized dragon

Freeze prey – look into someone's eyes and root them to the spot

### *Car Wizard*

Bullet drift – spin my car so I can shoot out the window at any target

Two wheels – navigate alleys and narrow spaces by popping my car up on two wheels

Big air – jump wide gorges, canyons, or from one rooftop to the next

### *Luck Powers*

Fortune – a reckless thing an ally attempts succeeds

Misfortune – the enemy makes an unfortunate mistake

Friend – summon my wind kami friend to blow your house down

### *Blade Witch*

To Me, My Blade – return my magic sword to me, no matter where it is

Master cut – bisect any object

Blink strike – strike so fast you don't realize you're dead

### *Master Tactician*

Reinforcements – troops come out of nowhere

Flank – the enemy doesn't see my troops coming

Air strike – flyover. Boom.

### *Self Aware Mecha*

Missile salvo – decimate the enemy minions

Transform – switch from high speed jet to anthropomorphic robot

Rage – lose my shit and pummel something into submission

### *Sexy Alien Powers*

Undress – paralyze men and women when in my underwear or less

Seduce – make the enemy forget why they were fighting

Heat vision – just like Superman

# ANIME THING SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

**THE CAPTAIN** Name:

*Whether literal captain, headmaster, or whatever, the Captain is in charge around here.*

Stern  Mask  Beard  Eyepatch

Notes:

How do they hint at their secret agenda?  
 What are they asking you to do now?

**THE SHY ONE** Name:

*The Shy One doesn't shirk their responsibilities but usually only speaks when spoken to.*

Willowy  Sad  Subservient  Long hair

Notes :

What is their internal monologue?  
 Who are they crushing on?

**THE VILLAIN'S PET** Name:

*The villain's pet is usually on the villain, except when it's spying on the good guys...*

Bird  Snake  Rat  Frog  Psychic

Notes:

What secret do they discover?

**THE SAGE** Name:

*The sage trains us, gives us murky advice, and tells us everything turned out as they foresaw.*

Wizenad  Irreverant  Enigma  Cranky

Notes:

What do they think of you?  
 What do they foresee?

**THE LUNK** Name:

*A gentle giant, the Lunk is a simple soul but not stupid.*

Tall  Wide  Immovable  Thoughtful

Notes:

Why do they refuse to take sides in this fight?  
 What motivates them to finally strike out?

**THE RIGHT CLAW** Name:

*The Villain's most powerful servant.*

Jacked  Cloaked  Laconic  Arrogant

Notes:

How did they enter the service of the Villain?  
 What makes them so powerful?

**THE HOTHEAD** Name:

*Overconfident to an absurd degree, the Hothead is a badass but a loose cannon.*

Short  Spiky Hair  Tattoo  Blunt  Sleeveless

Notes:

How are they showing off?  
 How do they get us in trouble?

**THE GOOD GUYS' PET** Name:

*Probably anthropomorphic in some way, the good guys' pet often gets underfoot.*

Cat  Dog  Chimp  Fox  Talking

Notes:

Whose pet are they?  
 How do they stow away on our mission?

**THE TOADY** Name:

*Could be the villain's our. Tiresome, but the Toady does have a trick or two up their sleeve.*

Ridiculous  Short  Whining  Sycophantic

Notes:

What is their weird ability?  
 How can we convince them to switch sides?

**THE AIRHEAD** Name:

*They love their team and will rush in to help, heedless of danger, often making things worse.*

Rosy cheeked  Round eyes  So excited

Notes:

How do they fail to respect your boundaries?  
 How do they mistake wrong for right?

**THE VILLAIN** Name:

*The Villain is the master manipulator, possibly the Big Bad of the whole season...*

Narrow Eyes  Cruel Smile  Wearing Black

Notes:

How were they wronged in the past?  
 Who is the spy they have among us?

**OTHER** Name:

Notes:

**OTHER** Name:

Notes: