



NOT THE END

QUICKSTART GUIDE

A GAME BY CLAUDIO PUSTORINO



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PIETRO BASTAS

**Mana Project Studio and Fumble GDR
proudly present NOT THE END**

The content of this Quickstart Guide is released under Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 3.0. Please share it with everyone who will play it with you and let us know what you think!

Download game materials and character sheets at:
bit.ly/NTEResources

The NOT THE END team

Idea and Art Direction: Claudio Pustorino

Game Design: Claudio Pustorino, Fabio Airoidi, Claudio Serena

Illustrations: Pietro Bastas

Layout: Claudio Pustorino

Editing: Claudio Serena

Editorial direction: Michele Paroli

Artistic supervision: Mirko Failoni

The contents of this preview and its graphic elements should be considered as preliminary material for the final version of the product.



CONTENTS

CONTENTS		3		
Welcome to NOT THE END	4	How and when to TAKE RISKS	33	
What is an RPG?	5	How to use SUCCESSES	34	
The pillars of NOT THE END	5	How to use COMPLICATIONS	35	
The game's setting	6	LESSONS and SCARS, other uses of a	37	
HexSys: the game system	6	Other types of TESTS	38	
What is a TEST?	9	LEAVING THE SCENE	40	
Facing a TEST	10	When to LEAVE THE SCENE	41	
		How to LEAVE THE SCENE	41	
		How to RETURN TO THE SCENE	42	
THE HEROES OF NOT THE END		12	EVOLVING THE HERO	44
Creating HEROES	14	How to evolve HEROES	46	
Describe your HERO in one sentence	16	Adding or changing a TRAIT	47	
List their distinctive TRAITS	17	Marking the HERO with a SCAR	47	
List the RESOURCES at their disposal	22	Learning a LESSON	47	
PLAYING THE HERO		24	NARRATING STORIES	48
Facing TESTS	26	The NARRATOR's tasks	50	
What is a TEST and how do you face one?	28	How to narrate TESTS	52	
How to describe the goal	30	Narrating COMPLICATIONS	54	
How to fill the BAG	31	Narrating MISFORTUNES	55	
How to decide how many a to DRAW	32	How to describe a CHALLENGE	56	
		Pacing the SESSIONS	58	

WELCOME TO NOT THE END

Not the End is a role-playing game that tells the adventures of **heroes** who are willing to risk everything for what they consider important, using an original game system called HexSys.

In this game a HERO is anyone who can learn from their mistakes. Every HERO in this game is defined as much by their successes as by their failures and each experience, however traumatic, makes them stronger and more multifaceted than before.

In **NOT THE END** every HERO is described by keywords placed in a hexagon hive, each of which represents one of their distinctive TRAITS. The proximity of the hexagons within the hive creates relationships and bonds that make each HERO totally unique. **HexSys** does not use dice to resolve conflicts and dangerous situations, but different-colored TOKENS that represent SUCCESSES and COMPLICATIONS.

Every TEST that you face will produce results that add something to the STORY and to the game world, making the outcome of each TEST unique and different from the previous one. Be prepared to take risks, triumph, fail and get back on your feet. This is not the END!



WHAT IS AN RPG?

In a role-playing game, **PLAYERS** take on the role of the characters in a **STORY**, interpreting their motives and deciding their actions. If you have never role-played before, don't worry: while it may seem difficult, as soon as you sit down at the table you will find that it comes as naturally as telling a story around a campfire.

The playgroup will include a **player** with a special role, responsible for describing the world around the **heroes**, playing all the **secondary characters** and helping the game unfold. From now on we will call this player the **NARRATOR**.

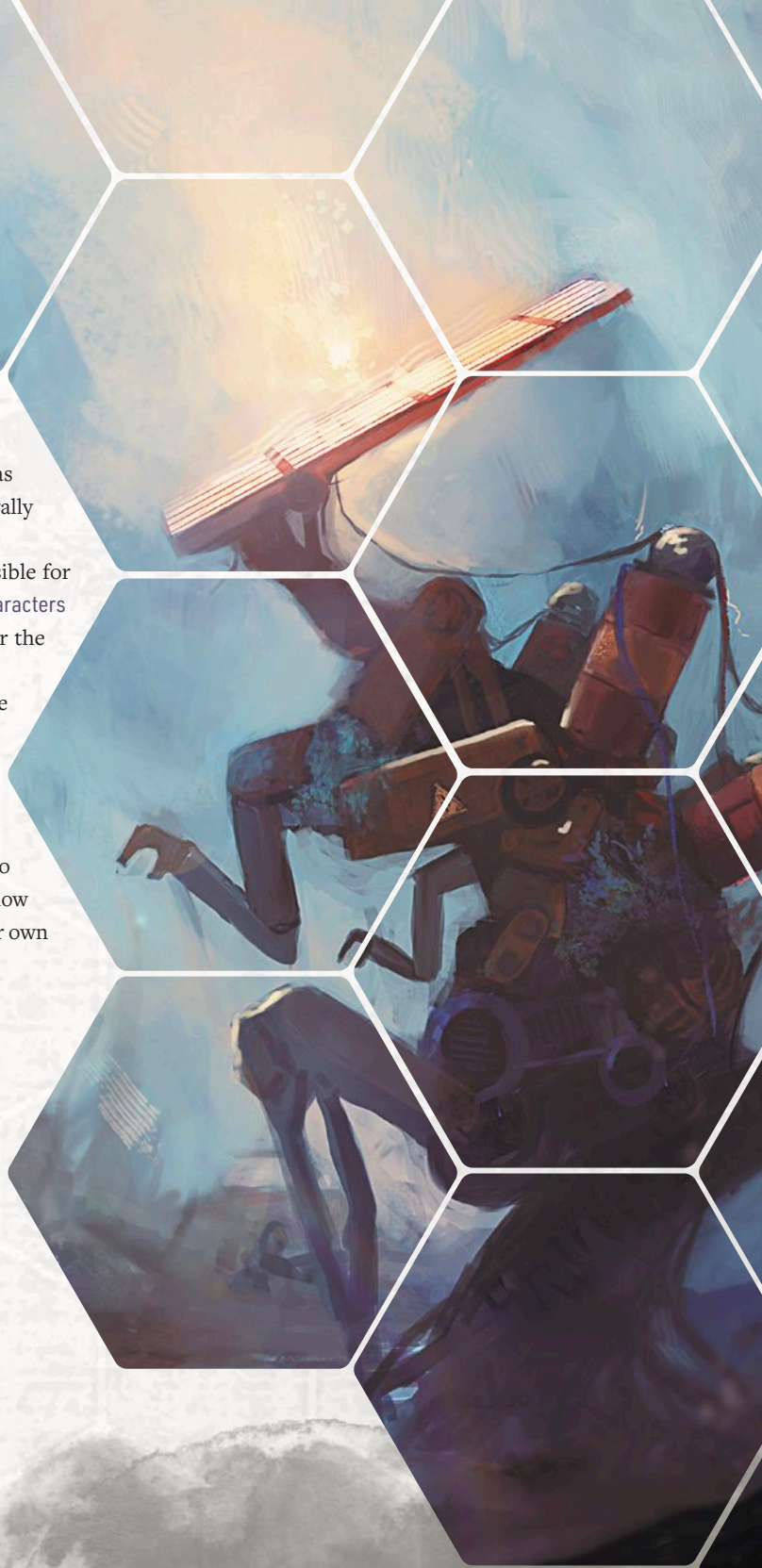
The game consists of a conversation between the **narrator** and the **players**. The **NARRATOR** describes the **SCENE**, the **PLAYERS** respond by describing their **HEROES'** actions, the situation evolves and the cycle restarts.

Sometimes the game will insert a random element to make the story a little unpredictable. The purpose of a role-playing game is to have fun while experiencing an adventure together, so remember to allow everyone at the table to take part and contribute to the story in their own way, without any pressure.

THE PILLARS OF NOT THE END

NOT THE END tells intense **STORIES** that leave an indelible mark on the **HEROES** who experience them. When you play, respect these three pillars:

- **TAKE RISKS** for what you consider to be important
- **Let the STORY** change your **HERO**
- **Live every END** like a new beginning



THE GAME'S SETTING

Not the End stories can be set anywhere: in distant realms home to dragons and powerful sorcerers, in futuristic dystopias ruled by merciless AI robots, in the dark and infinite depths of space, in the real world or in any other context that you are familiar with or can imagine.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE SETTING

Playing **NOT THE END** means first of all choosing a *where* and a *when*, namely a place and time in which the **STORY** is set. To begin with, there is no need to go into too much detail; you only need the bare minimum to create a common ground that stimulates your imagination.

This is a choice that the whole playgroup should make together. Although the choice of **SETTING** can be delegated to the **NARRATOR**, it is much more fun to experience a **STORY** set in a context that all the **PLAYERS** know, love and wish to experience and explore. To start off you only need a single sentence, but feel free to add a few details.

Once you have chosen a *where* and a *when*, creating **heroes** will naturally lead you to weave them into the game: this will generate narrative hooks necessary for **players** to have **heroes** that are fully integrated into the **story** from the outset. As with choosing the **SETTING**, creating **HEROES** together is more effective and fun.

HEXSYS: THE GAME SYSTEM

NOT THE END uses **HexSys**, an original game system that uses different-colored **TOKENS**, which are inserted and drawn blindly from a **BAG** to resolve important situations during the **story**.

“A long, long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...”, “Among the dusty streets of Redwater Creek, in pioneer-era America” or “In a space colony surrounded by the eternal ice of Ganymede, on 15 December 2047” are all good examples of *where* and *when*.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

The following are required to play:

- Around twenty different-colored **TOKENS** such as checkers pieces, poker chips or Go stones. Ensure the **tokens** you choose cannot be distinguished by touch
- An opaque **BAG** used for inserting and drawing **TOKENS** that is large enough to fit your hand in
- A **HERO** sheet for each **PLAYER**. You can download the sheets and all the printable game materials at bit.ly/NTEResources
- A few erasers and pencils

The game materials include **HERO** sheets and **LESSON** cards.

GAME SYMBOLS

This game uses **TOKENS** with two different colors that represent **SUCCESSES** and **COMPLICATIONS**. From this point on **tokens** representing a **success** will be denoted by the **Z** symbol and those representing a **complication** will be denoted by the **b** symbol. **Tokens drawn** or chosen at random will be denoted by the **a symbol**. Use the **tokens** every time your **hero** faces a **test**.

GLOSSARY

The next page contains a brief summary of the most common terms used in this manual, each accompanied by a brief explanation. Later on you will find more in-depth explanations, but you can use this list as a reference if you do not intend to read the manual from start to finish.

PLAYER: Someone in the group who plays a **HERO**;

A confrontation, a journey, an investigation, etc.

Facing an enemy, navigating in a blizzard,
questioning a suspect, etc.

NARRATOR: The member of the group who plays the secondary characters, describes the CHALLENGES, and recounts the COMPLICATIONS that happen during the STORY.

STORY: An entire narrative arc involving a theme or goal;

SESSION: When you are playing with your friends, you play a SESSION;

SCENE: A segment of the STORY in which a single moment of play is completed;

TURN: When the situation becomes critical, actions are taken in TURNS. A TURN is over when all the PLAYERS have acted. During the TURN, the NARRATOR only acts in response to the actions of the PLAYERS;

TEST: The act of DRAWING some ◎ from a BAG to learn the outcome of an action relevant to the STORY;

DIFFICULTY: A number between 1 and 6 that indicates how likely it is that the TEST will create COMPLICATIONS;

DANGER: A number between 1 and 4 that indicates how likely it is that the HERO WILL LEAVE THE SCENE;

BAG: An opaque container in which you place and DRAW the ◎ required to face a TEST;

DRAWING: The action of blindly drawing from 1 to 5 ◎ from the BAG;

SUCCESS: The positive outcome of a TEST, which corresponds to the ○ that the PLAYER has drawn from the BAG.

COMPLICATION: The negative outcome of a TEST, which corresponds to the ● that the PLAYER has DRAWN from the BAG.

HERO: One of the protagonists of the STORY;

TRAIT: Keyword inscribed in a hexagon on the HERO sheet which describes one of their key characteristics;

LESSON: Something that the HERO has learned through experience, which allows them to use SUCCESSES and COMPLICATIONS in a unique way;

TAKING A RISK: The PLAYER's decision to put the HERO in danger in order to DRAW other ◎;

LEAVING THE SCENE: A circumstance that prevents the hero from acting in a scene

WHAT IS A TEST?

A TEST is a turning point in the STORY in which the PLAYER puts their hero at risk in order to achieve a result. Each TEST is an opportunity to explore the HEROES' motives, to narrate their exploits and to give the NARRATOR ideas to make the STORY more engaging.

THE RIGHT TIME TO FACE A TEST

The decision of when to face a test is made by the NARRATOR, who is responsible for identifying the moments of the SESSION when requesting a TEST is necessary, interesting and fun. The NARRATOR asks the PLAYERS to face a TEST if:

- It is uncertain whether the HERO will succeed in what they are attempting to do
- There is a real possibility of resulting COMPLICATIONS that are interesting or significant for the development of the STORY
- There is something at stake

The NARRATOR avoids making PLAYERS take TESTS if:

- The action is so obvious that it has no chance of failure or so impracticable that it has no chance of success
- There is no possibility of resulting COMPLICATIONS that are interesting for the development of the STORY
- The PLAYER wants to find out if their HERO knows or has realized something: in this case, you answer their question directly based on their TRAITS

The next page contains a summary of how to face TESTS.

Sneaking undetected past palace guards, hacking a security system, convincing a stranger to help you, dueling with an adversary, defusing a bomb, etc. are all situations that require a TEST.

Taking an unattended object, learning about a place's customs or traditions, checking what you know about a subject that you have encountered for the first time, etc. are cases which, barring some rare exceptions, do not require a TEST.

FACING A TEST

When a **PLAYER** faces a **TEST**, they add the number of ● that corresponds to the **DIFFICULTY** and the number of ○ that corresponds to how many of the **HERO'S TRAITS** they can put in play and **DRAW** a number of ◎ of their choice ranging from 1 to 5. The ○ they have **DRAWN** indicate the extent to which things have gone well, while the ● describe how complicated the situation has become. In these pages you will find a summary that outlines what to do, but you should consult the **PLAYING THE HERO** chapter for a full understanding of how to face **TESTS** and the **NARRATING STORIES** chapter to learn how to develop the **SCENE** based on their outcome.



DESCRIBE YOUR ACTION

The **PLAYER** gives a concise description of the **HERO'S** intention. It is always good practice to state the **hero's** purpose, but there are no strict formulas that you are obliged to follow. Feel free to describe your action in the way that comes naturally to you. What you describe determines the **DIFFICULTY** of the **TEST** and the **TRAITS** that you can put in play.

Roberto plays Lothar, a bounty hunter. Lothar is crouching in the bushes near a bandits' camp. Roberto declares that he wants to shoot an arrow at the guard on patrol to silently kill him and approach the edge of the camp undetected.



FILL THE BAG

The **PLAYER** adds 1 ○ to the **BAG** for each of the **HERO'S TRAITS** that they can put in play in the **TEST** they are facing; it is up to the **PLAYER** to decide which traits to put in play. They then add a number of ● to the **BAG** that corresponds to the **DIFFICULTY** of the **TEST** announced by the **NARRATOR**.

The **TRAITS** that help Lothar are *Bounty Hunter*, *Silent*, *Assassinate* and *Infiltrate*. The **NARRATOR** states that the **TEST** is *difficult*. Roberto adds 4 ○ and 4 ● to the **BAG**.



DRAW

The PLAYER DRAWS from 1 to 4 ● from the BAG. The more ● they decide to DRAW, the greater the risks and chances of success. Every ○ DRAWN represents a SUCCESS, while every ● corresponds to a COMPLICATION. Opposite-colored ● never cancel each other out, but, once DRAWN, all contribute to the outcome of the TEST.

Roberto decides to draw 3 ● in total and TAKES OUT 2 ○ and 1 ●. This means that Lothar has had two SUCCESSES, but that his action has caused a COMPLICATION.



DESCRIBE THE RESULTS

The PLAYER spends the ○ they have DRAWN to describe the positive outcomes of the TEST and spends the ● they have DRAWN to ask the narrator to invent COMPLICATIONS that make the SCENE more engaging or create MISFORTUNES for theHERO.

The first ○ DRAWN guarantees Lothar's success in the TEST. Roberto spends the second ○ to improve the outcome of the TEST and spends the ● by asking the NARRATOR to subject Lothar to a MISFORTUNE. Lothar's arrow pierces the throat of the guard, who falls soundlessly to the ground in an area barely visible from the camp. But his bowstring breaks: Lothar finds himself *Unarmed*.



THE HEROES OF NOT THE END





CREATING HEROES

It just takes a little imagination and a few minutes to create a **HERO** in **NOT THE END**. All you need is a basic idea that you can build on by following some brief guided steps.

If possible, create your **HERO** together with the other **PLAYERS** and the **NARRATOR**: the end result will be significantly better.

The following pages offer a detailed description of all the necessary steps to create your **HERO**, as well as explanations and practical examples that will help you along the way.

STEPS TO CREATE A HERO

1. DESCRIBE YOUR HERO IN ONE SENTENCE

This sentence will serve as a starting point for developing the Hero and providing further details at later stages

2. LIST THEIR DISTINCTIVE TRAITS

The TRAITS are keywords that describe them and are placed in a hexagon hive. Place 1 TRAIT in the center that defines *who they are*, surrounded by 3 TRAITS that define *how they are* and 4 TRAITS in the outer part that describe *what they can do*

3. LIST THE RESOURCES IN THEIR POSSESSION

The term RESOURCE is used to refer to anything that may be useful for the HERO (equipment, contacts, etc). Write down from 3 to 5 resources

4. CHOOSE THEIR NAME

Name your HERO and you have completed the creation process!



WHERE CAN I FIND THE HERO SHEET?

You can download the sheet and all game handouts at bit.ly/NTEResources

DESCRIBE YOUR HERO IN ONE SENTENCE

The PLAYER identifies the essence of the HERO and concisely describes them in one or a maximum of two sentences.

This outline will serve as your guideline for subsequent questions. You do not need anything specific, just something that will allow you to roughly find your place within the game scenario.

If you wish, start thinking about your HERO's psychology and motives. Why is your HERO the way you imagine them to be? What are they willing to TAKE RISKS for? You do not have to decide now, but starting to think about it will help you create a multi-faceted character.

ARE THERE ANY CONSTRAINTS?

In **NOT THE END** there is no constraint on the type of HERO you can play. The important thing is that the HERO you choose to play is appropriate to the context of the game you have chosen for your adventure and can harmoniously fit into the group.

WHERE SHOULD I WRITE THIS DESCRIPTION?

There is no need to write what you have decided on the HERO SHEET; this initial idea will help you answer subsequent questions.

If you would like to write down what your hero is willing to TAKE RISKS for, we have allocated a space on the sheet where you can add this information. Remember that this concept can freely evolve and change over time.

During the STORY, your HERO will learn what they consider truly important and you may be surprised to discover how different it is from what you had first expected.

A masked vigilante who wants to bring justice back to their neighborhood, a court reporter with a penchant for mystery and a freed slave who has seen hell are all good examples.

You could be an animal that has become sentient due to a spell, a host organism that controls someone's actions, a wandering spirit, a cyborg or anything you can imagine.

LIST THEIR DISTINCTIVE TRAITS

The **PLAYER** describes the **HERO** by writing an archetype, 3 qualities and 4 abilities in the corresponding hexagons on the sheet.

Unlike other games, **NOT THE END** does not use a predetermined list of characteristics or abilities to score, but allows you to freely define keywords representing how you view your **HERO**.

These keywords are called **TRAITS** and should be placed in a hexagon hive located in the center of the **HERO** sheet, some examples of which are given in the following pages.

WHAT ARE TRAITS FOR?

When you face a **TEST**, every **TRAIT** you put in play allows you to add 1 ○ to the **BAG**. The more **TRAITS** you put in play in a **TEST**, the greater the chances of success. There are no negative **TRAITS** in an absolute sense and under no circumstances will a **TRAIT** force you to add 1 ● to the **BAG**.

HOW SHOULD I DEFINE MY HERO'S TRAITS?

To define their **TRAITS**, answer the following three questions in order:

WHAT IS MY HERO'S ARCHETYPE?

The **PLAYER** writes a **TRAIT** that identifies their **HERO's** archetype in the hexagon at the center of the hive.

You can choose the name of a profession, race, species or a mixture of any of them. Or you can choose an established word within the framework of the setting. It is important that what you write in the central hexagon is the concept your **HERO** identifies with and that this concept is clear to you and the rest of the group.

Being *Beautiful* is no better than being *Horrific*: the first **TRAIT** could be used to seduce someone and the second to intimidate them. **TRAITS** that are not compatible with the **TESTS** you face do not make the situation worse, but simply do not give you any advantage.

Hacker, Samurai, Swindler, Merchant, Elf, Pilot and Occultist are all excellent examples. You can be more specific, for example by writing *Dwarf Warrior* instead of *Warrior*. This archetype will not come into play if you are trying to use a bow, but it will help you during a drinking contest or while exploring a mine. Iconic words such as *Chosen One, Vampire, Werewolf* or *Jedi Knight* are good examples of archetypes since the **SETTING** to which they refer clearly defines them.

Qualities are normally described with adjectives: *Intelligent, Powerful, Agile, Inquisitive, Cunning, Warlike, Terrifying, Intrepid, Icy, Attractive, Cultured, Friendly*, etc.

You can write *Artificial Intelligence* as an archetype and *Sentimental* as a quality or juxtapose the *Sentimental* and *Logical* qualities.

Abilities are defined with verbs such as *Hide, Hack, Interrogate, Meditate* and *Haggle* or areas of expertise such as *Light weapons, Dirty fighting, Folklore*, etc.

A *Doctor* who is *Intelligent* and *Precise* could have abilities such as *Surgery*, while an *Intelligent* and *Precise Gunslinger* could have *Ballistics* among their abilities.

WHAT ARE MY HERO'S QUALITIES?

Write 3 TRAITS that describe your HERO's characteristic qualities in 3 hexagons of your choice from the 6 surrounding the archetype.

When you answer this question, consider which of your HERO's characteristics are most significant. While the archetype defines *who* your HERO is, the qualities describe *how* your HERO is.

Even if the qualities are adjacent to the archetype, the terms do not have to be related to each other. Similarly, qualities adjacent to each other do not have to be related unless you wish them to be.

WHAT HAS MY HERO LEARNED?

Write 4 TRAITS that describe what your HERO has learned or trained themselves to do in 4 hexagons in the outer crown of the hive.

Your abilities describe areas of specialization in which your HERO is well-trained. Each HERO has a maximum of 12 abilities.

Unlike other TRAITS, abilities must correlate with their adjacent qualities. This will be easy to do because the archetype and qualities will help you envision abilities in line with who you are in the game. The following pages provide examples that enable you to quickly understand how the correlation between hexagons can help your decision.

WHO DECIDES WHAT TRAITS ARE ALLOWED DURING HERO CREATION?

The **PLAYER**, in collaboration with the rest of the playgroup. The most important thing when choosing a trait is that it is relevant to the game setting and has a clear meaning to everyone at the table.

Any room for interpretation will be further clarified during the **SESSIONS**. It is not the **NARRATOR's** task to moderate **PLAYERS'** choices: everyone at the table is responsible for making the game enjoyable.

WHAT TRAITS SHOULD IDEALLY BE AVOIDED?

Avoid choosing TRAITS that are too broad and generic. Wording keywords in a way that allows them to always be put in play may seem convenient, but it ends up making the game less fun for everyone.

TRAITS such as *Infallible*, *Reduce margin of error*, *Perfect*, *Always ready*, *Succeed*, etc. should be avoided.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM UNDECIDED ABOUT WHICH TRAITS TO CHOOSE?

Ask yourself how you would like to see your HERO act in the scene. What are the most typical things they would do? How would they act to resolve a situation? When do they feel in their element?

If you get stuck, another great way to overcome this is to get help from other players and the narrator with suggestions or to consult lists of recommended traits in the **SETTINGS** chapter.

In any case, if at this stage you cannot think of all the TRAITS or you are undecided, move on: you can gradually complete them as you continue to create the HERO or even during the first game SESSIONS.

WHO DECIDES WHAT TRAITS CAN BE PUT IN PLAY DURING A TEST?

It is always up to the PLAYER to decide which TRAITS to put in play during a TEST.

Other PLAYERS and the NARRATOR are free to make suggestions or ask for clarifications to enrich the game narrative, however the final choice always lies with the PLAYER facing the TEST. They are responsible for consistently putting TRAITS in play and, if necessary, helping other PLAYERS and the NARRATOR to understand how to interpret the words describing the HERO.

LOTHAR: EXAMPLE OF TRAITS

Roberto wants to play Lothar, a bounty hunter with a deep sense of justice. Roberto imagines Lothar as a man hardened by many battles and ruthless towards criminals and anyone who flouts the law. He would like to play a character who is unsettling at times, but has his own moral code from which he never deviates. During creation he writes his archetype, 3 qualities, 3 abilities and 1 iconic item. He chooses **Bounty Hunter** as an archetype and **Veteran**, **Cunning** and **Frightening** as qualities. He connects **Veteran** to **Archery** and **Cunning** to **Investigate**. He also decides that since Lothar is a **Veteran** and **Cunning**, he definitely knows how to **Pass Unnoticed**, and since he is **Cunning** and **Frightening**, he can **Interrogate** very effectively.

LOTHAR: GAME EXAMPLE

Lothar has infiltrated the Baron's prisons to find Geralt, a commoner imprisoned by corrupt guards. Roberto declares that Lothar wants to sneak up on a guard on patrol to get him to talk by holding a dagger to his throat. The NARRATOR decides that this TEST is normal DIFFICULTY and Roberto adds 3 ● to the BAG. **Pass Unnoticed**, **Interrogate** and **Frightening** are certainly TRAITS related to the TEST. After a brief discussion the group decides that **Cunning** and **Bounty hunter** also apply. The other TRAITS are not relevant to the TEST so Roberto adds 5 ○ to the BAG.



A magic wand is a legendary **RESOURCE** at King Arthur's court, as well as being common if you are playing magic students at Hogwarts school.

For a soldier, hitting a target at 200 yards is a **TEST** with normal **DIFFICULTY** using a sniper rifle, but is almost impossible with a bow. It simply cannot be achieved by throwing a stone.

A rifle is a rare **RESOURCE** in the real world, but it could be a legendary item in a post-apocalyptic setting.

For Indiana Jones *My trusty whip* could be considered a **TRAIT**, as could *Keeper of Excalibur* for King Arthur. *Ring Bearer* could be the archetype for Frodo.

LIST THE RESOURCES AT THEIR DISPOSAL

The term **RESOURCES** broadly refers to anything useful that your **HERO** has at their disposal: equipment, money, documents, etc. Depending on the **SETTING**, **RESOURCES** could include familiars, robotic assistants, artificial intelligence, trained animals and so on.

HOW SHOULD I USE THE RESOURCES IN PLAY?

Possessing a **RESOURCE** could influence the **DIFFICULTY** of the **TESTS** or their feasibility. **RESOURCES** never influence the **BAG**.

HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT RESOURCES I POSSESS?

The **PLAYER** writes down a maximum of 5 **RESOURCES** on the **HERO** sheet, one of which can be rare for the context in which the **STORY** takes place.

The situation in which the **HEROES** start certainly affects their available **RESOURCES**, so discuss this with the playgroup.

Remember to only write down **RESOURCES** that are relevant to your **HERO** and distinguish them. The fact that you own everyday items is something that can be improvised; only write down **RESOURCES** that are important for you or the development of the **STORY**.

ALTERNATIVE: RESOURCES AS TRAITS

Sometimes **RESOURCES** are such an integral part of a **HERO** that they can be considered a pillar of their identity. In this case, by mutual agreement with the **NARRATOR**, we recommend writing the object as one of the **HERO'S TRAITS**.

EXAMPLES OF RESOURCES

Lothar is an experienced bounty hunter who is somewhat renowned in his field. After a brief discussion with the game table, Roberto writes down the following in his list of **RESOURCES**:

- Metal handcuffs
- Bow and arrows
- Sturdy clothes
- Bounty hunter license
- 50 coins

Lothar wants to prove that he has executed a criminal for just cause and guards are threatening him with pikes.

Lothar asks the guards if he can take something out of his pocket and slowly shows them his bounty hunter's license.

Now that the guards have seen his authorization, convincing them will be an easy, rather than difficult **TEST**.

Lilian is a member of the clergy and, although long estranged from the court, has noble ancestry. For Alice, it is important to note that she is an experienced healer:

- Cassock
- Silver symbol of Saint Galen
- Healer's bag
- Medicinal herbs
- Fine paper and ink

Lilian is trying to heal Lothar from a nasty injury that he has sustained during a conflict with criminals.

He has a deep cut and the blade seems to have scraped the bone. Lilian fears the blade was poisoned because Lothar is beginning to show strange symptoms.

Lilian uses her medicinal herbs to create an ointment that she applies to the wound and the tools in her healer's bag to suture it. The **TEST** has a normal **DIFFICULTY**. It would have been impossible to treat Lothar without equipment unless you settled for a temporary solution.

Etienne is an undead who has dragged himself out of the grave. The objects to which he is most attached are those that his wife Igritte left in his coffin:

- Lumberjack hatchet
- Worn clothes
- Letter from Igritte
- Bloodstained handkerchief
- Wedding ring

Etienne enters a village to get information about his wife's killers. The locals do not trust outsiders and his threadbare clothes and unsettling appearance do not help matters. The **TEST** to convince someone to share information with him would be difficult. Etienne does not want to threaten the villagers and persuades them to talk by showing his wedding ring and bloodstained handkerchief. Now his appearance is less threatening: a person who has lost everything does not care about appearance. The **DIFFICULTY** of the **TEST** drops from difficult to normal.



PLAYING THE HERO





FACING TESTS

To play **NOT THE END** you have to understand the spirit with which the **TESTS** should be faced. Every **TEST** is an opportunity to explore your **HERO**'s motives, to narrate their exploits and to give the **NARRATOR** ideas to liven up the **STORY**.

The following pages provide an in-depth look at all the necessary steps to face the **TESTS** and how to use them as key moments to enrich the narrative.

WHEN FACING A TEST, AS THE PLAYER YOU:

1. STATE THE HERO'S GOAL

You only need to state a goal or intention; the outcomes of the TEST will be described at the end of the TEST

2. FILL THE BAG

You must insert as many ○ as the TRAITS that the hero puts in play and as many ● as the difficulty specified by the NARRATOR

3. DRAW FROM 1 TO 4 ◎ AS YOU WISH

The ◎ must be DRAWN blind and all at once. The more ◎ YOU DRAW, the more likely it is you obtain SUCCESSES and COMPLICATIONS

4. DECIDE WHETHER TO TAKE A RISK

If you are not satisfied with the ◎ you have DRAWN, you can TAKE A RISK and DRAW others, putting the HERO in danger

5. SPEND THE ◎ DRAWN AND RECOUNT THE OUTCOME

Spend ○ to pass the TEST or to improve the TRAITS and ● to ask the NARRATOR to subject the HERO to MISFORTUNES or to COMPLICATE the SCENE. If you have decided to TAKE A RISK, the NARRATOR spends the ● on your behalf

WHAT IS A TEST AND HOW DO YOU FACE ONE?

When the **PLAYER** has a goal whose outcome is uncertain or important for the **STORY**, the **NARRATOR** asks them to face a **TEST**. When they request a **TEST**, the **NARRATOR** tells the **PLAYER** how **DIFFICULT** and **DANGEROUS** it is.

WHEN A TEST IS NECESSARY

Every **TEST** is a turning point in the **STORY** that could result in **SUCCESSES** and **COMPLICATIONS**. Each **TEST** is an opportunity to explore the **HEROES'** motives, to narrate their exploits and to give the **NARRATOR** ideas to make the **STORY** more engaging. A **TEST** is normally faced when:

- It is uncertain whether the **HERO** will succeed in what they are attempting to do
- There is a real possibility of resulting **COMPLICATIONS** that are interesting or significant for the development of the **STORY**
- There is something at stake, or a physical or social conflict is taking place

It is better to avoid facing a **TEST** if:

- The action is so obvious that it has no chance of failure or so impracticable that it has no chance of success
- There is no possibility of resulting **COMPLICATIONS** that are interesting for the development of the **STORY**
- The **PLAYER** wants to check if their **HERO** knows someone or something or has noticed something; in this case it is best that the **NARRATOR** replies to the **PLAYER** by referring to the **HERO'S TRAITS**.

Sneaking undetected past palace guards, hacking a security system, convincing a stranger to help you, dueling with an adversary, defusing a bomb, etc. are all situations that require a **TEST**.

Taking an unattended object, learning about a place's customs or traditions, checking what you know about a subject that you have encountered for the first time, etc. These are cases which, barring some rare exceptions, do not require a **TEST**.

THE DIFFICULTIES AND DANGERS OF A TEST

Every TEST is designated a specific DIFFICULTY. Moreover, some TESTS can make you LEAVE THE SCENE. If you are the NARRATOR, consult the **NARRATING STORIES** chapter for a detailed explanation of how to manage these two numbers.

- The DIFFICULTY is a number between 1 and 6 that describes how likely it is that the TEST will result in COMPLICATIONS. When the PLAYER faces a TEST, they must insert a number of ● that corresponds to the DIFFICULTY.
- The DANGER is a number between 1 and 4 that describes how likely it is that the HERO WILL EXIT THE SCENE during the TEST. When the PLAYER DRAWS a number of ● equal or greater than the DANGER level, their HERO LEAVES THE SCENE. The more DANGEROUS the TEST, the lower the number of DRAWN ● required to make the HERO LEAVE THE SCENE. All tests have a specific DIFFICULTY, but not all are DANGEROUS.

You can find all the information about LEAVING THE SCENE further on in this chapter. For now you only need to know that when the HERO has LEFT THE SCENE something has happened to them that has prevented them from directly acting on the SCENE.

HOW TO FACE A TEST

Each time you face a TEST, you must follow these steps, which are described and explained in detail in the next pages of this section:

1. State the HERO's goal
2. Fill the BAG
3. DRAW from 1 to 4 ◎
4. Decide whether to TAKE A RISK
5. Spend the ○ and the ● that you have DRAWN and recount the outcome of the TEST

DIFFICULTY and DANGER are distinct values. Decoding an encrypted message is DIFFICULT but not DANGEROUS, while defusing a simple explosive is not particularly DIFFICULT, but very DANGEROUS.

Lothar tries to convince some guards to give him information. The NARRATOR states that the DIFFICULTY of the TEST is 4 and there is no DANGER. Lothar adds 4 ● to the BAG.

Lothar wishes to defuse a pressure trap that he has just placed a foot on. The NARRATOR states that the DIFFICULTY of the TEST is 3 and the DANGER is 2. Lothar adds 3 ● to the BAG and knows that if he DRAWS 2 or more ● HE WILL LEAVE THE SCENE.

HOW TO DESCRIBE THE GOAL

When the **PLAYER faces a **TEST**, they describe the goal of the **HERO** and the actions by which they are seeking to achieve it, clarifying which **TRAITS** they will put in play.**

Although it is best to describe the action from the outset in a way that involves the **TRAITS** that the player **WISHES** to use, subsequently justifying the use of a **TRAIT** is still allowed.

Trying to put as many **TRAITS** as possible in play is a permitted and fun exercise, but it is best to avoid far-fetched descriptions just to have an extra **O** in the **BAG**. It is much better to imagine what the **HERO** is doing and to describe it so that the **TRAITS** put in play naturally fit into the narrative.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM STRUGGLING TO DESCRIBE THE TESTS I AM FACING?

Although listing the **TRAITS** that you use during the **TEST** without a description is less engaging, there is no point in laboring to come up with lofty descriptions or adjusting to the narrative style of the more verbose players.

Forget any performance anxiety and narrate in the way that comes most naturally to you; there is no need to feel bound to a specific format and you are not obliged to follow any particular style.

If necessary, use your **HERO**'s **TRAITS** as inspiration to describe what you are doing. Remember not to force other **PLAYERS** to adapt to your style.

Be supportive of other players by asking questions and showing interest in what they are recounting. You do not have to be professional storytellers to have fun together; the important thing is to respect and listen to each other.

“My intention is to sneak into the Castle unseen. I slip past the enemy ranks, constantly looking around to keep an eye on the position of the guards on patrol and jumping from rooftop to rooftop when it is not possible for me to safely pass through the alleyways” is a great description for putting **TRAITS** such as ***Furtive***, ***Wary***, ***Agile*** and ***Infiltrator*** in play.

A less flowing, but equally functional way to play is to simply say “I get past the guards”. The **NARRATOR** will ask you how you do this and you will then explain how you are putting your **TRAITS** in play.

1 2 3 4 5

HOW TO FILL THE BAG

The **PLAYER** inserts 1 **O** in the **BAG** for every **TRAIT** that they put in play and a number of **●** equal to the **DIFFICULTY** decided by the **NARRATOR**.

HOW DO YOU PUT A TRAIT IN PLAY?

Describe how your **HERO** intends to act and the **TRAITS** that you can put in play will become clear. List them while you insert the **O** in the **BAG** so that the playgroup knows what they are and you can check that you have not forgotten any.

IF I DO NOT HAVE ANY TRAITS TO PUT IN PLAY, HOW DO I FACE A TEST?

If you face a **TEST** and you do not have any **TRAITS** to put in play, you cannot succeed. The **TRAITS** describe not only who your **HERO** is, but also how they usually act.

If you realize that your **HERO** lacks **TRAITS** that you think they should have, you can try to develop them in that direction. The **EVOLVING THE HERO** chapter explains how to do this.

Noticing a shortcoming in your **HERO** is a good prompt to ask yourself whether the **HERO** wishes to become something different from what they are at the moment or prefers to remain how they are, focusing on their strengths.

Obviously this reasoning applies to actual **TESTS**, which have a **DIFFICULTY** and are therefore actions that are not accessible to everyone. The lack of a **TRAIT** in the hive does not mean that you are completely incapable of facing even the simplest tasks relating to that area.

HOW TO DECIDE HOW MANY **●** TO DRAW

It is difficult for a **Priest** who is **Charitable**, **Kind** and **Pacifist** to find themselves in a position of wanting to hurt someone. Should this happen, they would not know how to act. It will be up to them to consider their inability and decide whether or not to learn how to fight.

Not having **Athletic** among your **TRAITS** does not mean that you cannot run 500 feet. Only the most difficult **TESTS**, for which you are truly risking something, will be impossible.

Let's take the most extreme case in which you have 1 ○ and 3 ● in the BAG. DRAWING 4 ○ will give you a mathematical certainty of SUCCEEDING in the TEST, at the cost of facing many COMPLICATIONS.

If the test you are facing is very important to you, you may be willing to pay this price to succeed. Sustaining a wound that will leave a scar in order to destroy an evil artifact will make your HERO's endeavor more interesting and will give you roleplaying ideas as you watch them develop and change over time.

In a duel to the death, with a BAG consisting of 3 ○ and 3 ●, DRAWING 4 ○ means looking for trouble so you will be certain to strike your opponent. You could even have reasons to want your HERO to be scarred.

Now let's consider the case of a HERO who is trying to defuse a bomb. There is a 1-hour countdown and the BAG contains 2 ○ and 2 ●. DRAWING 1 ○ could result in a SUCCESS or COMPLICATE the SCENE, but it will not detonate the bomb.

The PLAYER decides how many ○ to DRAW, between 1 and 4. The more ○ THEY DRAW the more things will happen. Whether they are positive or negative depends on the ○ that make up the BAG.

Most of the BAGS will have a good balance of ○ and ●. Often the desire to succeed will lead you to endure COMPLICATIONS to ensure you SUCCEED in the TEST you are facing.

It is not easy to have SUCCESSES without COMPLICATIONS, but you will also find you are often in a position where you can DRAW enough to ensure you have at least 1 ○ in your hand.

You will find that you have a high level of control when it comes to handling COMPLICATIONS, to the extent that using the ● that you DRAW will be as much fun as spending the ○.

In **NOT THE END** how much you are willing to risk to get what you want matters more than determining how likely you are to succeed at what you are attempting to do.

WHEN IS IT BEST TO DRAW MANY OR FEW?

IT IS BEST TO DRAW many ○ when your HERO is willing to deal with many COMPLICATIONS in order to achieve the SUCCESS they desire. Alternatively, you can DRAW many ○ when you want lots of things to happen that liven up and develop the SCENE.

IT IS BEST TO DRAW just a few ○ when your HERO is prepared to fail in order to avoid excessive risk for themselves or the SCENE; the fewer ○ DRAWN, the less positive and negative consequences there will be for the scene.

Ultimately, DRAWING just 1 ○ means both tempting fate and risking very little, since the TEST will either turn out entirely well or entirely badly. In other words, DRAWING 1 ○ is a way of saying "*Do or die*" and now and then it is a good way of adding a little tension to the game.

HOW AND WHEN TO TAKE RISKS

The **PLAYER** can **TAKE A RISK** in order to **DRAW** other  in addition to those that they have already **DRAWN** during a **TEST**.

WHEN CAN I TAKE A RISK?

The **PLAYER** can decide whether to take a **RISK** during any **TEST** immediately after **DRAWING** and before spending the  to describe the outcome of a **TEST**.

WHAT PRICE DO YOU PAY FOR TAKING A RISK?

When the **PLAYER** takes a **RISK** they must respect these two constraints:

- When they **DRAW** for the second time they must always reach a total of 5  **DRAWN**.
- All the  **DRAWN** must be handed to the **NARRATOR**, who will spend them on behalf of the **PLAYER** as they wish. The next page explains how to spend the .

Every time you decide to **TAKE A RISK**, you essentially end up **DRAWING** the maximum number of  and allow the **NARRATOR** to spend the  on your behalf.

On the one hand **TAKING A RISK** gives you a chance to reverse the fortunes of a **TEST** that has not gone your way, while on the other hand you will have to put everything at stake and pay the price of not being able to control the resulting negative outcomes. Only **TAKE A RISK** for what your **HERO** considers truly important!

Lothar wants to capture a key witness who might testify against the Baron's son. The fugitive tries to escape by running wildly through a crowd. Lothar's **BAG** contains 4  and 4 .

Roberto decides to **DRAW** 3  and discovers to his disappointment that he has drawn 3 .

Lothar cannot accept that the fugitive has got away and therefore decides to **TAKE A RISK**. Roberto **DRAWs** another 2 , which is exactly what he needs to reach a total of 5  **DRAWN**.

Roberto **DRAWs** 1  and 1  so he holds a total of 1  and 4 .

With the  he is guaranteed **SUCCESS** in the **TEST**, but the **NARRATOR** now has 4  to spend as they wish and decides to do so by subjecting Lothar to 1 **MISFORTUNE**, **CONFUSION** and **ADRENALINE**, as well as **COMPLICATING** the **SCENE**.

The **NARRATOR** recounts how Lothar, in order to catch the fugitive, knocks over a passer-by who turns out to be the leader of the guards.

Lothar suffers the **MISFORTUNE** *Hated by the authorities* and now the guards get involved. Lothar's heart is racing and getting out of this situation will not be easy.

HOW TO USE SUCCESSES

The **PLAYER** must use all the **○** that they **DRAW**. They can spend them as they wish to **SUCCEED** in a **TEST** or to **strengthen** a **TRAIT**.

SUCCEEDING IN A TEST

The first **○** spent ensures success in a **TEST**. For every **○** spent in addition to the first you can improve the result obtained by facing a **TEST**.

The way in which the effect of the **TEST** is improved is up to the **PLAYER**, although the other **PLAYERS** and the **NARRATOR** can contribute by suggesting ideas or asking questions. Here is a list of positive effects that could happen for every **○** spent in addition to the first:

- The action has an unexpected positive consequence. This benefit must be secondary to the effect of the action;
- The obtained result will last longer;
- The obtained result affects more than one subject.

This list is merely indicative; use your imagination and keep the narration coherent. The **PLAYER** is responsible for ensuring that the narration is plausible and in line with what is happening in the **SCENE**.

STRENGTHENING A TRAIT

The **PLAYER** places 1 **○** on one of the **TRAITS** that they have used during a **TEST**. The next time they put it in play, they will add this **○** in addition to the first. Every **TRAIT** can hold a maximum of 1 **○** at a time.

Roberto wants to shoot an arrow through the rope tied around the neck of a poor man about to be hanged. He **DRAW**s 3 **○**. He discards the first, which guarantees him **SUCCESS** and then he can spend the other 2 as he wishes.

- The executioner lets out a cry and one of the guards' horses rears up.
- The arrow bounces off a torch that falls on other ropes.
- The condemned man takes the initiative and removes the noose from the neck of the convict beside him.

Lothar smiles and muses that he has not lost his good aim with age. He places a **○** on **Archery**.

1 2 3 4 5

HOW TO USE COMPLICATIONS

The **PLAYER** must use all the ● that they **DRAW**. They can spend them as they wish to **COMPLICATE** the **SCENE**, endure a **MISFORTUNE** or accumulate **ADRENALINE** or **CONFUSION**.

COMPLICATING THE SCENE

The **PLAYER** hands over 1 or more ● and asks the **NARRATOR** to **COMPLICATE** the **SCENE**. Spending ● in this way avoids direct consequences for the **Hero**, but complicates things for everyone. The **SCENE** will become more dangerous or the **TESTS** within it will become more **DIFFICULT**. It is up to the **NARRATOR** to decide how to complicate the **SCENE**, although the **PLAYERS** can suggest any good ideas that come to mind.

ENDURING A MISFORTUNE

The **PLAYER** puts 1 or more ● on the sheet, in the **MISFORTUNES** section and asks the **narrator** to subject them to one. **MISFORTUNES** are negative conditions that afflict the **HERO**. They can include physical, psychological and emotional factors of any kind and are always temporary. The **NARRATOR** recounts what is happening to the **HERO** and states the **MISFORTUNE**, after which the **player** writes it down in one of the dedicated hexagons.

WHAT EFFECTS DO MISFORTUNES HAVE?

Every time a **MISFORTUNE** is put in play in a **TEST**, add the ● associated with it to your **BAG**. Once the **TEST** has been taken, if the **MISFORTUNE** is still present, place the ● near it again. Every **MISFORTUNE** should affect the narrative and how you play the **HERO**.

Roberto wants to shoot an arrow through the rope tied around the neck of a poor man about to be hanged. He **DRAWs** 3 ●. He must decide how to spend them.

He hands 1 ● to the **NARRATOR**, asking them to complicate the **SCENE**. The crowd shrieks as the arrow lands in the deck of the gallows, but the executioner and guards seem more alert than astonished. Everyone understands what is going on: an ambush!

Shaken, Sore shoulder, Spurned, Sense of guilt, Scared, Cracked rib, Exhausted, Head injury, etc. are all good examples of **MISFORTUNES**.

You place 1 ● on a **MISFORTUNE** and a farmer in the crowd points at you and says “Hey, isn’t that the bounty hunter?”. The guards turn towards you. You are **Hunted**.

Being **Hunted** will add 1 ● to your **BAG** when you face **TESTS** such as hiding, evading guards, convincing someone to divert your pursuers, etc.

Fleeing the country and lying low for a few days or, paradoxically, being caught would be sufficient conditions to remove the **Hunted** MISFORTUNE.

During his escape, Lothar kills several guards to gain his freedom. He gains various MISFORTUNES until a second ● is placed on **Hunted**. The NARRATOR tells him that he has gone too far. **Hunted** becomes **Public enemy** and when it is put in play it will subject Lothar to 2 ● in the BAG.

Roberto places 1 ● on the ADRENALINE hexagon and describes how Lothar's heart is starting to race. If he wants to salvage the situation he only has a short time to act. In the next test he faces he will have to draw 4 ☉.

Roberto places 1 ● on the CONFUSION hexagon. Lothar will not be able to control himself during the next TEST. If he puts 4 TRAITS in play, rather than adding 4 ○ to the BAG he will add 4 ☉, which will be randomly chosen. For example, with eyes closed.

HOW LONG DO MISFORTUNES LAST?

A MISFORTUNE afflicts the HERO until it is remedied or its consequences wear off. Something must happen during the STORY that warrants the removal of the MISFORTUNE.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I RUN OUT OF SPACES ON THE SHEET?

You cannot suffer new MISFORTUNES, but the NARRATOR can make an existing one worse by describing how it gets worse. When a worsened MISFORTUNE is put in play, add 2 ● to the BAG. Every MISFORTUNE can be made worse by up to 3 ● and can only grow by 1 ● each TURN.

ACCUMULATING ADRENALINE OR CONFUSION

ADRENALINE and CONFUSION are conditions that influence your HERO's self-control in the next TEST they face. You can impose them if you do not want to hand the ● to the NARRATOR.

HOW DOES ADRENALINE WORK?

The PLAYER places 1 ● on the ADRENALINE hexagon if they think the outcome of the TEST that they have just faced may have excited the HERO. In the next TEST they will be obliged to draw 4 ☉. After doing so, they remove the ● placed on the ADRENALINE hexagon in the sheet.

HOW DOES CONFUSION WORK?

The PLAYER places 1 ● on the CONFUSION hexagon if they think that the outcome of the TEST has dazed or confused the HERO. In the next TEST they will be obliged to add randomly drawn ☉ to the bag instead of the ○ that they would have added by putting their TRAITS in play. After doing so, they remove the ● placed on the CONFUSION hexagon on the sheet. If the HERO receives any help, it is up to the PLAYER to decide whether or not they are affected by the CONFUSION afflicting the HERO.

WHEN IS IT APPROPRIATE TO ALLOW THE NARRATOR TO CREATE COMPLICATIONS AND MISFORTUNES?

Whenever it is fun to do so. In **NOT THE END** the NARRATOR uses the ● to respond to the PLAYERS' actions. This means that the ● are a tool that ensures that SCENES remain interesting and that the STORY continues to progress in the direction desired by the players.

The more PLAYERS face TESTS, the more SUCCESSES and COMPLICATIONS they generate. It is COMPLICATIONS that liven up the STORY, allowing it to develop in unexpected directions.

A completely harmonious situation can be quickly resolved, while a complicated one is interesting to experience and explore. Enduring MISFORTUNES and COMPLICATIONS is not a punishment, but a way of having memorable adventures.

In **NOT THE END** it is the PLAYERS who ask the NARRATOR to create COMPLICATIONS and their job is to ensure that these requests are always met in an original and unexpected way. Through this game economy you will often find yourself more involved and entertained by TESTS that have gone very wrong than TESTS that have gone perfectly.

LESSONS AND SCARS, OTHER USES OF ○

The complete **NOT THE END** manual explains how your HERO can learn LESSONS in the course of the STORY or be marked by SCARS. LESSONS allow the PLAYER to use ○ or ● in a unique way, while SCARS are traumatic experiences that make the HERO tougher when it comes to tolerating the ● that they DRAW.

LESSONS and SCARS are optional forms of character development that you can decide to use as you see fit in order to give your HERO greater depth and structure.

Lothar knows the LESSON *There's a rebel lying deep in every soul* and can place 1 ○ on the card that describes the LESSON. Later he can spend it in order to recount how the news of the liberation of a poor soul will motivate a person or a small group not to bow their heads, but to rebel against injustice.

Etienne is marked by the SCAR *I watched my wife die*. When he decides to put it in play he will add 1 ● to the BAG, but he can ignore one of the ● that he DRAWS during the TEST.

Roberto and his group want to sneak into the enemy camp unseen. The group decides to let Lothar act and he adds 2 ○ to the BAG for his TRAITS and 3 ● for the DIFFICULTY. Lilian does not have appropriate TRAITS, while Etienne has the *Furtive* TRAIT. Roberto therefore adds 1 ○ and 1 ● to the POOL.

Lothar is interrogating a bandit. Etienne stands beside him and smiles sardonically, putting the *Intimidate* TRAIT in play. Lothar adds 1 ○ to the BAG.

Roberto DRAWS 1 ○ and 2 ●. The bandit talks, but Lothar will have to decide how to spend 2 ● and Etienne must choose how to spend 1 ●. Helping Lothar has led Etienne to share the risk associated with the TEST.

GROUP TESTS

A GROUP TEST is when more than one HERO takes part and contributes to the outcome of a TEST, influencing its chances of SUCCESS while exposing themselves to possible COMPLICATIONS.

When facing a GROUP TEST, choose a HERO who will lead the action: they will have to fill their BAG as normal and then each HERO involved in the action describes how they act and what TRAIT they are putting in play to contribute.

Every HERO who has at least one supporting TRAIT guarantees a maximum of 1 ○ for the BAG, even if they have more than one TRAIT to put in play. If a HERO takes part in the TEST but does not have any TRAIT to put in play, their presence is a hindrance and they add 1 ● to the BAG.

If the HERO acting as leader DRAWS 1 or more ● during a GROUP TEST, every other HERO who has participated must take 1 ● in addition to those already DRAWN and instantly spend it. At the same time, if the HERO who is acting as leader DRAWS at least 1 ○, the GROUP TEST has succeeded for all the HEROES involved.

HELPING OR HINDERING OTHER HEROES

Helping or hindering another HERO in a TEST works in a very similar way to performing a GROUP TEST, except that you are trying to contribute to the outcome that they will obtain without sharing the effects.

During the TEST, you will expose yourself to possible COMPLICATIONS by aiming to help them with a TRAIT that will add 1 ○ to their BAG or to hinder them by putting a spanner in the works and adding 1 ●.

Describe what actions you are taking to help or hinder them, but remember that if they DRAW 1 or more ● you will also have to take another one, in addition to the ● they have DRAWN, and instantly spend it. Helping or hindering a TEST does not prevent another HERO from facing it.

COMPETITIONS BETWEEN HEROES

HEROES compete when they are trying to outdo each other in the same TEST. In this case, both the PLAYERS perform the same TEST and the PLAYER with more ○ to invest in the result wins the contest.

CONFLICTING GOALS

Situations in which a HERO intends to obtain a result before another HERO to thwart their action can be resolved in a similar way to competitions.

In this case, both PLAYERS perform a TEST separately after agreeing that the test is held at the same time. The PLAYER who spends more ○ on the outcome prevents the other from getting what they wanted.

CONFLICTS BETWEEN HEROES

Performing TESTS intended to harm other HEROES is particularly destructive. The acting hero states what they are doing and the targeted hero states how they are defending themselves. The acting hero adds the number of ○ to their BAG that corresponds to the number of TRAITS that they can put in play and the number of ● that corresponds to the number of TRAITS that the target can put in play to defend themselves.

All the ○ DRAWN COUNT AS MISFORTUNES that afflict the target, while all the ● DRAWN COUNT AS MISFORTUNES that afflict the hero taking the action. When PLAYERS act against each other there is no need for the NARRATOR to intervene by describing the MISFORTUNES. The narration is up to the PLAYERS, who can independently narrate the MISFORTUNES.

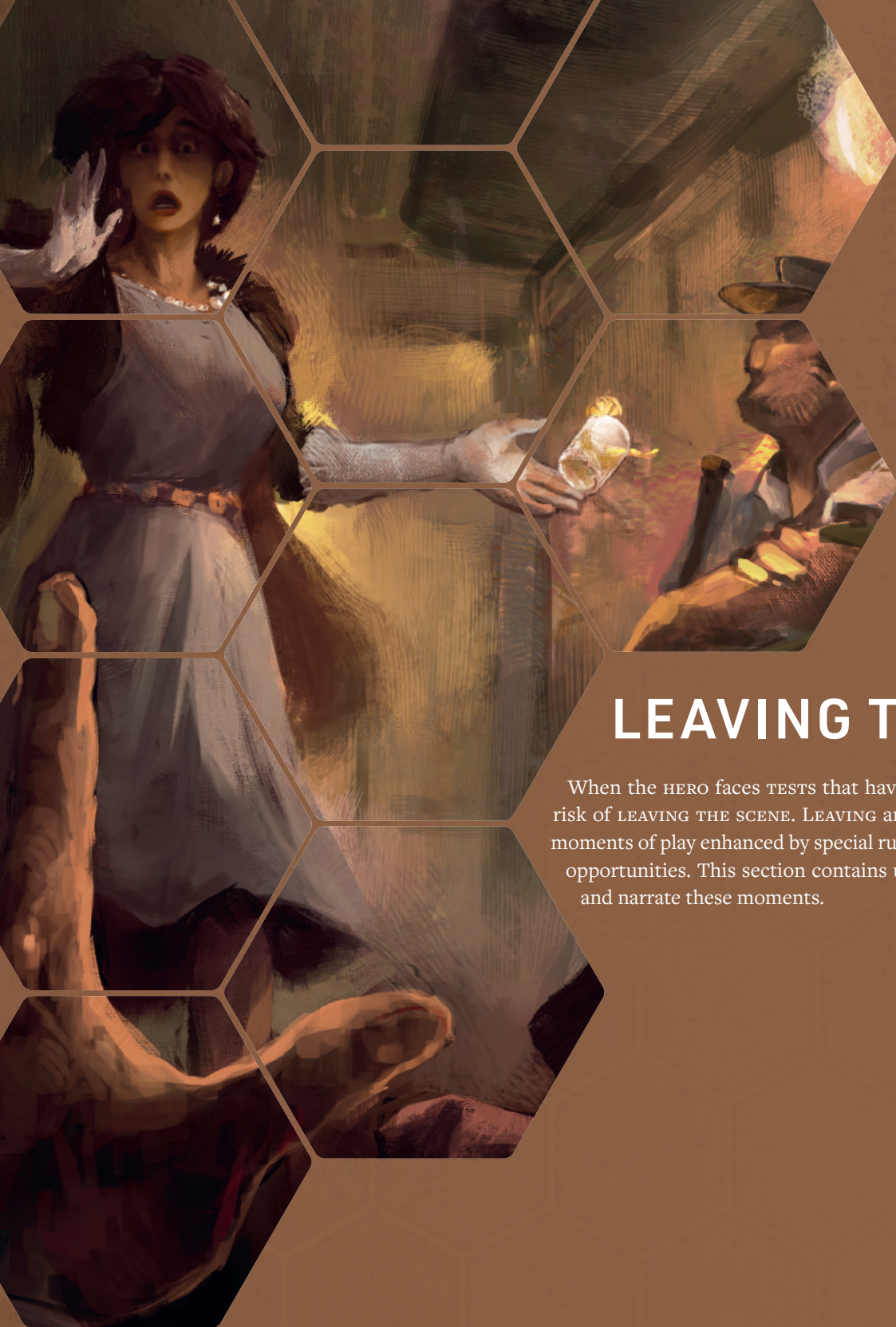
Lothar and Etienne want to find out which of them is the best archer. The NARRATOR makes both of them face a test with a DIFFICULTY of 3 to hit a target from a distance. Lothar obtains 3 SUCCESSES and Etienne obtains 2. The TEST concludes with Lothar's victory.

Lilian wants to destroy an evil artefact before Lothar can bend it to his will and absorb its power. Lilian and Lothar face the TESTS separately, but in game terms they do so at the same time. Lilian DRAWS 3 ○ and spends all of them on the outcome of the TEST, while Lothar DRAWS 2 ○ and knowing that he cannot match Lilian's result, decides to spend 1 ○ to improve one of the TRAITS that he has put in play.

Lothar wants to attack Etienne. Roberto declares that Lothar is coming at him armed with sword and dagger. Fabio states that Etienne is defending himself by trying to deflect his attacks using his axe and pushing him back.

Lothar adds 2 ○ for *Bounty hunter* and *Veteran*, while Etienne adds 2 ● for his traits: *Powerful* and *Axe*.

Roberto draws 2 ◎ and successfully obtains 1 ○ and 1 ●. Both Etienne and Lothar suffer a MISFORTUNE.



LEAVING THE SCENE

When the HERO faces TESTS that have a DANGER value, they run the risk of LEAVING THE SCENE. LEAVING and RETURNING to the scene are moments of play enhanced by special rules that highlight their narrative opportunities. This section contains useful insights into how to play and narrate these moments.

WHEN TO LEAVE THE SCENE

The HERO LEAVES THE SCENE if the PLAYER DRAWS a number of ● equal to or greater than the DANGER of the TEST. If a TEST has a DANGER value, the NARRATOR must explicitly state this before the player DRAWS.

Normally LEAVING THE SCENE implies that something bad has happened to your HERO, but what actually happened depends on the game situation, the elements involved and what you were trying to achieve.

HOW TO LEAVE THE SCENE

When the HERO LEAVES THE SCENE, the PLAYER must discard a number of ● equal to the DANGER of the TEST. The NARRATOR will use them to recount how the HERO has LEFT THE SCENE and to subject them to a MISFORTUNE related to what has just happened.

After discarding the ● that will make them LEAVE THE SCENE, the PLAYER spends all the remaining ◎ as they wish to describe the outcome of the TEST. The PLAYER and NARRATOR will often find themselves working together to agree on a narrative of how things turned out.

IF I LEAVE THE SCENE HAVE I FAILED THE TEST?

Not necessarily. Like every other TEST, its outcome depends on the ◎ you have DRAWN. If you have DRAWN at least 1 ○ it means that the HERO has succeeded, but at the same time something has happened that has made them LEAVE THE SCENE.

After countless adventures, Etienne has found his wife's murderer. Facing his enemy is FAIRLY DANGEROUS, which means that Etienne must LEAVE THE SCENE if he draws 3 or more ●.

Etienne, mad with rage, attacks him head-on, risking everything and DRAWING 5 ◎. The result of the TEST is 1 ○ and 4 ●.

He immediately discards 3 ● and spends the ○ to succeed in the TEST and the remaining ● to complicate the SCENE. Etienne strikes the assassin, but ends up on the ground from an impact blow that subjects him to a MISFORTUNE from 3 ●, *Head injury*.

Additionally, the NARRATOR spends the ● that he has been handed and recounts how Etienne, half-conscious, senses that the killer appears to be faintly moving. He seems not to be dead yet.

Etienne is confusedly aware that his wife's murderer is creeping away from him. The bastard is still alive and Etienne is not willing to let him escape. Etienne summons up all his remaining energy and tries to RETURN TO THE SCENE. Etienne is practically unconscious and will have to use his willpower to return to consciousness. The TEST is *very difficult* (5 ●) and Etienne can put *Revenant*, *Relentless* and *Those murderous bastards* (3 ○) in play. Fabio recounts how his wife's *Wedding ring* sparkles in his peripheral vision. The NARRATOR appreciates this and decides to lower the difficulty of the TEST to 4 ●. Fabio adds 3 ○ and 4 ● to the BAG and decides to DRAW 4 ●. Unfortunately he DRAWS 4 ●, so Etienne cannot RETURN TO THE SCENE and must spend the DRAWN ● complicating the SCENE or being subjected to MISFORTUNES, ADRENALINE OR CONFUSION.

If Etienne had LEFT THE SCENE because he had been kicked out of a bookstore after snooping around in a forbidden area, waiting for the SCENE to end would have been enough in order to RETURN TO THE SCENE without the need to face TESTS.

HOW TO RETURN TO THE SCENE

A player whose HERO has LEFT THE SCENE has two options: to skip their TURN and wait for the situation to improve or to try to RETURN TO THE SCENE, which may require them to face a TEST.

HOW SHOULD I FACE A TEST TO RETURN TO THE SCENE?

When you try to RETURN TO THE SCENE by facing a TEST, you can put TRAITS in play by describing what you are doing in practice and how you are drawing on your inner strength, harnessing what spurs you on.

The TEST takes place normally, but its purpose is always to RETURN TO THE GAME and every TEST to return to the scene never involves DANGER. As with every other TEST, DRAWING 1 ○ is enough to succeed and not drawing any is tantamount to remaining out of the scene.

IS IT ALWAYS NECESSARY TO FACE A TEST IN ORDER TO RETURN TO THE SCENE?

As with every other TEST, if there is no DIFFICULTY involved in RETURNING TO THE SCENE or no possibility of the situation getting worse in any way, facing a TEST is completely unnecessary and risks creating situations in which the PLAYER and NARRATOR find it difficult to spend the DRAWN ●. You have to face a TEST in cases in which the HERO has a real possibility of not being able to RETURN TO THE SCENE or when facing the TEST could worsen the HERO's condition or the situation of those around them.

WHEN IS IT DIFFICULT TO RETURN TO THE SCENE?

The DIFFICULTY of the TEST TO RETURN TO THE SCENE depends on the situation that you find yourself in and what you are trying to do. Remember to consider the MISFORTUNES afflicting the HERO when you face a TEST TO RETURN TO THE SCENE.

CAN I HELP A HERO RETURN TO THE SCENE?

If you use your TURN to help an ally who has LEFT THE SCENE to return, you can face a GROUP TEST alongside them. The choice of which HERO leads the TEST depends on what is described in the game; it could be the HERO who has LEFT THE SCENE who faces the TEST assisted by you, or it could be the other way around.

CAN I RETURN TO THE SCENE AGAINST MY WILL?

Yes, a successful TEST by another PLAYER could bring your HERO back to THE SCENE even without your cooperation. However, no one can force you to keep your HERO in the STORY if you no longer intend to play them.

A HERO's ultimate destiny should lie in their hands and it is up to the other PLAYERS to respect their wishes. The END of a HERO is a delicate moment in the game and should be treated in a way that respects the harmony of the table.

In the next TURN, Lilian rushes to Etienne's aid. Lilian uses her *Healer's bag* and puts the *Medicinal herbs* under Etienne's nose to restore him to consciousness with their smell. The narrator states that the test, given the RESOURCES put in play, is *normal* (3 ●).

The group decides that Lilian should face the TEST and Etienne should support her. Lilian puts *Educated*, *Heal* and *Kind* in play and Etienne helps her with *Relentless*. The BAG contains 4 ○ and 3 ●. Lilian DRAWS 4 ◎ that turn out to be 2 ○ and 2 ●. With Lilian's help, Etienne RETURNS TO THE SCENE and Lilian spends the second ○ to eliminate the *Bleeding* MISFORTUNE that Etienne gained in the previous TEST.

Lilian hands 1 ● to the NARRATOR and puts the other on ADRENALINE. Since he has helped Lilian, Etienne must immediately spend 1 ● and he asks the NARRATOR to subject him to a MISFORTUNE.

The NARRATOR recounts that the murderer has disappeared, letting the group know that finding him will be very difficult and he inflicts the *Furious* misfortune on Etienne.



EVOLVING THE HERO





HOW TO EVOLVE HEROES

This Quickstart Guide contains a very brief overview of the way in which the **HEROES** develop over the course of the **STORY**. The way **HEROES** evolve is one of the distinctive features of **NOT THE END**, to the extent that it constitutes one of its pillars and is designed to eliminate the barriers between what happens to the **HERO** and what they become.

In **NOT THE END** the **HERO** changes when they have experiences that are so significant that they mark them in some way. These moments are referred to as **CRUCIAL TESTS**. It is the **PLAYERS** who decide which **TESTS** are **CRUCIAL** for their **HEROES** and recount how facing these tests changes the heroes.

The **PLAYER** can state that any **TEST** they are facing is **CRUCIAL** for the development of their **HERO**, but must do so before knowing what its outcome will be. Only after facing it, based on how things have turned out, the **PLAYER** will decide how the **TEST** changes the **HERO** by choosing between three development methods, which are summarized on the next page.

TO EVOLVE THE HERO, THE PLAYER:

1. STATES WHAT TEST IS CRUCIAL FOR THE HERO

They may do so at any time they wish and whenever they see fit, provided it is before they DRAW. In other words, the PLAYER can decide what TESTS will change the hero, but they have to do so before learning the final outcome.

2. FACES THE TEST

The TEST is faced like all the others by following the rules of the **PLAYING THE HERO** chapter. The outcome of the TEST will provide the necessary elements to understand how the HERO changes.

3. DESCRIBES HOW THE OUTCOME CHANGES THE HERO

After facing the CRUCIAL TEST, the PLAYER can evolve the HERO in one of the following ways:

- **The HERO acquires a new TRAIT or changes an existing TRAIT**
The chosen TRAIT must be related to the outcome of the TEST. So the same crucial test could make you *Disillusioned* as a former *Idealist* and a *Pariah* as a former *People's Hero*.
- **The HERO is marked by a SCAR**
You can write a SCAR rather than a TRAIT in one of the free hexagons on the sheet. When you put a SCAR in play, you add a ● to the BAG, but you can ignore a ● that you DRAW by placing it on the SCAR, where it will remain until it is appropriate for the narration. This way you can describe how even traumatic experiences make you stronger.
- **The HERO learns a LESSON**
LESSONS are special skills that allow the HERO to spend ○ and ● in ways that would otherwise be impossible.

A dark, atmospheric illustration in a painterly style. The scene is set in a dimly lit, possibly underground or industrial environment. In the center, a large, dark wheel with a circular face and radial spokes is being pushed or pulled by a figure. To the left, a figure in a dark, hooded robe stands with their back to the viewer, looking towards the central action. To the right, two figures in detailed, dark armor with gold accents are engaged in a struggle or combat. One figure is in a dynamic, lunging pose, while the other is more stationary. The background features large, dark stone pillars and a complex structure of pipes or machinery. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, greys, and blacks, with highlights of gold and yellow light filtering through the scene, creating a sense of mystery and tension.

NARRATING STORIES



A character in a dark, tactical suit with yellow accents is shown in a dynamic pose. They are holding a large, red, ornate umbrella in their left hand and a black handgun with a red laser sight in their right hand. A long, red, glowing sword is held in their left hand, extending upwards. The character is positioned within a hexagonal frame that is part of a larger background composed of many such hexagons. The background is a dark, moody landscape with a mix of purple, blue, and orange tones, suggesting a night scene or a stylized environment. The overall aesthetic is that of a video game or a digital art piece.

THE NARRATOR'S TASKS

Unlike other games, **NOT THE END** does not burden the **NARRATOR** with the responsibility of refereeing the game or deciding what is right and wrong.

Free from any refereeing responsibilities, the **NARRATOR** can actively listen to the **PLAYERS'** input and effectively use it.

Once you've laid out the initial premise of the story, you are free to listen to your **PLAYERS'** input and to play **NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS** just like a **PLAYER**.

THE NARRATOR'S MAIN TASKS ARE:

KICKING OFF THE STORY

By starting the STORY in a rapidly evolving situation, you create favorable conditions for the HEROES to make a difference with their actions.

DESCRIBING CHARACTERS AND CHALLENGES

Rather than focusing on the HEROES' motives, the NARRATOR must concentrate on the desires and aspirations of the characters that the HEROES will meet during the STORY. The PLAYERS' TESTS will create COMPLICATIONS that naturally lead the STORY to revolve around the HEROES. The NARRATOR must focus on providing an interesting, compelling context to which they can relate.

DECIDING THE DIFFICULTY AND DANGER OF TESTS

Knowing how to choose when to ask for a TEST is one of the skills of a good NARRATOR. This chapter provides the necessary tools to determine the DIFFICULTY and DANGER of the TESTS on the spot.

RESPONDING TO OTHER PLAYERS' INPUT

Narrating a STORY in **NOT THE END** means above all letting the HEROES' actions influence the game context through the SUCCESSES and COMPLICATIONS that they generate.

HOW TO NARRATE TESTS

When the NARRATOR asks a player to face a TEST, after describing the situation as they please, they list the DIFFICULTY and possible DANGER of the test using the following formula: This TEST is DIFFICULT, corresponding to (from 1 to 6) ● SO LEAVE THE SCENE if YOU DRAW (from 1 to 4) ●

DETERMINING THE DIFFICULTY OF THE TEST

The question to answer in order to determine the DIFFICULTY of a TEST is as follows: How DIFFICULT is it to face this TEST with the RESOURCES available to the HERO?

- **Elementary:** Automatic success
- **Very easy:** 1 ●
- **Easy:** 2 ●
- **Normal:** 3 ●
- **Difficult:** 4 ●
- **Very difficult:** 5 ●
- **Almost impossible:** 6 ●
- **Impossible:** Automatic failure

When you ask yourself this question, you should exclude the HERO's abilities from the equation. The extent to which the HERO is skilled or capable will determine which and how many TRAITS they put in play, so their skills should not be considered when determining DIFFICULTY.

MISFORTUNES, which subject the HERO to the addition of 1 ● to their BAG, should be ignored along with TRAITS. In principle, you should exclude MISFORTUNES when calculating DIFFICULTY unless the condition that they contribute to illustrating dictates otherwise.

Striking a person who is walking in a square 150 feet away is an *easy* test (2 ●) with a good sniper rifle, *difficult* (4 ●) with a pistol and *almost impossible* (6 ●) with a slingshot.

If the square is crowded and you want to avoid hitting anyone who is not the target, the DIFFICULTY may increase by 1. If the target is stationary and the HERO is in a favorable position, it may decrease by 1, and so on.

For a *Surrounded* character it could be almost impossible to signal to their companion without being seen. The ● that would normally be added to the BAG may not be sufficient to represent the DIFFICULTY of their condition.

DETERMINING THE DANGER OF A TEST

The question that must be answered to determine the DANGER of a TEST is: how DANGEROUS is the TEST for the HERO's safety?

- **Not at all:** It is not possible to LEAVE THE SCENE
- **Slightly:** YOU LEAVE THE SCENE BY DRAWING 4 ●
- **Fairly:** YOU LEAVE THE SCENE BY DRAWING 3 ●
- **Very:** YOU LEAVE THE SCENE BY DRAWING 2 ●
- **Extremely:** YOU LEAVE THE SCENE BY DRAWING 1 ●

NARRATING DIFFICULTIES AND DANGERS

If you want to make the narration even more tense, use descriptions that let the PLAYER sense how difficult and DANGEROUS the situation is for the HERO in order to set the scene. In any case, be sure to explicitly state the level of DIFFICULTY and DANGER. If there is no DANGER, you must explicitly state this.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS IT APPROPRIATE TO PUT HEROES IN DIFFICULTY AND DANGER?

Do not be afraid to make HEROES face DANGEROUS situations. The rules are structured to make LEAVING THE SCENE an interesting event that provides the PLAYERS with many opportunities.

Be realistic in how you use DIFFICULTY and DANGER and do not try to be too lenient towards the PLAYERS. **NOT THE END** allows the STORY to proceed in a non-punitive way, while giving the NARRATOR the freedom to heighten the tension.

Assuming you are playing in a realistic context: Doing heraldry research on ancient texts in a dusty library is a TEST that is in no way DANGEROUS, while defusing an explosive is a very DANGEROUS test and jumping off a cliff trying to grab a rope is extremely dangerous.

In a situation like this, DRAWING some ● may result in Lothar being **Wounded** or **Surrounded**.

The **NARRATOR** acts in response to the **PLAYERS'** actions. Complicating the **SCENE** allows you to let your opponents take the initiative and liven up the situation.

- A secret weapon, an important ally
- A secret ability, an innate talent
- Reinforcements, an old enemy
- A bomb, an alarm, an ultimatum
- Poisonous gas, a sandstorm
- The ceiling collapses, a door shuts
- Someone to defend, a betrayal
- A snag, a favor called in
- A secret revealed, a weakness exposed
- An ally has been kidnapped

A **HERO** has taken out a bad guy and during the **TEST** the **PLAYER** has **DRAWN 1 ●** and spends it as a **COMPLICATION**. The **NARRATOR** wanted to include a criminal gang in the **STORY** and uses the **COMPLICATION** as an excuse to do so: there is a tattoo on the thug's neck that is well known to the **HEROES**, revealing that it is one of **Caio's** men, probably recently arrived in the town.

NARRATING COMPLICATIONS

Every time a **PLAYER hands them some ●, the **NARRATOR** describes a **COMPLICATION** within the **SCENE** or **STORY**.**

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMPLICATIONS

Every time a **PLAYER** asks you to complicate a **SCENE**, they are giving you a great gift. First consider what elements you already have and then ask yourself what you could add. Here are some examples:

- An adversary has an ace up their sleeve
- Someone or something is more dangerous than expected
- A new threat arrives on the **SCENE**
- A countdown is triggered
- The context is, or will be, more hostile than expected
- The **HEROES** are divided
- An unexpected variable is put in play
- Something else requires the **HEROES'** attention
- The enemy discovers something
- Bad news arrives

COMPLICATIONS do not have to affect one **HERO** in particular. The effects must embrace the whole **SCENE** or **STORY** and make it more interesting and exciting for everyone. When you consider it necessary, raise the **DANGER** of the **TESTS** faced in the **SCENE** to give the **PLAYERS** a sense of the significance of what has just happened.

Another way to use **COMPLICATIONS** is to insert elements of the **STORY** that were not known to the **PLAYERS** until that moment, but which as the **NARRATOR** you knew would appear sooner or later as an integral part of the plot.

NARRATING MISFORTUNES

Every time a **PLAYER** places the ● on a **MISFORTUNE** space, the **NARRATOR** recounts something bad that happens to the **HERO**.

MISFORTUNES are a tool to make **PLAYERS** reflect about their **HERO**'s situation. A MISFORTUNE is not a punishment, but the element that creates a link between the potential **SUCCESS** of a **TEST** and the consequence that the **HERO** suffers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MISFORTUNES

Feel free to experiment and imagine not only what could happen to the **HERO** in relation to the test they have faced, but also what could happen to them given the context and situation in which they find themselves. Here are some examples:

- Limits the **HERO**'s ability to act
- Affects the **HERO**'s emotional sphere
- Affects the **HERO**'s social sphere
- Affects the **HERO**'s self-perception
- Affects the **HERO**'s physical condition
- Limits the time available to the **HERO**
- Limits the resources available to the **HERO**
- Puts a constraint on the **HERO**
- Insinuates a doubt in the **HERO**'s mind

Remember that MISFORTUNES must always be temporary effects. Their severity depends on the **SETTING** in which the **STORY** is taking place. The presence of magic or the level of technology heavily influences what is possible or impossible, and MISFORTUNES should correspond to the tone of the **SETTING**.

Striking a swordsman without him having a chance to react will engage the **PLAYERS** less than striking a swordsman who during the **SCENE** has **Wounded**, **Humiliated** and **Disarmed** them. Similarly, being **Shocked** by a newly discovered piece of information will give the **PLAYER** a clear perception of how important this information is.

- Broken arm, blurred vision
- Despondent, embarrassed, angry
- Spurned, outcast, humiliated
- Sense of guilt, crisis of faith
- Frozen, hungry, sleep-deprived
- Hours are numbered, compromised, hunted
- Unarmed, robbed, unkempt
- Blackmailed, cursed, poisoned
- Paranoid, suspicious, edgy

In a science fiction context a **Broken arm** is a MISFORTUNE that can be easily remedied, while in the Late Middle Ages it is something much more serious.

Melchor is a combat android. His muscles glisten under his subdermal armor and a single-edged katana gleams in his hand.

Facing Melchor is *difficult* (4 ●) and *very dangerous* (you LEAVE THE SCENE if you DRAW 2 ●)

Melchor is IMPOSSIBLE to bribe, but persuading him using logic is *easy* (2 ●) and *not at all dangerous*.

Melchor is lethal in close combat and can also control buildings' safety and critical support systems (doors, ventilation, etc.).

Melchor's consciousness consists of the digitalized memories of the father of Markus Finnigan, the engineer responsible for the project that created him. Melchor's prime directive is to protect Cronotech's mainframe, but awakening Markus's father's memories could awaken his latent consciousness. Extremely high voltages slow Melchor down, overloading his systems, but also making him mad with rage.

HOW TO DESCRIBE A CHALLENGE

The NARRATOR answers a list of questions, further elaborating at will on the information they deem appropriate to effectively describe the CHALLENGE.

- 1. What is their name? Who or what are they? What do they look like?**
These questions are used to create a concise description of the CHALLENGE.
- 2. In general, how DIFFICULT and DANGEROUS are they to deal with?**
Attribute a DIFFICULTY and a general DANGER to the CHALLENGE, which can be applied to most TESTS
- 3. What are the main exceptions to the previous question?**
List the main TESTS that characterize the strengths and weaknesses of the CHALLENGE
- 4. What MISFORTUNES and COMPLICATIONS is the challenge most likely to cause?**
Briefly list the main misfortunes and complications related to the challenge so that you can quickly access them as a reference during the narration
- 5. Choose from these follow-up questions:**
What are their secrets?
What are their weaknesses?
What is their raison d'être?
Who knows everything about them?
Where are they found?
What is their story?
What are their origins?
What moments have defined who they are?
What do they hold dear?
Who would do anything for their sake / for their ruin?

WHEN AND TO WHAT EXTENT IT IS APPROPRIATE TO PROVIDE DETAILS OF A CHALLENGE

Provide details of CHALLENGES to the extent that you and the other PLAYERS consider them interesting or important for the STORY. You can also offer only partial details of the CHALLENGES, answering just some questions and not answering the following ones. The questions are listed in order of importance, so if you only want to answer some of them, then you should choose the first ones.

WHAT TYPE OF CHALLENGES CAN I DESCRIBE?

You can describe any kind of CHALLENGE! Supporting questions are formulated to serve as a prompt for any kind of subject, whether it be an individual, a group, a place, a situation, a faction, an object, etc.

HOW DO I USE THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CHALLENGE?

Make sure that what you write when providing details of a CHALLENGE acts as a support without overly constraining you. The answer to the first question is the most important because it gives you a general idea of how to improvise the DIFFICULTY and DANGER of any test concerning the CHALLENGE.

All subsequent questions are prompts, but should never hold back the narrative. The TESTS, like the resulting MISFORTUNES and COMPLICATIONS, depend as much on the CHALLENGE as on the context in which they take place and on the SCENE.

HOW DO I DETERMINE DIFFICULTY AND DANGER?

Consider the narrative context in which the CHALLENGE is taking place. The same subject could vary in DIFFICULTY and DANGER in different narrative strands. When you provide details of a CHALLENGE, always consider the type of STORY that you are weaving.

There will just be a single description of all the Baron's guards, but if one of them becomes relevant to the STORY during the narration then you can elaborate further.

In terms of gameplay, there is no difference between describing a swordsman, dungeon or military vehicle. You can use the same creation rules to describe any subject that the PLAYERS interact with.

A pack of wolves is a tough challenge for peasants in the late Middle Ages, while it is merely a nuisance for the demigods of ancient Greece.

PACING THE SESSIONS

The final fight between a HERO and his sworn enemy could last much longer than a montage in which the HERO forces his way through the enemy ranks, mowing down dozens of soldiers who are nothing more than extras.

During the STORY a deadly duel could last a few seconds, while a journey from one city to another might take several weeks. Yet both SCENES could take up the same amount of time at the game table.

A journey to a faraway region could be a minor transitional phase, but it could also be full of dangers and significant events. Depending on how much importance you want to give to the SCENE, the HEROES have to obtain a different number of significant SUCCESSES to achieve their goal.

As in a film, every SESSION consists of a series of SCENES in which the HEROES attempt to pursue one or more GOALS. Each SCENE can obviously include a different number of subjects or places that the HEROES must deal with or visit, and can last for a varying length of time. A SCENE's duration does not depend on the number of elements that it includes, but on the importance that it has within the STORY and on how entertaining and interesting it is.

The NARRATOR must develop a sensitivity to the importance of a SCENE to ensure that it is allocated the right space in a STORY. There is no point in forcing PLAYERS to devote hours of time to trivial goals, only to hastily conclude crucial or particularly interesting moments of the game. To manage the length of the SESSION, the NARRATOR has GOALS at their disposal, namely achievements that are important for the STORY, to which they can attribute varying degrees of DEPTH.

WHAT IS A GOAL AND WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

When the NARRATOR decides to create space for a particular moment in the game, they declare a GOAL to the PLAYERS. A GOAL is a target that the HEROES have to work towards. A GOAL may relate to a SCENE, a CHALLENGE or more generally a game situation.

A PLAYER may declare an intention which in the NARRATOR's view constitutes a GOAL, or the NARRATOR can define a GOAL in order to place the right emphasis on the situation that the HEROES are experiencing.

The GOALS should not be understood as vague or long-term intentions, but should always be related to the moments of play that the HEROES experience during the SESSION. You can assign a DEPTH to each GOAL, which will determine the number of SUCCESSES that the HEROES must achieve to reach it.

The greater the DEPTH of a GOAL, the greater the number of TESTS required to reach it and the more time you dedicate to it during the SESSION.

ASSIGNING DEPTH TO GOALS

When the NARRATOR describes a GOAL, they decide and state the DEPTH to the PLAYERS. The greater the DEPTH of a GOAL, the greater the number of SUCCESSES needed to reach it.

To choose the depth of a goal, base it on the game context and on the space that you want to devote to the goal during the SESSION

- Low depth: from 1 to 3 SUCCESSES, the GOAL will be reached in 1 or 2 TESTS
- MEDIUM depth: from 4 to 6 SUCCESSES, the GOAL will be reached in 2 to 5 TESTS
- High depth: from 6 to 9 SUCCESSES, the GOAL will be reached in 5 to 8 TESTS

If you prefer not to purely rely on your sensitivity to determine the DEPTH of a GOAL, you can check for certain indicators that could influence it.

- Hostile environment: +1 SUCCESS
- Unexpected situation: +1 SUCCESS
- Important CHALLENGE in a SCENE: +1 SUCCESS
- High stakes for the STORY: +1 SUCCESS
- High stakes for the HEROES: +1 SUCCESS

HOW CAN I KEEP TRACK OF THE RESULTS?

When you state a GOAL, write down the number of SUCCESSES necessary to achieve it, and every time the PLAYERS achieve a SUCCESS that you consider relevant write it in your notes. When the number of SUCCESSES achieved is equal to those requested, describe how the HEROES achieve the GOAL. The more HEROES face TESTS used to achieve a GOAL, the less they accumulate COMPLICATIONS that place them in difficulty or risk making them LEAVE THE SCENE.

The HEROES have decided to wade through some dangerous swamps that will lead them closer to the Baron's prisons unseen. During the journey they are surrounded by a group of ex-convicts who intend to rob them.

The NARRATOR wants to ensure that the scene with the ex-convicts does not take up too much time and decides on a GOAL with a low DEPTH (2 SUCCESSES). Given the hostile environment and unexpected situation they choose to mark 4 SUCCESSES as the resolution threshold. SUCCESSES that are significant to the GOAL could include:

- Climbing a tree and gaining an advantageous position with the bow;
- Injuring, killing, or terrorizing the bandits;
- Making a deal with the ex-convicts in order to be guided to the prisons.

When the HEROES achieve 4 SUCCESSES relevant to the GOAL, the NARRATOR will recount how the bandits disperse, are defeated or help the group.

If the group later attempts to break into the prisons, SUCCESSES to count could include locating a disused entrance, bribing guards or sneaking behind them undetected.

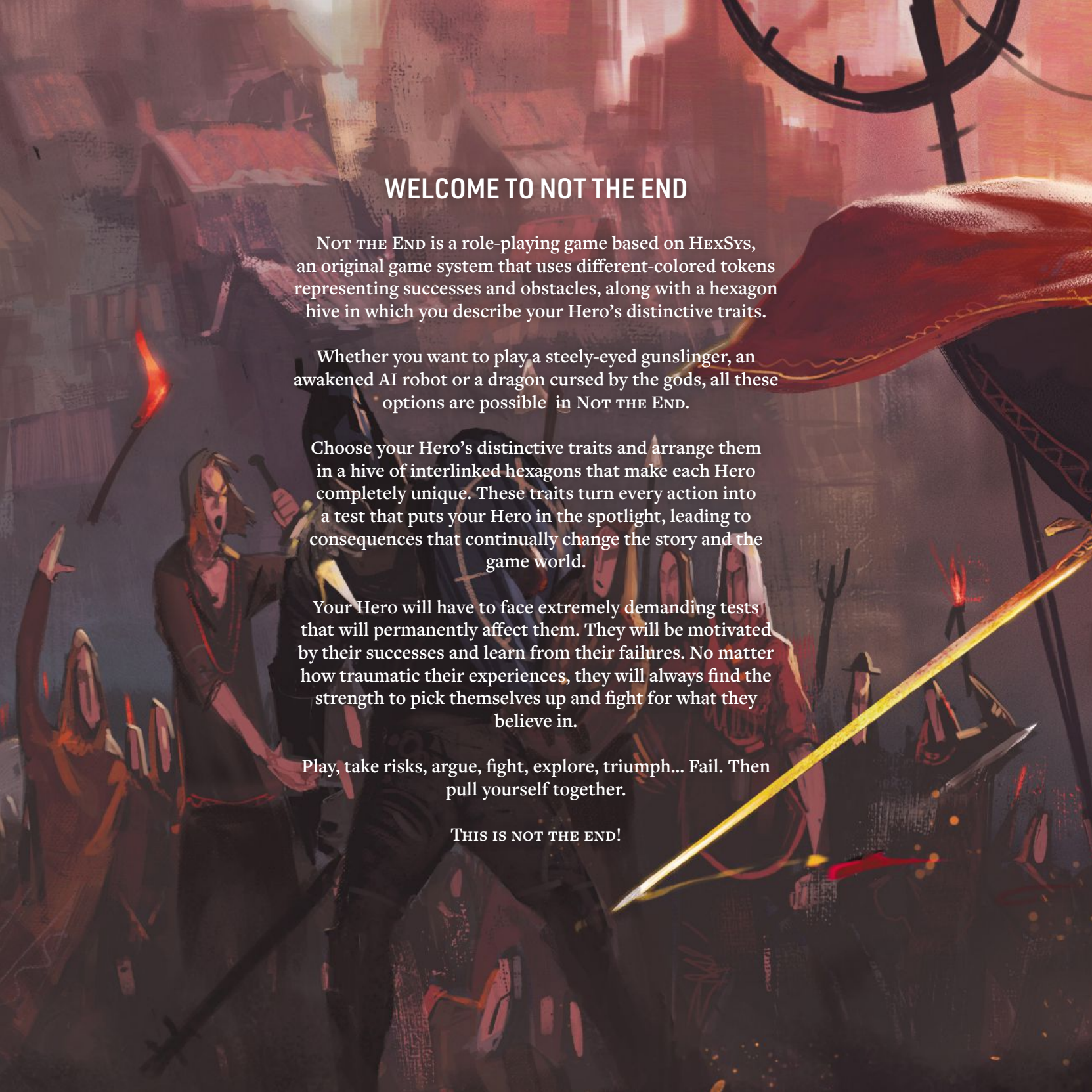




THIS IS NOT THE END!

We hope you enjoyed this Quickstart Guide! The full **NOT THE END** manual contains:

- Over 240 pages of content, examples and game insights
- In-depth examples and alternative rules for creating **HEROES** and choosing **TRAITS**
- An entire chapter dedicated to the **HEROES' DEVELOPMENT**, which includes examples, detailed explanations, 54 **LESSON** cards and alternative ways of growing
- A chapter dedicated to the **NARRATOR** with tips on how to tell **STORIES**, conduct **SCENES** and make **CHALLENGES** and **CONFLICTS** even more interesting
- A chapter dedicated to **SETTINGS** with 5 **SETTING** examples that include lists of **TRAITS**, examples of **HEROES** and a long list of **CHALLENGES** to inspire you

The background is a dark, atmospheric illustration. In the foreground on the right, a large, red, textured umbrella is partially visible. A bright, glowing yellow sword with a red hilt extends diagonally from the bottom right towards the center. In the background, there are silhouettes of buildings and figures. One figure on the left is holding a torch. The overall color palette is dark with reds, yellows, and oranges, creating a moody and intense atmosphere.

WELCOME TO NOT THE END

NOT THE END is a role-playing game based on HexSys, an original game system that uses different-colored tokens representing successes and obstacles, along with a hexagon hive in which you describe your Hero's distinctive traits.

Whether you want to play a steely-eyed gunslinger, an awakened AI robot or a dragon cursed by the gods, all these options are possible in NOT THE END.

Choose your Hero's distinctive traits and arrange them in a hive of interlinked hexagons that make each Hero completely unique. These traits turn every action into a test that puts your Hero in the spotlight, leading to consequences that continually change the story and the game world.

Your Hero will have to face extremely demanding tests that will permanently affect them. They will be motivated by their successes and learn from their failures. No matter how traumatic their experiences, they will always find the strength to pick themselves up and fight for what they believe in.

Play, take risks, argue, fight, explore, triumph... Fail. Then pull yourself together.

THIS IS NOT THE END!