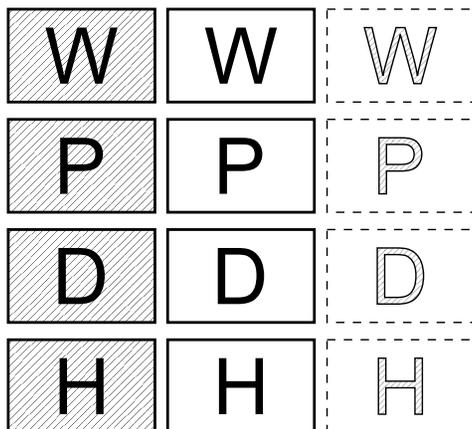


CARD LAYOUT



The leftmost column decides the overall situation; the second column establishes details. All other columns are discarded.

EXAMPLE WORLDS

Space, Western, Cruel, Fluffy, Demanding, School, Kingdom, Spy, Ocean, Underworld, Polite, Dark

EXAMPLE PLACES

Dungeon, Jail, Office, Watery, Basement, Cave, Roof, Past, Heaven, Television, Coma, Well, Standoff

EXAMPLE DOOMS

Execution, Sorrow, Pain, Monsters, Explosion, Shame, Systematic, Dragon, Terror, Ridiculous, Pathetic

EXAMPLE HOPES

Secret, Cavalry, Telephone, Forgiveness, Surprise, Delay, Tunnel, Dawn, Cure, Death, Mistake, Rain

EXAMPLE PERSONALITIES

Tricky, Mean, Kind, Intrepid, Stout, Dark, Psychopath, Soldier, Wife, Child, Chef, Dishonest, Creative, Nihilist

EXAMPLE GOALS

Fame, Nookie, Riches, Safety, Peace, Children, Dinner, Home, Power, Coffee, Fun, Adventure, Death

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Scene: A Crowded Tree in a Ninja Forest, awaiting a Vengeful Bear with Hope of Hungry Cavalry. The Storyteller is a Bloodthirsty Chef.

STORYTELLER: What you have to understand is that as culinary skill increases, tastes grow... more exotic.

CHARACTER A: Do we *have* to understand?

STORYTELLER: Only if you want to truly comprehend fine dining. Every great chef must, at one point, go in search of their own meat.

ADVERSARY: But did you even have the skills to hunt?

STORYTELLER: I knew I would either flourish in the moment or quickly be bested by my prey.

They roll. The Adversary gets a total of 4 and the Storyteller gets a total of 15. The Storyteller wins and passes the Adversary a die, and the role of Adversary passes to the left.

STORYTELLER: Luckily, in the woods I felt my culinary instincts adapting. The freezer made me sturdy. Chopping made me strong. Boiling made me...

CHARACTER B: Okay! We get it! Get on with it!

STORYTELLER: Fine! Far be it for me to keep a diner waiting. Deep in the woods I saw my target: a huge grizzly bear. I took out my Santoku and stalked up behind him through the underbrush.

ADVERSARY: But don't bears have acute senses? How could you sneak up on them?

STORYTELLER: I knew that either my precision with a piping bag would translate into subtlety in the brush, or it would notice me and start an impossible chase.

They roll. The Adversary gets a total of 11 and the Storyteller gets a total of 8. The Adversary wins.

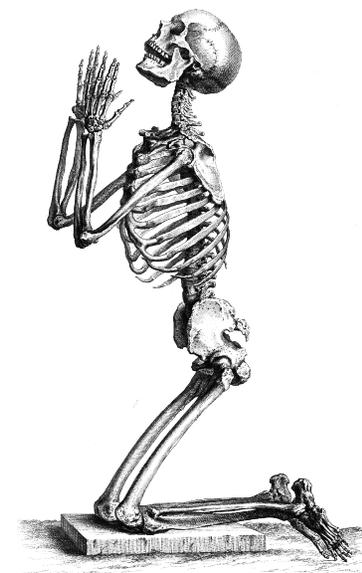
STORYTELLER: I got within fifteen feet and he reared up. He turned to look at me, charged, and I barely made it to the top of this tree without getting eaten.

Inspired by: Fiasco, Canterbury Tales, Rashomon, The Usual Suspects, Slumdog Millionaire, Spider and Web, and more.

For more from Future Proof Games, visit futureproofgames.com.

Awaiting the End

by Gregory Avery-Weir and Future Proof Games



Awaiting the End is a game about a group of people awaiting a doom in an unpleasant place. They might be prisoners awaiting their execution in prison, space travelers waiting for their oxygen to give out in a tiny escape pod, or PhD candidates waiting in a dorm cafeteria to hear why their dissertation was rejected.

To pass the time, the characters tell each the stories of how they arrived in this place, awaiting this doom.

There is some hope of escape, but it's unclear who will make it and who will fail. While the stories are being told, the other characters interrupt to ask questions and present conflicts.

After the stories are complete, one of the characters will win and escape to tell the story of what happened to everyone else.

You will need:

- three to six players (although more might work),
- a pencil and six index cards for each player, and
- seven six-sided dice for each player (or seven dice total and a way of recording die pools).

STEP 1: IN MEDIA RES

Each player labels her first four cards **World**, **Place**, **Doom**, and **Hope**. She then writes a single word on each card representing something about a World the stories could happen in, a Place where the characters could tell the stories, a Doom that could await once the stories end, and a Hope that could help prevent a Doom. These four cards don't need to be related to each other.

Shuffle the cards together and deal them out face up. Deal them out in rows according to the type of card they are, with the first card dealt of each type on the left (see diagram). You should end up with four rows of cards and the same number of columns as players.

The left two columns will decide the situation you're in. The leftmost column will decide the kind of situation, with the second column adding details.

Start with the player furthest from their inevitable death (the youngest) and proceed around the table clockwise. Each player can swap two cards in a single row. Once you're done, discard all but the two leftmost columns.

The chosen World cards establish the kind of world the stories take place in. The Place cards establish where the characters are telling the stories. The Doom cards suggest what doom awaits when the storytelling ends. The Hope cards show how the characters could hope to escape the doom.

Figure out the details of the world by discussing the chosen cards among yourselves. Remember that the leftmost card is the most important and the secondary card adds detail. Hopefully it will be clear what sort of world is being discussed.

Each player now writes a one-word **Personality** and **Goal** card. The Personality card informs what sort of person a character could be, while the Goal card represents what a character could have been trying to accomplish that landed them in this situation. The two cards don't need to be related.

Shuffle them and deal them out face up; skip a player and give the card to the next player if they've already gotten a card of that type.

Each player can now trade one of their cards with a corresponding card from another player, starting with the youngest and proceeding to the left.

STEP 2: FLASHBACKS

Describe the place and the characters among the players, speaking out of character and establishing what everything and everyone looks like. Add evidence of what the characters have been through: wounds, stains, or strange possessions. Make sure you don't explain how they got that way. That's saved for when the stories get told.

Starting with the youngest, each player takes a single turn as the **Storyteller**. They get six dice to start. The player to their left starts as the **Adversary**. The Adversary gets one die to start.

Optional Rule: *If stories are too long or too short for your group, change the number of dice. Giving the Storyteller more dice to start will make the story longer, while giving the Adversary more dice to start will increase the risk of failure. The total of the Storyteller's dice and the Adversary's dice should be an odd number.*

The Storyteller starts telling a story of how they got in the current situation, speaking as their character. Everyone except the Adversary gets to interrupt and ask questions in-character. They should ask for details when details are interesting, and hurry the Storyteller along if things get slow. The story should help flesh out the world, and stories told by different characters need not match; they might be lying or misremembering.

When the Adversary sees an opportunity for conflict, he finally speaks. He interrupts and asks, "But..." and continues with a question about how the Storyteller overcame some obstacle or conflict. The Storyteller says, "I knew I would either..." and lists two options: one that is clearly a success and continues the story, and one that is clearly a failure and would lead to the character arriving in the Place and facing the Doom.

The Storyteller and the Adversary each roll their dice pool and add up the values on their dice. The player with the highest total wins. Ties go to the Storyteller.

Interlocking Stories: *As you go around the table you may find that the stories begin to interlock, using characters and situations from other Storytellers' stories. This is to be encouraged.*

If the Storyteller wins a roll, she gives the Adversary a die and the Adversary passes her dice to the next non-Storyteller player on her left. That player becomes

the new Adversary. The Storyteller continues the story, telling of her success and moving on as described above. Play continues, rotating Adversaries, until the Storyteller fails.

At any time, a Storyteller may choose to forfeit a roll or otherwise end their story early, ending up in the Place facing the Doom. Other players may offer suggestions to the Adversary or Storyteller if they're having trouble.

If the Adversary wins a roll, the Storyteller narrates the failure and how that ended up with them in the Place. This should be a short wrap-up, no more than a few sentences. Other players are welcome to interrupt to ask questions or hurry the story along. The Adversary's dice go into the Storyteller's **Hope Pile**. The Storyteller's dice go in the collective **Doom Pile**.

Storytelling continues until all characters have failed and ended up in the Place facing their Doom. Each player should have a Hope Pile, and there should be a lot of dice in the Doom Pile.

Optional Rule: *If you want to add more risk to the game, you can allow the Storyteller to narrate an especially risky set of options in exchange for immediately moving one of the Adversary's dice to the Doom Pile. This will give the Storyteller a better chance of succeeding at that roll, but at the price of making it less likely for everyone to escape the Doom at the end.*

STEP 3: CONCLUSION

Divide the number of dice in the Doom Pile by the number of characters, rounding up. Roll that number of dice and record the total.

Each player rolls their hope pile and adds the values together to get a total. Whichever player gets the highest roll automatically escapes the Doom and gets to tell the story of the escape, speaking as her character, to a third party. This third party might be a character that was mentioned in the stories, or it might be someone else. It might not even be clear who the story is being told to.

Compare the other characters' totals to the doom total. If a character beat the doom total, he escapes the doom. If there is a tie, or the character's total is less than the doom total, he falls victim to the doom.

Characters that escape may do so through the original Hope, or they may do so through some other means. The narrating (winning) player gets to decide how each character escapes or meets her Doom.