

Mythic™

Game Master Emulator

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Introduction

Welcome to Mythic: Game Master Emulator, improvisational role-playing using your favorite role-playing games. Mythic: GM Emulator is meant for use by role-players with a little experience under their belts and their favorite game in hand. It is not a stand-alone game. For that, we have Mythic (just Mythic), which is a fully fledged, universal role-playing game. Mythic was published in early 2003 as an attempt to produce an rpg that could be played solo or with a group, minus the game master. Or, with the Game Master, but without preparation.

Judging from the enthusiastic response from those who purchased and played Mythic, the system is a success.

Mythic is really two products in one. It is a universal rpg, and a system for emulating a GM for any role-playing game. Some bought Mythic for both portions, while others use only the emulation system. Recognizing that not everyone wants the universal game sections of Mythic, we are publishing this version that contains only the emulation rules. The system presented here is slightly updated from the original version published in Mythic.

Now, on to the meat of the matter. What is GM emulation? I'm glad you asked ...

WHAT IS THIS THING ALL ABOUT?

Most RPGs operate under the principle that there are players and there is a Game Master, who is responsible for running the show. The GM prepares all the details of an adventure, and then “runs” the players through that adventure. This usually requires a great deal of preparation on the part of the GM and the handling of many details.

Mythic: GME is different in that it requires no preparation from the GM. Mythic adventures are meant to be played off the cuff, with perhaps a few minutes of brainstorming to come up with the opening scene.

Mythic can also be played entirely without a GM. The same mechanics in Mythic that allow a GM to run an adventure without preparation also allow a group of players to do without the GM.

You can think of Mythic as an artificial intelligence. It is designed to use simple rules of logic to answer any yes/no question. So, whether you are playing alone, or acting as an unprepared GM, or are a group of players without a GM, just ask your questions ... only, instead of asking a live GM, you ask Mythic.

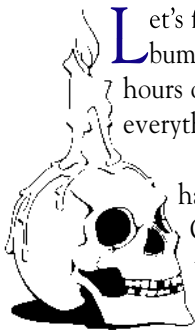
We'll get into this more in a bit. Just you wait and see.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

In each chapter you will find shaded boxes and “torn paper” boxes. The shaded boxes provide examples and clarifications, while the paper boxes offer useful rules. At the back of this book you will find a summary of most of these rules, and other bits of useful information collected for you to find easily.



Mythic Adventures



Let's face it: The life of a Game Master can be a bummer. There's the weight of responsibility, hours of preparation, and keeping track of everything. And I mean everything!

It's no mystery why most gaming groups have one poor schmuck who acts as the GM every single time. No one else wants to do it. And who would? Actually playing is so much more fun.

With Mythic, you can do away with the GM entirely, if you wish. Or, if your GM enjoys playing God, Mythic can make adventures more fun for the GM by eliminating all of that nasty preparation. In a Mythic adventure, the GM (or players sans GM) can start an evening's entertainment with about five minutes of prep time. As the adventure unfolds, the GM is just as surprised by the twists and turns as the players are.

Fun for everyone.

No GM? What you talkin' 'bout Willis!

Mythic is a gaming system that automates the functions of a living, breathing GM. It works through interpretation and logical principles. (We'll get more into that later. For now, trust me.) The upshot is, with Mythic acting as your GM, that poor schmuck can finally roll up a character and get his hands dirty. It also means you can play solo if you wish (and who hasn't wanted to do that, just once?)

How can such a system be used? Let's see ...

No GM, multiple players

Everyone whip out your character! To get an adventure going, players either roll up or decide on an opening scenario, and perhaps a few details or two, and Mythic: GME takes it from there. All action is decided through the asking of yes/no questions and the application of logical principles. By asking and answering questions, the adventure moves along, with the occasional random event throwing players a curve ball. The action is broken into scenes, just like in a movie, to keep everything straight.

No GM, one player

Mythic: GME can be used to go solo. There have been various solo systems in the past. But let's be honest, none of them are truly satisfying. How many variations of "Choose-Your-Own" can you go through before you start longing for something more? Solo play in Mythic works the same as in group play. You're just alone.

One GM, any number of players

For those who like to be a GM, we have something for you, too. The same tools that allow Mythic to automatically generate adventures on the fly without a GM also work with a GM. This means very little to zero preparation, if you don't want to prepare. Simply create an opening scenario (you can come up with that on the drive over), or roll one up, and follow Mythic as it guides you along. Mythic will throw in its own twists and turns, so the GM will be just as shocked as the players as the adventure proceeds.

This is not to say, though, that total control is taken out of the hands of the GM. The GM is free to break away from the structure that Mythic puts together. If nothing else, Mythic will generate an adventure skeleton that the GM can work with. At the most, Mythic will spin the entire adventure for the GM, whose job will be to administer the process.

Mythic with other RPGs

Mythic: GME generates dynamic, unfolding adventures on the fly. As a GM emulator, Mythic is meant to be played with other role-playing games. Mythic takes the place of the GM, but the main RPG's rules still handle character creation, combat, task resolution and everything it would normally handle. Questions that players would ask the GM are now asked to Mythic, instead.

The write stuff

Finally, Mythic: GME can be used as a writing tool. The architecture that creates dynamic adventures is really an automated story-telling system. It will work just as well without any games or formalized characters attached. Just set the scene, ask some questions, and start writing.

The Fate Chart



The Fate Chart is the heart of Mythic. Everything that happens in a Mythic adventure is resolved by forming a yes/no question. The logic of that question is then applied to the

Fate Chart, which gives a percentage probability of a “yes” answer. The results are either yes, no, exceptionally yes or exceptionally no. The players then interpret the results to fit logically into the adventure. All questions are resolved in this manner, from determining the contents of a room to finding out who the villain really is.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

All action is moved along in Mythic by asking yes/no questions. Are there monsters in the room? Is the door locked? Is it raining today?

Normally, such questions would be asked to a Game Master who is keeping track of such details. In a Mythic adventure, the GM can be replaced; the rules of Mythic are designed to answer all questions put to it and in a logical manner, as long as they are phrased as a yes/no question.

A glance at the next page will show you the Fate Chart. Along the left side are probability descriptors (impossible, likely, a sure thing, etc.) and along the bottom are “Chaos Ranks.” Chaos is tracked throughout the adventure to represent how out of control the situation is becoming. The higher the chaos, the greater your chances of a yes response to a question, which usually means more action. By referencing odds on the left with chaos along the bottom, the Fate Chart gives you the percentage chance of your question being a “yes.”

When a player asks a question, the next step is to determine what you think the odds are of that question being a yes. This is a totally subjective value, as you can see from the odds listed on the left. Your choices start in the middle at 50/50. These are good odds to pick if you really think there is a 50% chance of getting a yes, or when you have no idea of the probability. Additional choices range upward with Somewhat likely, Likely, Very likely, Near sure thing, A sure thing, and Has to be. Odds range downwards from 50/50 with Unlikely, Very unlikely, No way, and Impossible.

The descriptive nature of the odds makes it simple to determine because you can use everyday language. Are the

odds of the roulette table turning up black 50/50? Is it very likely to rain? Is there just no way that a key will be under the doormat?

You may wonder at the Impossible and Has to be odds. After all, if it’s impossible, it can’t happen, right? Not necessarily. In fictional worlds, even the seemingly impossible can occur, and the Fate Chart keeps the door open for that possibility. For instance, a character has died. Thus, the odds of the man standing at the door being that dead character are impossible. This doesn’t mean that it can’t actually happen, as the impossible happens all the time in movies and books. As far as the characters are concerned, however, it is impossible.

So, who makes the determination of the odds? If you are playing with a GM, he makes this decision. If you are not, then the group of players must come to a consensus. If you cannot decide, then the group must average their opinions and take the closest description.

A word of caution here, however: don’t take forever. Decide quickly, and move on. Go with the odds that seem right, but don’t wrack your brain too much.

For example: The players are leading their characters, a trio of old-west cowboys, through a canyon as they search for a band of escaping bank robbers. One of the players is nervous of an ambush, so he asks the question, “Are there cliffs above us where they could ambush us from?” The player who asks the question thinks the odds are very likely, while the other players think the odds are only likely. They decide, democratically, since 2 out of 3 think it’s likely, then likely will be the odds.

You have your question and you have your odds. Now it’s time to consult the Fate Chart. Cross reference the odds with the current chaos score (we’ll get into the chaos rank a little later) for your probability of a “yes” answer to the question. Roll 1D100 and compare it to this value. If you roll within the value, then the answer is “yes.” If you roll above, then the answer is “no.”

By rolling very low, or very high, you can achieve exceptional results. These are the little numbers to the left and right of the larger, percentage numbers. Rolling equal to or less than the left number is an exceptional yes, rolling equal to or higher than the right number is an exceptional no.

You’ll notice that some numbers are negative, while others go above 100. These results are virtually a guaranteed “no” or “yes.” However, you still must roll to see if an exceptional result occurs.

The Adventure

This section provides the structure for running a Mythic adventure. You've got the basics on how to ask Mythic questions and how to answer them using the Fate Chart. Now, it's time to put it all together.

The structure outlined in this chapter is designed to generate a dynamic, and improvised, adventure. These rules can be used by a game master to help come up with adventures off the cuff, offering as much surprise to the GM as to the players. Or, players can do away with the GM and use these rules to generate their own adventures.

Improvised means "free-form," right? Not necessarily. Mythic is designed to move the adventure along based on improvised ideas, but it provides a structured framework to guide and shape those ideas. This isn't "making it up as you go along" so much as hopping from one idea to the next with rules to navigate the way. The current idea is the current scene, the action of the moment. You may have some clue as to what the next idea is, but you won't know what happens for sure until you get there.

This may sound confusing right now. But it all makes sense in the end.

To start, let's take a look at how Mythic views time.

SCENES

Mythic gameplay is visualized like a movie with an adventure session broken into scenes. Just like in a movie, a scene takes place at a certain location, involving certain characters, and covers a certain segment of action. Usually unimportant stuff is left out of a scene and only the good stuff gets shown. When the action is over and the characters are ready to move on the scene ends and we proceed to the next scene.

Mythic works the same way. A scene setting is envisioned, the characters resolve conflicts within the scene then it wraps up and everyone moves on. A scene is a discrete unit of time within an adventure, but it can be of any length. The scene, in game time, can last a few minutes or many years. The important thing is that each scene must have a purpose. Perhaps the characters have come across a room while exploring a dungeon. They pause to check the room out. This is a scene. When they are done, and all actions have been resolved, the scene is over.

The simplest way to move from scene to scene is for

The End is Near ...

Below are some example scenes emphasizing where they begin and where they end. The important concept to keep in mind is that a scene begins with a setup and ends when action and conflict have been resolved.

Scene 1

Setup: A band of superheroes is breaking into the stronghold of a villain. They discovered an airduct in the previous scene. This scene begins with the heroes crawling inside, entering the building. The scene proceeds with the heroes making their way inside and searching.

Ending: Since the point of this scene is the heroes getting into the stronghold, once they've accomplished this, the scene is over. The players may stretch the scene out with some preliminary exploration of the stronghold to get some flavor for what it's like ("the halls are made of chrome and strips of light glow dimly from the ceiling"), but the next scene will likely deal with initial encounters.

Scene 2

Setup: Earlier in the adventure of a mecha/military game, the players discovered that the alien Battle Pods were staging an attack. This new scene begins with the characters jumping into their War Mechs and charging onto the battlefield. The action for this scene is straightforward: combat.

Ending: The scene ends when the battle ends. Either the aliens are beat back or the players stage a desperate retreat.

Bottom line

There are no hard and fast rules for what constitutes the beginning and ending of a scene, there are just guidelines. The scene structure is designed to help give the adventure shape. The most important rule of thumb is simply to end a scene where it seems natural, and that usually means when the main activity of the scene is concluded.