

CHANGE,

a worldbuilding game

a game about societies coming to be
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This is a game about fictional societies, the challenges they face, and the changes they undergo facing the aftermath of these challenges. This is also a game about how societies shape their surroundings, whether it be the lands they inhabit or the peoples they neighbour.

While playing, you will think up a simple idea of a fictional society, put it in a world with others like it, and have them change and interact, both inbetween and with the world they inhabit until the groups and the world are no longer all that simple. The game is not about making the stories about wars and alliances and inventions compelling – though likely will be –, nor is it about maneuvering your society into a position of power – though you can certainly try. It is much, much simpler - *see what happens*. The purpose of the game is to have an interesting and unique society at the end of play, one which has qualities that make sense, one with a history you can explain.

Please take note that this game is in playtesting stage. If you played the game or are intending to play it, please contact me at Daumantas.Lipskis [at] gmail [dot] com with any questions, comments or links to playtest reports you may have.

1. What you need to play

You will need to gather up some friends. The game is intended for three or more players, but it is perfectly possible to play with two, or even with no one but yourself to keep you company.

You will need to know that success is fickle – both for, and your rivals. You will need to enjoy turning large failures into small victories. You will sometimes need to abandon the plans you had for your group and deal with the issues that face you, and adapt to the changes that happened.

You will need dice – this game uses d10s. A single player will rarely, if ever, be rolling more than 4 of them at a time, so plan accordingly. You will need sheets of paper – as many as there are players plus one is the bare minimum. You may also use index cards instead of paper. Bring writing implements. Pencils, especially coupled with erasers, are generally better, as you will be rewriting bits and pieces of your group-sheet, but you can make due with a pen. All the paper and index cards will likely take up some space, so make sure there is a table of adequate size.

2. Core Concepts

Before going through the nitty-gritty of the mechanics, take a look at the example group-sheet at the end of this file. It is fairly simple – ten rows, three columns, and a heading each. Having a visual guide in front should help you understand the basics, and there is really no way to keep track of advanced stages of the game without it, so be sure to check back on it – or write up your own – every once in a while as you read on.

Below is a list of all relevant concepts the game employs, and any rules attached to them. The concepts are given in the order in which they are most likely to come up in a game. Concepts that are most relevant to each other are bundled together. Know that the application of some rules (specifically, adding, removing and changing Traits as a result of an Aftermath dice roll) will need judgment calls. You have a choice between winging it when you get there, and using the guidelines described further down, in the Play Process section.

Turns – play goes in turns. It does not matter much how exactly turn order is established, nor does everyone keep the same place in said order from session to session. Pick something that is intuitive for your group – something based on the order you sit at the table would be perfect. During a turn, you can undertake a single Challenge, *or* create a single Institution and attempt to attach it as a Segment onto a particular Arena, which may or may not include a Challenge.

Traits are features, both good and poor, that your group has. These can be nearly anything – items or places (Swords, Coal Mines, Hidden Lairs), proficiencies (Fire Mages, Archers, Engineers), modes of rule (Rule of the Strong, Democracy, Hive Mind), or resources (Treasure, Stones of Power, or Steel), or any other things you can think of. You will be using beneficial traits to help you in Challenges, and harmful traits will be used against you in the same Challenges. You can use as many traits during a Challenge as you wish, but the same trait may never be used twice in the same Challenge. Traits are grouped into three categories, ten items for each.

Defining traits are ones that are special to your group. They are the main source of its power, and its weaknesses. When choosing a defining trait, do not be afraid to go overboard. “Magic in the Blood”, “Immortal”, “Warlike”, “Flying” and the like are all good defining traits. There are good defining traits (marked by a ++) and bad defining traits (marked by a --). During a Challenge, you can use a good defining trait to decrease its difficulty, and a bad trait can be used by your rivals to increase it. Defining traits can be used indefinitely, but must “recharge” for a turn between uses.

Regular traits - these are tools and affinities a group gathers and will likely change around a lot. There are some guidelines for choosing regular traits depending on the situation in which they are chosen under Play Process, but generally, you should choose traits that are not obviously good or bad, but rather good or poor. Regular traits can be good (+), neutral(0), and poor(-). Good and neutral traits can be spent to decrease the difficulty of a Challenge you are facing, but go down by one rank as you do (from (+) to (0) and from (0) to (-)). Poor traits can be used at any time by anyone to increase the difficulty of a challenge, but doing so increases the trait’s quality from poor(-) to neutral(0).

Peripheral traits – these are of no direct use to your society. Swords in a society of rifles, religion in a society of atheists, warrior ethic in an age of tradesmen – these things still exist tucked away somewhere deep, but they do not play the active role they once had. You do not start with any peripheral traits, but you will gain some as your poor regular traits are pushed out of use. Peripheral traits can make a comeback to regular trait status if the corresponding (on the same row) regular trait is doing poorly. A peripheral trait increases in rank (from (-) to (0) and from (0) to (+), but no more) every time the corresponding regular trait is hit by a losing Aftermath die, and changes places with the regular trait if the regular trait is at (-) when hit by a losing Aftermath die.

Challenges – the mechanic by which things get done in the world. Its core is simple – say what you are trying to do, apply positive traits to decrease difficulty and you're your own negative traits used against you to increase difficulty, roll a d10. If your result is higher than the target number, you win the Challenge. If it is lower, you lose. The exact nature of the consequences of a win or loss is determined by rolling Aftermath dice – though these can only tell you the level of significance of the consequences, on not what they are.

Aftermath dice – these show what happens after a Challenge is failed or won. After a Challenge, roll a number of d10s (exact number depends on the type of the Challenge – see more in *Challenge Difficulties*, *Attack & Defense*, *Margin of Victory*, and *Adding and Changing Arena Segments*) and note the result of each die. There are two types of Aftermath dice – winning and losing ones. In most cases, the type is defined by whether you won or lost the preceding Challenge.

(The section below will make a lot more sense if you have a group-sheet in front of you.)

Winning Aftermath dice increase the traits they hit (from (-) to (0) and from (0) to (+)), allow you to create new good (+) regular traits if they hit an empty slot, and create new good defining traits if you roll double (you roll the same number with at least two different dice). When a winning Aftermath die hits a good (+) regular trait, the regular trait currently occupying the slot is pushed into Peripheral traits, where it retains its good (+) rating, and a new good (+) regular trait is created in the now free slot. If a peripheral trait is already present in the slot the former regular trait was pushed into, the old peripheral trait is removed from play.

Losing dice decrease the traits they hit (from (+) to (0) and from (0) to (-)), allow you to create new poor (-) regular traits if they hit an empty slot, and create new bad defining traits if you roll double. When a losing Aftermath die hits a poor (-) regular trait, the regular trait currently occupying the slot is pushed into peripheral traits, where it retains its poor (-) rating, a new neutral (0) regular trait is created in the now free slot. If a peripheral trait is already present in the slot the former regular trait was pushed into, the old peripheral trait is moved back to regular trait status at neutral (0) level, and no new trait is created. Whenever losing Aftermath dice hit a trait in the regular traits column, the rating of a corresponding peripheral trait increases (from (-) to (0) and from (0) to (+)).

Challenge Difficulty – if it is a Challenge you set yourself (do this by saying “My guys are going to...”) which you can do whenever it is your turn, the amount of Aftermath dice rolled depends on the Challenge Difficulty, and the type of the dice – winning or losing – depends on whether you win or lose the Challenge. In a self-set Challenge, you get only winning or only losing dice. In a self-set Challenge, you choose the difficulty yourself, between Easy, Medium, and Hard, or, if you are feeling particularly cocky, Impossible and higher:

- Easy – difficulty 3, [1d10] Aftermath dice.
- Medium – difficulty 7, [2d10] Aftermath dice.
- Hard – difficulty 12, [3d10] Aftermath dice.

If at any time you feel like rolling Impossible difficulties or higher, they are easy to calculate – the sequence goes 3, 3+4, 3+4+5, 3+4+5+6, and so on. For every step of increasing Difficulty you make, the Aftermath dice amount increases by +1.

Inter-Group Attack & Defense – attacking another group is simple and works much like a normal Challenge – only the difficulty is not static, but how much your opponent rolled, plus whatever changes traits induce. The attacker goes first: he describes what he is hoping to accomplish, then uses his positive traits (and the target’s negative traits) and rolls [1d10]. The defender then does likewise – describes how he is going to try to thwart the attacker’s plans, then invokes his own positive traits and the rival’s negative ones, and rolls [1d10]. Higher roll wins, ties favor the defender. Winner gets [1d10] (no more, no less) winning Aftermath dice, and also has a chance to roll some losing Aftermath dice for his opponent. The exact change the attack brings depends on the Margin of Victory – a larger Margin of Victory means the winner of a Challenge will roll a larger number of losing Aftermath dice *for the loser’s group*, meaning that it is possible for other people to decide what traits you receive if you lose an inter-group Challenge.

Margin of Victory – calculate it by comparing the attacker’s and the defender’s total results. The amount of losing Aftermath dice the winner can roll for the loser’s group increases for the following steps: [1d10] at 2, [2d10] at 5, [3d10] at 9, and so on (2, 2+3, 2+3+4, etc., [+1d10] for every step taken). No losing Aftermath dice are rolled if the Margin of Victory is less than 2.

Support – If you are not directly participating in a Challenge, you can support the side you wish to win by spending one and only one of your traits.

Example Challenges:

Bob is playing Children of the Wind, an isolated bird-like people perched high atop the highest mountains. Play has started quite recently – Bob has already spent some of his starting traits and gained some new ones.

<i>Example Group: The Children of the Wind</i>					
	<i>Defining traits</i>		<i>Regular traits</i>		<i>Peripheral traits</i>
1.	Flying++	1.	Archers0	1.	
2.	Lithe++	2.	Airships0	2.	
3.	Weaklings--	3.	Isolated-	3.	
4.		4.	Cliffside Nests+	4.	
5.		5.		5.	
6.		6.	Keen sight0	6.	
7.		7.		7.	
8.		8.		8.	
9.		9.		9.	
10.		10.		10.	

Bob decides to take on a Medium Challenge – scout out the area for sources of food and new places to live. The default Medium Difficulty is 7, but Bob chooses “Flying”, “Airships” and “Keen sight” as the traits that help him in this situation, giving his upcoming roll a boost of +3 (and effectively decreasing the Challenge difficulty to 4). The “Airships” and “Keen sight” traits are now both at poor(-) rating, whereas the Children’s “Flying” trait remains at its current state – however, Bob will not be able to invoke it next turn. Someone at the table notes that the Children of the Wind will have a hard time scouting while being isolated, and Bob frowns - while this makes the “Isolated” trait increase its rating from (-) to a more useful (0), it also increases the Challenge’s effective difficulty by +1. Bob sighs and rolls...

...a 6! That’s a win, even if by a hair. Since this was a Medium Challenge, Bob gets to roll [2d10] winning Aftermath dice, which he immediately does. He rolls a 4 and a 1. Slot 1 is occupied by a trait at neutral(0) level, so Bob simply ups its rating from Archers0 to

Archers+. Slot 4 occupied by the trait Cliffside Nests, which is currently at good(+) rating already, which means he can not just increase the rating, and will have to make up a new trait instead. Bob ponders for a bit and then declares that the new living space allow the Children to expand far and wide, which makes them Numerous+. The “Cliffside Nests” trait, keeping its good(+) rating, is pushed into the Peripheral traits column. It will not be of much use now, but if the “Numerous” trait does not live up to expectations, Cliffside Nests may just make a comeback... Had Bob’s Aftermath roll hit a free slot (5, for instance), he would have made up a new trait much like he did now, but would not have had to push a serviceable trait down into the Peripheral traits column... Here is Bob’s group-sheet after the Challenge:

<i>Example Group: The Children of the Wind</i>					
	<i>Defining traits</i>		<i>Regular traits</i>		<i>Peripheral traits</i>
1.	Flying++	1.	Archers+	1.	
2.	Lithe++	2.	Airships-	2.	
3.	Weaklings--	3.	Isolated0	3.	
4.		4.	Numerous+	4.	Cliffside Nests+
5.		5.		5.	
6.		6.	Keen sight-	6.	
7.		7.		7.	
8.		8.		8.	
9.		9.		9.	
10.		10.		10.	

But it is not over yet! Sam, Bob’s rival, is playing “The Talons” – garden variety orcs led by otherworldly demons, and they have just decided to pluck some feathers out of the Children’s plumage. They scale the mountains and slash and burn anything they can get their hands on – having Demon Overlords++ helps, as does being Warlike++, as does the opponent being a Weakling-- with his Airships and keen-sighted scouts weary and worn from use. So that’s a +5 to the Talons’ roll. Sam rolls a 9, for a total of 14 after the bonus is factored in.

Bob shakes his fist angrily at Sam and prepares a hasty retreat into the Isolated mountaintops. Archers pepper the intruding orcs and demons with arrows, while the Lithe wind-children hide in cracks and crevices within the mountain. And lets face it – when you are as Numerous as the Children are, losing a few nests to invaders is not that big a

deal. This gives Bob a bonus of +4, which is respectable, but may not be enough. Bob would love to exploit a weakness of Sam's group, but at the moment, it has none that could be applicable, so he just rolls the dice, fingers crossed for a 10.. And gets a 4, for a total of 8. So not only is it a loss – it is a loss at a margin of 6, meaning that Sam will be able to roll [2d10] losing Aftermath dice for Bob's group, as well as a [1d10] winning Aftermath die for her own.

Her winning Aftermath roll allows her to replenish one of her own traits, whereas the losing Aftermath dice for the Children of the Wind... Roll a 5 and a 5! A bad Defining trait, picked by your rival! Bob groans at the indignity, while Sam picks out "Cowards--" as the Children's new Defining trait, and then makes a few chicken noises to egg him on. Bob rolls his eyes at the pun (much like you are doing now), and begins plotting sweet, sweet revenge... Not that his current group-sheet is much to look at.

<i>Example Group: The Children of the Wind</i>					
	<i>Defining traits</i>		<i>Regular traits</i>		<i>Peripheral traits</i>
1.	Flying++	1.	Archers0	1.	
2.	Lithe++	2.	Airships0	2.	
3.	Weaklings--	3.	Isolated0	3.	
4.		4.	Numerous0	4.	Cliffside Nests+
5.	Cowards--	5.		5.	
6.		6.	Keen sight0	6.	
7.		7.		7.	
8.		8.		8.	
9.		9.		9.	
10.		10.		10.	

Arenas & Institutions – Arenas represent the high politics and “this is how we do it here” social customs of a particular region. There are no Arenas at the start of play, but you can create them at any time, provided you have any free Institutions. You can make as many Institutions per turn as you wish, but you can only use one of them for an action. You make Institutions by spending three regular traits the way you would do for a Challenge, combining them into a single entity, giving them a name and writing it down on your sheet somewhere. Institutions have power ratings – (1) if the Institution is made entirely out of regular traits, (3) if a good defining trait is used in its creation. Be wary – using a good defining trait for an Institution devotes it fully to it, meaning that the trait is downgraded to regular status immediately. An Institution’s power shows how many Segments of the Arena the Institution is in can add or change. More on Segments below.

The reason to create Arenas is because they provide a reduction in Challenge Difficulty equal to the number of Segments (both your own and those of any rivals or allies) in that particular Arena. There are a number of requirements to claim the bonus, however: the actions you are undertaking to face a Challenge must run in accordance with the Arena’s prescriptions; you must have an attached Institution (Segment) to that particular Arena; and at least one of these attached Institutions must be fictionally present for the Challenge you are undertaking. You can only invoke one Arena per Challenge.

Segments – any particular Arena is composed of these. An Arena is essentially a sentence composed of a string of pieces – namely, Segments. When a single Institution is used to create an Arena, it starts out as a single verb (i.e.: (influence), (create), (destroy), (fight), (trade), (rule), or something else of your own creation). As more Institutions (or more powerful Institutions) enter the Arena, the Arena gains more Segments and becomes more complex and specific (i.e.: (influence)(city)(by cloak and dagger); (create)(poisons)(in secret)(for trade); (destroy)(worlds)(with monsters)(for glory); or something else of your own creation). To add or change a Segment, ask a question (why? how? where? are good ones, who? or what? are generally not, as they are too specific – but feel free to experiment), provide a short answer to it, and if you win the Challenge that usually goes with such attempts, write your new Segment next to the original Arena. If you need to rearrange the order of the sentence to have it make more sense, feel free to

do so – just try to mark the order in which the additions/changes were made, as that will matter for Segment Change difficulties later on.

Know that you do not have ownership over an Arena – anyone can enter it and Add or Change Segments of it, provided they win the associated Challenges. The goal in adding and changing Segments is shaping an Arena into one that you or your allies could easily take advantage of, and your rivals could not. On the other hand, you could enter your rival's Arenas not for the purpose of wresting control over them, but rather for subverting them, ingeniously taking advantage of a bonus a rival has worked hard for and was planning to keep.

Adding and Changing Segments works in similar ways – you must have a free Institution (or a free Institution power point) and use it to beat a certain Challenge difficulty to get a new Segment. However, there are some minor differences. If you are Adding a Segment and no one counters you, you automatically succeed – however, if you are Changing a Segment, whether the Segment is your own or not, and whether everyone present in the Arena is on board with your proposed change or not, you will face a Challenge. The Challenge Difficulty calculations for Adding or Changing Segments also differ.

A thing to note is that when Adding or Changing Segments, you are influencing the Institutional balance of an Arena, and not attacking any particular rival. This means that only the player doing the Adding or Changing can use his full traits against the Arena's current setup, and everyone else is limited to Supporting (which means using one trait and one trait only) either the group or the Arena's status quo, as per their choice. As always, any and all negative traits a group has are free pickings for anyone.

Adding Segments – To make an Addition, you must have a free Institution, or free Institution power points. If you are making an Addition, there are two possibilities: everyone with a present Segment in the Arena is on board with your proposed Addition, in which case you simply go ahead and Add; or someone counters your proposed change, in which case you will have to beat a Challenge.

When facing an Adding Challenge: say what you are trying to do, apply your traits, apply the number of Segments in the Arena that are owned by people who are in favour of your proposed change, apply any Supporting dice, and roll [1d10].

The total must be higher than the Challenge difficulty, which is calculated the following way: the number of Segments owned by people who disagree with your proposed Addition, plus [1d10], plus any traits Supporters of the Arena throw in, plus the Founder's Bonus defense if he chooses to invoke it.

If you win, your proposed Addition goes through and you receive [1d10] winning Aftermath dice. If you lose, your proposed Addition does not go through, you cannot use the Institution you used for the attempted addition for at least a turn, and you must roll losing Aftermath dice based on the Margin of your Loss – calculated like the Margin of Victory, only not in your favour. Margin of Loss-induced dice allow the loser himself to pick any traits if necessary.

Changing Segments – To make a Change, you must have a free Institution, or free Institution power points. If you are making a Change, there is only one possibility – you will have to beat a Challenge.

Say what you are trying to do, apply your traits, apply the number of Segments in the Arena that are owned by people who are in favour of your proposed change, apply any Supporting dice, and roll [1d10].

The total must be higher than the Challenge difficulty, which is calculated in the following way: the *total* number of Segments in the Arena, plus the number of Segments owned by people who disagree with your proposed Addition, plus [1d10], plus any traits Supporters of the Arena throw in, plus the Founder's Bonus defense if he chooses to invoke it.

If you win, your proposed Change goes through, you receive [1d10] winning Aftermath dice, and the Institution or Institution power point that used to occupy the particular Segment is freed up for future use – however, it must spend at least one turn recuperating. If you lose, your proposed Change does not go through, you cannot use the Institution you used for the attempted addition for at least a turn, and you must roll losing Aftermath dice based on the Margin of your Loss – calculated like the Margin of Victory, only not in your favour. Margin of Loss-induced dice allow the loser himself to pick any traits if necessary.

Founder's Bonus – received by whoever is the first to create an Arena. Can only be used in Defense of that particular Arena, and only against any proposed Additions or Changes the founder disagrees with. The Founder's Bonus starts at 5 and decreases by 1 every time it is used. If the starting "(verb)" Segment of an Arena is successfully Changed to something else, the Founder's Bonus is lost immediately, and is not re-gained by anyone else.

Using Institutions of power (3) – Once an Institution is entered into any Arena, it can not be used for any other Arena, ever, and this includes Institutions of power (3) in their totality. This means that you can not use a single power point to create a Segment in one Arena, and another power point for a Segment in a completely different Arena. You can use as many power points of a single Institution in a turn as you wish. You face only one Challenge when performing multiple Additions or Changes with a single Institution during a single turn, but always the most difficult Challenge possible – most of the time, this means the Change Challenge must be faced when attempting to both Add and Change Segments.

Example Arena-building:

Bob decides to get even with Sam, and starts working on creating an Arena to help with that. All of the traits he has are currently at (0). He spends three of them – Archers, Airships and Numerous, and the ratings of these three traits decrease to (-). He decides to name his new Institution "Clouds of Arrows", and immediately uses it to open a new arena, (fight). Since the Arena did not exist beforehand, no one is able to challenge this, so Bob's attempt automatically succeeds. He also gets [1d10] winning Aftermath dice, which he rolls and gets a new trait, Rock Bombardiers+, in slot 7 of the regular traits column.

However, Sam's group sees the new Arena as more of an opportunity than a threat. Sam uses three traits, one of which is a defining one – "Demon Overlords", with "Spirit trip" and "Grotesque" being the other two, to create "The Nightmares", an Institution that favours entering the dreams of their foes and choking their spirits rather than fighting them head on. This makes "Demon Overlords" into a regular trait at (+), so Sam moves it to a slot of her choice in the regular traits column. This also gives the Talons an

Institution of power (3), which would allow them to add three whole Segments into the (fight) Arena if they succeed the Challenge that will come with Bob inevitably countering Sam's proposed Addition.

Sam says what she will be attempting to Add to the Arena – (fight)(offensively)(in dreams)(for torture). Sam does not yet have any Segments in the Arena, so all she can use to decrease the difficulty is traits - she spends three of them to decrease the Difficulty, and rolls 10, for a total of 13.

The initial difficulty of this Challenge is 1, for the (fight) Segment Bob has. Bob also chooses to use his Founder's bonus. The Founder's bonus, which can only be used defensively, decreases every time it is used, so Bob will not be able to keep on doing this for long. Still, it is currently at a respectable 5, with a total of 6 Difficulty even before the Arena's roll. Bob could have spent a single trait to support the Arena, but he is strapped for traits already and hopes that the Founder's bonus will be enough. The Arena roll is a 5, for a total of 11. Therefore, Sam wins and gets a [1d10] winning Aftermath die which allows her to create a new trait, but most importantly – her proposed Additions go through, and the Arena is now (fight)(offensively)(in dreams)(for torture).

But Bob is not about to give up. He combines what traits he has to spare – Rock Bombardiers, Keen Sight, and Isolated, to create “The Secluded Missiles” – an Institution operating from the relative safety of the top of the mountain, devoted solely to maintaining never ending bombing raids. Bob declares that he is going to bomb the hell out of any Nightmares that try to touch his people, which in mechanical terms means he will be attempting to Change a Segment – from (in dreams) to (from the air).

Bob does not have many bonuses to help with this, but he believes he is due for a good roll, and even if not, any losing Aftermath dice might create new traits, which, while a burden in the short term, might become a boon in the long. Bob has one Segment, the initial (fight), in the Arena, and uses his Flying trait to help. Bob rolls, and receives a 9. 11 total!

Changing Segments is difficult, however. There are four total Segments in the Arena, three of them owned by Sam. Sam chooses not to throw in a Support trait, but rather to use the Children's defining trait, Cowardice, for an extra malus and a total difficulty of 8. The Arena roll is a measly 2, meaning a total of 10. The Children of the Wind win!

Bob rolls a [1d10] winning Aftermath die, and gets a new trait – Cocky(+) in slot ten. It is Sam's turn to roll her eyes, but she is worried. For the first time in a while, Bob has the advantage. Sam has spent most of her traits on the attacks, and can not create any new Institution, and the one she does have is down for the turn. There is no plausible way she could take advantage of the Arena's bonus now, whereas Bob can and most likely will, as you can tell from the grin on his face.

Removing bad Defining Traits & Chaos dice – Sometimes, you will be stuck with bad Defining Traits (--) you strongly dislike. There is a way to get rid of them, but it is rather unsavory. Declare a Hard Challenge and say what exactly you are trying to do to get rid of the trait in question. If you win the Challenge, the bad Defining Trait (--) becomes a poor (-) Peripheral trait – move the trait to a slot in the Peripheral traits column of your choice. If you lose the Challenge, the trait stays. Irregardless of whether you win or lose, you will have to roll Chaos dice – getting rid of a defining feature of a society causes all kinds of stress and havoc.

Chaos dice – roll [4d10] losing Aftermath dice on the regular traits column, note the changes. Afterwards, roll [4d10] losing Aftermath dice on the peripheral traits column. This is the only time you will ever be rolling on the peripheral traits column. Any trait that is hit decreases in rating (from (+) to (0) and from (0) to (-)). Any poor (-) peripheral traits hit by a losing Aftermath die disappear forever, and a new poor (-) trait is placed in the same slot.. If an empty slot is hit, create new traits at poor (-) rating. Any doubles (and higher) that are rolled for either the regular or peripheral traits column are ignored and treated as a single number.

Chaos dice Example:

<i>Example Group: The Children of the Wind</i>					
	<i>Defining traits</i>		<i>Regular traits</i>		<i>Peripheral traits</i>
1.	Flying++	1.	Archers-	1.	
2.	Lithe++	2.	Airships-	2.	
3.	Weaklings--	3.	Isolated-	3.	
4.		4.	Numerous-	4.	Cliffside Nests+
5.	Cowards--	5.		5.	
6.		6.	Keen sight-	6.	
7.		7.	Rock bombardiers0	7.	
8.		8.		8.	
9.		9.		9.	
10.		10.	Cocky+	10.	

Above is Bob's group-sheet after last turn. Sam chose to do something that did not affect Bob for a change, so he is now free to do what he will. And what he will do is attempt to get rid of that pesky negative defining Cowards trait.

Bob declares that the Children of the Wind will not tolerate any Cowards, marking their homes in secret and then stoning them and their whole families to death. Liteness helps marking the homes undetected, and Rock bombardiers and Cocky – with the execution of the deed. For further help, the (fight)(offensively)(from the air)(for torture) Arena is invoked. The bonuses reduce the Difficulty from 12 to a very manageable 5.

Bob rolls [1d10] and gets a 7, meaning that the Cowards trait is no longer a defining one. Bob moves it to the peripheral traits column, slot 10. But killing and torturing members of your own society does not end as simply as that. There will be Chaos!

Bob rolls [4d10] losing Aftermath dice on the regular traits column, and gets 2-3-8-3 as results, which means that he actually managed to score a net win. Any doubles on a Chaos roll are ignored, so Bob’s current roll is the equivalent of a 2-3-8. Airships and Isolated traits move on over to Peripheral traits, and Bob gets to create two new traits at neutral (0) rating in their place, as well as a new poor (-) trait in slot 8. Bob decides that this means that some of the population is scared and takes off Expanding, taking some of the best craftsmen with them, meaning that the group has to rely on sheer Wingpower instead of Airships. Finally, Bob decides that Despotism is emerging as the form of rule.

Lastly, Bob needs to roll another [4d10] losing Aftermath dice, but this time, on the peripheral traits column. Bob gets 1-4-10-1 as his result, which means a 1-4-10, as was already established. This means that there is a new poor (-) peripheral trait in slot 1 – Bob chooses Crafters, as them moving to the periphery would best explain the disappearance of active Airships. Cliffside Nests goes down a rank, to neutral (0). Finally, the Cowards trait is gone altogether – good riddance! – and the Blood Feud trait is penciled in instead.

<i>Example Group: The Children of the Wind</i>					
	<i>Defining traits</i>		<i>Regular traits</i>		<i>Peripheral traits</i>
1.	Flying++	1.	Archers-	1.	Crafters-
2.	Lithe++	2.	Wingpower0	2.	Airships-
3.	Weaklings--	3.	Expanding0	3.	Isolated-
4.		4.	Numerous-	4.	Cliffside Nests0
5.		5.		5.	
6.		6.	Keen sight-	6.	
7.		7.	Rock bombardiers-	7.	
8.		8.	Despotism-	8.	
9.		9.		9.	
10.		10.	Cocky0	10.	Blood Feud-

3. Starting the game

First, decide on the general vibe of the game. The default is “Civilization, only with fantasy races”, but you could easily downscale it to conflicts between factions in a single city or kingdom, or adapt the rules for a science fiction game of clashing fleets among the stars, or a fight for survival in a particular alien world. Anything works, just be sure everyone is on the same page on what you are trying to accomplish.

Second, decide on the rough outline of the region you want play to take place in. This can be anything – a generically described single city, sea, or mountain, or a complex of varying terrains. If it is your first time playing, just pick a single theme, or a combination of two (i.e., “there’s this big forest and then there’s this big mountain next to the forest”), and stick with it. If you wish, you will be able to bring new places into play via the use of Challenges. One thing to note is that the various groups should be able to establish some form of contact immediately, so it would be a good idea not to set them in opposing corners of the world. Distance is good. Separation is not. Write theme down on a sheet of paper, or, if you like, jot down a basic map. This is your World sheet – keep it, as you will be using it to keep track of various Arenas later in the game.

Now is the time for everyone to make their group-sheets. If using regular sheets of paper, make three columns, each numbered from one to ten, top to bottom. Same numbers should be roughly in the same row - ten rows in total. Write Defining, Regular and Peripheral (or just the letters D, R, and P) on top of each column, starting from the left and going to the right. Leave some extra space around each column/row slot – you will be changing old traits to ones, which means crossing things out and writing things in. Regular traits will change around most often, so try to give that column the most room.

If using index cards, arrange thirty of them into three columns and ten rows, much like outlined above. When it comes time to writing on the index cards, write nothing but the trait names – their physical order should be enough to show their numbers, and use different positions (slide them side to side, or tilt them noticeably) denote the status of their rating. Experiment with what works for you best, but make sure everyone at the table keeps a similar system.

Next, everyone at the table should think of a vague idea for a group. Nothing too specific, just enough for a general feel. Do not be afraid to use completely generic fantasy races – when the game is over, you will be surprised how different the group is from when it started. Originality is something that happens in play, and not something you have to provide in advance.

When you have a general feeling of your group, think up three defining traits for it – two good, one bad; and three regular traits – one good, one neutral, one poor. A good way to make up traits is to try and imagine a member of your group doing something typically awesome for the group, and then describing what he is doing, why he is doing it, and what items and qualities he has. This gives you proficiencies, goals & beliefs, and tools and abilities, all of which work great as traits.

And you are done! Actual play can now begin.

4. Play process

As of yet, the game itself does not drive you towards any particular action, so any goals you have will have to be self set. Whether you fight the groups of other players, either to enslave them or just to take their lands and resources, whether you ally with them for a better tomorrow, or try to eke out a peaceful existence in your own little corner of the world is all up to you. However, rivalry of one sort or another is likely to be the most fun option to explore, so try and do that if the game is petering out.

If it is your first time playing, the best way to introduce yourself and your friends to the game would likely be to have everyone face some minor self-set Challenges, then to have a couple of inter-group attack Challenges and only then moving on to making and exploiting Arenas.

Some groups will gain a major advantage early and exploit it to get even more advantages, and some will drag far behind for extended periods of time. That is normal – the tables will eventually turn, and every group will have their time in the sun. Still, if you are the one on the receiving end of the cruelty of lady luck, there is one thing you should do, which may sound counter-intuitive at first: take bigger risks. You will either

win, and win big, or lose, and lose big. Now, given that you are not on good terms with lady luck, you will likely lose, and that is good. This game has built-in safety measures to protect anyone from becoming a permanent outsider – the more you lose, the more your peripheral traits will increase and return to use, just as previous leaders slow down to better protect their current assets. Of course, permanent chaos in your group will likely drastically alter the core principles of your society, but you have to take the bitter with the sweet.

When facing a Challenge, always describe what you are doing in some detail, and how the traits you pick help. You do not need to make a novel out of it, but providing some detail in advance will often save you from a scratching your head when it is time to decide what new traits Aftermath dice have brought you.

Exploit Arenas to their full potential. Employing Arenas is the easiest way to reliably win Hard Challenges, and it is definitely a lot harder to face a rival when he has the support of a powerful Arena and you do not. Know that it will often be easier to adapt to Arenas already established than to create a useful new one from scratch, so always try to subvert existing Arenas first and create your own second.

If you want to make traits and their relationships make better sense, follow the guidelines provided below. Still, keep in mind that nothing can be a substitute for the criteria you set yourself, so if you feel you have good reason to ignore any of these guidelines, feel free to just that.

- Always create traits that flow naturally out of the situation. This is a gimme, but it is certainly worth reiterating.
- You will often be able to create more than one trait per turn, so if you have problems thinking of new traits, spread the results of your Challenge along several traits. If you decide a volcano erupted and blew up the underwater city you tried to build, you can create “Volcanic Island”, “Underwater Ruins”, and “Pollution”, instead of just “Near a Volcano”

- When creating poor (-) traits, pick something unsavory, something your group would normally strongly dislike or even loathe. Poor(-) traits will eventually become usable traits, and then you will have the fun of explaining how your group manages to make use of them.
- When creating poor (-) traits for another group, which you get to do when you win a Challenge against a rival group by a significant Margin of Victory, shame them by the traits you create to the best of your ability – that does not have any mechanical repercussions beyond the fairly temporary effect of the poor(-) trait itself, but it will have a rather satisfying effect on the narrative, especially when your rival uses these traits to achieve his own goals. “Slaves”, “Hunted”, “Tasty” are all excellent choices in this regard.
- Whenever creating a trait that pushes out an old trait into the peripheral traits column, make the new trait thematically related to the old one. This will help to achieve some continuity if the peripheral trait makes a comeback, as well as making immediate narrative sense. The following two bits of advice are more specific versions of this:
 - When pushing out a good(+) trait by a good(+) one, which happens when you roll a winning Aftermath die on a good(+) trait, replace the old trait by a more powerful, refined, or focused version. “Stone” into “Masons”, “Archers” into “Marksmen”, “Sorcerers” into “Wizards’ Cabal”, and so on.
 - When pushing out a poor(-) trait by a poor(-) one, which happens when you roll a losing Aftermath die on a poor(-) trait, replace the old trait by a less powerful, refined, or focused version. “Treasure” into “Misers”, “Sorcerers” into “Hedge wizards”, “Piety” into “Cynicism”, and so on.
- When creating peripheral traits created by Chaos dice, create traits that exemplify the resentment of the parts of your society that embodied the defining negative trait that you tried to get rid of.

5. Obscure rules

These should not come up all that often, but when and if they do, you will know where to look.

- When an Aftermath roll overflows (triple result or more)– any dice that overflow the bare minimum of a double roll allow the winner of the Challenge in question to receive as many free Aftermath regular trait hits as there are overflow dice, and distribute them where he believes they are necessary on the regular traits column.
- When a you roll a double Aftermath die result, and the result you rolled already has a **good** (++) defining trait in it, place a new trait there as if the slot was empty, and move the old defining trait into a regular traits slot of your choice. If the slot is full, push the row to the right – current regular trait into peripheral traits, current peripheral trait into nothingness. You are also free to create a power (3) Institution via the use of the old defining trait, so long as you do so immediately
- When you roll a double Aftermath die result, and the result you rolled already has a **bad** (--) defining trait in it, place a new trait there as if the slot was empty, downgrade the old defining trait to (-), and move it into a peripheral traits slot of your choice. If the slot is full, the old peripheral trait goes into nothingness. If the double Aftermath die was of losing type, you also have to roll Chaos dice. Chaos roll is [4d10] losing Aftermath dice on regular traits, then [4d10] losing Aftermath dice on peripheral traits – any poor peripheral traits (-) that are hit get removed from play. Any doubles (and higher) that are rolled with Chaos dice are ignored and treated as a single number.

Extras: Example Group-sheets

This is a group from the beginning of a game: hardy whale hunters in ironclad vessels.

<i>Example Group: The Harpooners</i>					
	<i>Defining traits</i>		<i>Regular traits</i>		<i>Peripheral traits</i>
1.	Ironclads++	1.	Whale hunters+	1.	
2.	Seahardy++	2.	Well known0	2.	
3.	Reckless--	3.	Supplies-	3.	
4.		4.		4.	
5.		5.		5.	
6.		6.		6.	
7.		7.		7.	
8.		8.		8.	
9.		9.		9.	
10.		10.		10.	

...and this is the same group some time after a long and bitter struggle with a race of aquatic dwarves, a struggle that the Harpooners have now largely lost. They have since attempted to get rid of the recklessness that got them into trouble in the first place, but to no good effect.

<i>Example Group: The Harpooners (mid game)</i>					
	<i>Defining traits</i>		<i>Regular traits</i>		<i>Peripheral traits</i>
1.	Ironclads++	1.	Sea Scribes0	1.	Whale hunters-
2.	Seahardy++	2.	Memories0	2.	Forgotten-
3.	Reckless--	3.	Supplies-	3.	
4.		4.	Whale Skins-	4.	
5.	Skin Merchants++	5.		5.	
6.	Ghost Ships--	6.		6.	Weary-
7.		7.	Bloody rituals0	7.	Deep dwarf skins-
8.		8.		8.	Strict-
9.		9.	Penny pinchers0	9.	Cash to spare-
10.		10.	Scattered-	10.	