

# Wisher, Theurgist, Fatalist & Weaver of Their Fates

A Storytelling Game by Jenna Moran

## Introduction

Reality is an illusion.

Those who seek to understand it corrode their understanding of it. In naïveté, objects are solid, ideas are true or false, sensations are real, and communication conveys information. To the adept, these things are as fading dreams.

There is no object that is not also emptiness.

There is no arbiter of truth.

Sensations are the lies of Maya; they are the shifting of electrical patterns in the brain; they are signifiers without referent.

Communication is violence.

Reality is false.

It does not matter how many layers one peels back. It does not matter what revelations one has. This is because there is no truth.

We are things that we have dreamed, and there is no sense in it, and when the sleeper wakes we shall be washed away.

## The Jewel of All Desiring

In a fairy tale land far away, in the dreaming kingdoms, in the land Cal' Ed, the jewel of all desiring has been lost.

This jewel is that sleeper that dreams inwards, that inverted oyster, that creature that we name God the Shaper, God the Maker, Lord---

And it has not yet begun to shape the world.

The jewel is a pearl of infinite layers and subtleties and its possessor may obtain everything that they desire.

For uncounted æons it was in the hands of the Kings and Queens of Raif.

Never did they wish.

Never did they fulfill the destiny of the jewel.

Who would want to obtain *everything* that one desires?

## The Journey

From the ranks of the people the wishers and their companions have been raised up---

To seek among the fairies;  
the dragons of the deeps;  
the ur-toads and the claw things;  
among the shadows on the sun and the ghosts beneath the world,  
and in the lands of humankind besides  
for the jewel of all desiring.

One of you must be the wisher---

Must find the jewel and command the Creator to make the world as you desire it. And if you should succeed, then the world shall always have been as you wish it, and your life a thing sprung of your own desiring; and if you should fail then you shall be forgotten like the tides.

# Cast of Characters

## Wishers

Wishers are people worth believing in.

They're the kinds of people whom you can *trust* to wish up a good world. They're good at understanding the needs of others and they're good at inspiring others to follow their dream.

To win an unambiguous victory in this game, you need one of your wishers to find the jewel and have it grant them the world of their desire. It's not that they're the only ones who can do this---the jewel will grant *any* one person's desires. It's that they're the ones whom the rest of you, at least when the story begins, can trust to desire good and true things for the world.

Wishers focus on the Attribute **Harmony**. This gives them a supernatural or near-supernatural ability to win hearts and minds, reconcile divergent ideas, and share their vision of the world with others. It gives them the power to answer the important questions, and with it the duty to set a path for events and resolve moral quandaries.

## Theurgists

Theurgists are people who can light the hidden fires in the world.

They could be angels, wizards, fairies, or little gods. They could be holy men or women. They are those who have the power to lift others up into light or cast them down into shadow.

The theurgists do not desire the jewel for themselves--- at least, not at first, and not aloud.

Their goal is to forge the wishers into the kinds of people who are worthy to give unto God the purpose for this world; into heroes worthy of the wishes that shall define the world. Their goal is to judge the wishers and make them ready for their task--- and only then to ensure their success.

Not even the theurgists, of course, are immune to the wishers' charm.

Theurgists focus on the Attribute **Insight**, giving them supernatural or near-supernatural ability to see hidden possibility in the world and make it into truth. They wield this power to test others, to bring an end to evil and suffering, and to remove such practical obstacles as stand in their way.

## Fatalists

Fatalists are those who know the secrets of the world.

They are scholars. They are prophets. They are experts--- founts of knowledge and confidence.

The role of the fatalist on this journey is cruel. It is something of a purpose that they must educate the wishers, warn them, and share with them the secret truths of the dreaming kingdom. But this is not why they seek the Jewel.

To win an unambiguous victory in this game, you need one fatalist to survive and agree to become the firmament of the world; and more, the wisher must willingly sacrifice that fatalist in the world's creation. The person who becomes the firmament of the world is torn apart, unraveled, laid bare down to the bones of their soul and made into the structure of all reality. It is their lore and their knowledge and the order with which they approach their lives that become the order and basis for the world itself.

Any character can become this structure; it's not limited to fatalists. But it is the fatalists' belief that only someone such as a fatalist can do it well. And if it is not done, and done well, then the world shall remain in some part fantasy; in some part dream; in some part lie--- as the doomful sages of the world suggest it is already.

Fatalists focus on the Attribute **Knowledge**, giving them a supernatural or near-supernatural understanding of the truths of the world. They may speak for the past, the present, and the future when others' inner eyes are blind.

## The Weaver

The Weaver is that player who weaves the fortunes of the world and manages the players of the game.

One among you is this creature.

It is immanent in one of the wishers, theurgists, or fatalists who travel at your side. It lurks behind their eyes.

It is a curse to be the Weaver.

Of all the creatures in the world, only that one indwelt by the Weaver cannot use the Jewel of All Desiring.

Of all the creatures in the world, only that one indwelt by the Weaver cannot become the firmament.

And it is often seen that the one indwelt is still, quiet, unwilling or unable to step up to the burdens and the tasks near at hand; possessed by a strange queer lassitude that holds them back from solving the problems of this world.

It is the Weaver's job to run the game.

## Your Character

You will control one of the protagonists of this story--- one wisher, one fatalist, or one theurgist, and potentially the Weaver. Much of your contribution to the story will manifest through this character and their actions and decisions.

## Cast of Players

### You

We will not explain who you are at length. You should already know who you are. If you are an object or a philosophical zombie, you should avoid playing this game if at all possible.

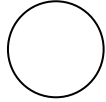
### The Other Players

Make note of the other people nearby who appear to be playing this game. These are the other players. They are *nakama*. They are cheap labor. Their desires and choices are chaotic input to your story. They are those who will provide ideas you would not have had. They are those who will stand beside you shouldering the work of the story.

From them you will distill the warm glow of shared experience.

Recognize that the other players lack your own enlightenment regarding this game; they will never see everything in it that you see, but rather babble aimlessly regarding their own distinct visions. Serve as an attentive witness to these visions but do not expect them to match your own.

## Planets and Stars



Example Planet

Planets and stars help you play.

Some people argue that ancient astronauts mined various magical planets to acquire the secrets of how to play WTF. Others disagree.

You'll find more details on these planets – including two mystery planets seen only during eclipses – in the first supplement for WTF.

## Attributes and Skills

Players in WTF have the following core Traits---

### Attributes —

These are

**Harmony** (the spirit and charisma of the wisher)  
**Insight** (the capacity to perform theurgy)  
**Knowledge** (the lore of the fatalist)

These are supernatural spiritual abilities, and each is rated from 0 to 5.

### Powers —

These are

**Creatures** (power that governs living things)  
**Law** (power that governs physical and moral law)  
**People** (power that governs people and their societies)  
**Self** (power that governs the self)  
**Substance** (power that governs the physical substance of the world)  
**Shadow** (power over the shadow that dwells behind the world)

These are skills rated from 0 to 5 that focus the player's ability to use their supernatural Attributes.

### Specialty Powers —

Each character also has 0 or more "specialty" powers as defined by their player.

## Attributes

### Harmony

Harmony fits you together with other people. You can use it to persuade, to charm, to be the moral center of a group. Most importantly you use it when forging consensus among disparate voices and making people happy with the choices you advocate.

It is the character with harmony who explains what people should believe--- what is right, what is valuable, what is worthwhile.

It is always valuable to believe what a character with high Harmony says, but it is not necessarily correct. Thus one may say to a wisher,

"Your vision of the world inspires me--- but I fear it is not truth."

**Wishers** rely on the Harmony Attribute.

#### Deceptive Harmony

Harmony gives way to discord when someone lies about what is right and what is valuable and what is good.

A wisher becomes a creature of shadow when they begin to tell people that that which is not right, is right; that that which they should not believe, they should believe; that that which is invidious and without value is exalted and beneficent.

As you'll see later, any player can declare a wisher **deceptive**, but this can have unpleasant consequences.

#### Insight

Insight is the power to see hidden truths through a deep understanding of the cosmos--- and then to bring them forth, essentially *making* them true.

It is the character with Insight who decides how things should be---

What *should* happen;

What the rules *mean*;

What fundamental truth lies behind a certain disputed event.

That which Insight declares in its power is indisputable in fact, but as it is a thing created by the theurgist it is disputable in interpretation. That is, one may say to a theurgist,

"It is true, what you say, but bitter and wrong that you have made it so."

**Theurgists** rely on the Insight Attribute.

#### Corrupt Insight

Insight gives way to corruption when someone begins to shape the "shoulds" of the world in a fashion not in accordance with their own beliefs.



A theurgist who makes true a thing they do not *believe* should be true is a creature inherently deluded, monstrous, and sinful. They do not believe those truths they speak, when they are true. Thus they are deluded. They wield the insight of their kind against the world, wounding it, corrupting its nature. Thus they are monstrous. They betray the very nature of Insight by arguing it falsely. Thus they are sinful.

Such a theurgist falls and becomes a creature of the shadow.

As you'll see later, the Weaver and only the Weaver decides when a theurgist is **corrupt**, and this can have unpleasant consequences.

### Knowledge

Knowledge is the power to understand the world as it is--- to know the facts of it and to see what will happen if no theurgist changes it.

It is the character with Knowledge who tells people the lore of the world; the paths they are on; the secrets of the dreaming kingdoms; the destinies and curses and taboos and blessings that cluster about every soul.

That which the character of Knowledge explains is the true lore of the world of this game, but it does not necessarily relate to what happens and it does not necessarily relate to what anyone else believes. Thus, a theurgist might answer a fatalist thus:

"You say I am doomed to die. So be it! I am doomed. But I shall circumvent this fate; death shall not find me."

And a wisher might answer them thus:

"You say that three times these people will betray us; and if you say it, then no doubt it shall be so. But it is worth the risk of trusting them, nevertheless, for there is that inside them that is worthy of our trust."

### Knowledge and the Truth

It's possible that someone in your group--- e.g., the Weaver or the person with **WTF** open to the right page--- knows the canonical truth about something.

For example, the ur-toads aren't actually toads.

If someone wants to use their Knowledge to find out whether ur-toads are toads, then it might be useful to ask, say, you, since you're looking at or remembering that information right this very second.

As you'll see later, however, it's completely up to your group and how you play whether trying to find out the "right answer" is obligatory--- the other option is that the player who uses Knowledge successfully simply decides what they're going to say the truth is.

### Destructive Knowledge

To deny Knowledge is to destroy the world.

Beyond the dreaming kingdoms there is a darkness, a shadow, a thing insidious to fable, a curse on all desire, a corruption upon knowledge.

Should a character deny their Knowledge and begin to preach a lore they do not believe is true, they become a gateway through which the nature of the world is lost. They become a devourer of truth, and those things they do not say are banished from the world.

It is a delicate matter, determining what is known. As you'll see later, only the player of a character can declare their own lore false and deny their Knowledge--- even if everyone else thinks they're making up nonsense and calling it things they "know." To declare that one's own lore is **destructive** can have unpleasant consequences.

### Powers

There are six standard Powers. Each measures your ability to use Harmony, Insight, and Knowledge in the relevant domain.

When you use one of your Powers with Harmony, you change how people ought to act or think about something that falls under the Power's Domain. Both the Power rating and your Harmony rating contribute to success.

When you use one of your Powers with Insight, you make something under that Power's domain more like you feel it should be. Both the Insight rating and the Power rating contribute to success.

When you use one of your Powers with Knowledge, your Knowledge tells you about something under that Power's domain. Both the Knowledge rating and the Power rating contribute to success.

We will explain this using an example – **Self**.

Self measures your power over your own potential.

When you combine the Self Power with Harmony, you change how others ought to see you and what they should do about you.

When you combine the Self Power with Insight, you make yourself more like what you believe you should be.

When you combine the Self Power with Knowledge, you learn about yourself.

### Creatures

**Creatures** measures your power over the strange creatures of the world--- monsters, animals, even angels.

### Law

**Law** measures your power over the law of the world: the physics, the magic, the order of the firmament that some fatalist will hopefully become.

### People

**People** measures your power over the civilized and barbaric peoples.

### Self

**Self** measures your power over yourself and your own potential.

### Shadow

**Shadow** is unusual--- most characters, as you'll see, won't start the game able to use the Shadow Power. It measures your power over the shadows that threaten the world--- deceptive harmony, corrupt insight, fallen Weavers, and destructive knowledge.

### Substance

**Substance** measures your power over the substance of the world--- the mountains, the pyramids, the sky, the magic swords, the jewels.

### Specialty Powers

Specialty Powers are unique areas where your power is strong--- such as genealogy, fire, or the sea.

If you have a high Insight and a high Genealogy, for example, it is easy for you to say, "This person commands all the royal virtues: they must be the secret heir to the royal line of Raif," and have it be so. Conversely, a high Knowledge

and a high Genealogy would save you the effort of theurgy, as you would already know where the secret heir to the line of Raif resides.

## Gifts

A Gift is a character trait with relevance in the world.

Each Gift is a narrative truth--- a sentence or two describing a feature of the character.

It has three associated Qualities--- Truth, Mechanical Support, and Valence.

We will explain these Qualities through the example of Susan. Susan was a princess of Raif until she rejected court life to become a reclusive swordswoman living in the mountains. The loss of the jewel has drawn her out of seclusion.

She has a Gift:

"Susan is extraordinary with the blade, but does not like to kill."

## Truth

This measures the *truth* of the Gift--- how real it is.

**Weak Truth.** A Gift that is "weak" in its truth is not necessarily grounded in anything in the game. Maybe Susan isn't really all that good with the blade. Maybe she just *thinks* she doesn't like to kill, and in fact just hasn't given it enough of a chance.

Who knows?

I mean, ultimately, a Gift is just some words that somebody wrote down, it doesn't necessarily mean it's *real*.

**Strong Truth.** A Gift that is "strong" in its truth is all but written in the book of the world--- an axiom of creation, a primal cause, a thing that makes ordinary rocks and trees pale into corollaries and lemmas. There is nothing more true or indisputable than this. Susan is extraordinary with the blade. She does not like to kill. A, as John Galt might say, is A.

**Ordinary Truth.** If a Gift isn't weak or strong in its truth, it's basically as true as anything else. Like, that thing over there that is true? It's as true as that. There's no confusion here--- Susan is a darn fine swordswoman, and killing is icky--- but the mountains won't tumble and the sky won't break if it turns out

looking back on everything after the game that her extraordinariness or reluctance were a contingent perception.

### Mechanical Support

This measures the degree to which the rules of the game support the use of that Gift to differentiate between outcomes.

**Weak Mechanical Support.** A Gift with "weak" mechanical support has no clear and specific meaning in play. Sure, Susan is extraordinary with the blade, but that doesn't mean she can automatically win fights or anything. Sure, she's a bit reluctant to kill, but there's nothing to indicate that she'll be haunted if she does. Basically, it just doesn't come up very often.

That doesn't mean that it's not true.

I mean, if it ever comes down to whether Susan is extraordinary with the blade like in an extraordinary bladeswomanship contest, she still gets to win. And if there's ever a question of "did you feel reluctant there?" you as the player can definitely say, "Yes, Susan felt reluctant to kill that guy."

But it means that when you say "I'm extraordinary with this blade," it doesn't necessarily do you any good against falling trees, werewolves, dynamite, guns, emotional trauma, or fights where there's any reason to think that extraordinary bladework might *not* help. In short, weak mechanical support makes it possible for Susan to be a "faux action girl," whose immense skill only comes up now and again to make it all the more amazing how often she loses or needs someone else's help to fight.

**Strong Mechanical Support.** A Gift with "strong" mechanical support, on the other hand, is practically an "I win" button in play. Not only do circumstances generally come up that favor the application of the Gift, but you can use the Gift freely in contexts where it normally wouldn't apply.

"But how did you tame those bulls so quickly, Susan?" the hapless townfolk might ask, and you can sheath your blood-red sword and flash a grin and answer, "I'm extraordinary with the blade---

"But I do not like to kill."

**Ordinary Mechanical Support.** If a Gift isn't weak or strong in its mechanical support, then it should come up some of the time, be useful or at least meaningful in most of those cases. Further, there should be opportunities to consciously leverage the Gift, making it relevant or useful when it otherwise would not have been. Susan, for instance, could reasonably expect to win most straight-up swordfights; that there would be fights (straight-up or otherwise)

that she would win; and that if she were aggressively boisterous, she could increase the frequency of both fights and victories at the cost of opportunities for more peaceful resolutions. Sometimes refusing to kill her enemy (or mourning enemies she does kill) should put her in a tight spot, but it has beneficial karmic or emotional repercussions that improve her overall life effectiveness.

## Valence

This measures the degree to which the Gift *matters*.

**Weak Valence.** A Gift with weak valence is unable to shift the weight of destiny or morality. For example, if Susan's Gift has weak valence, then ultimately she can't become *successful* with her sword or her scruples--- she can win battles but not wars. As soon as she draws her sword she concedes the larger fight--- at best, she can keep things from getting worse.

**Strong Valence.** A Gift with strong valence has the power to create good outcomes--- both in the sense of abstract virtue and in the sense of matching the player's desires. For example, if Susan's Gift has strong valence, and she duels a terrible enemy and then spares their life, she can reasonably expect something good to come out of it. The enemy repents, or reveals the truth about a darker plan, or at least admits defeat and doesn't bother her again.

**Ordinary Valence.** A Gift with ordinary valence can and sometimes does produce good outcomes--- but sometimes it produces bad ones, or solves an immediate problem without putting a dent in the larger situational conflict. Basically, using the Gift is sometimes futile, sometimes fruitful, and often in between.

## General Notes

A typical Gift is ordinary in two respects and weak in one--- short on truth, mechanical support, or valence. Each character will begin with one Gift of superior caliber: ordinary in two respects and *strong* in another.

It is not possible without the use of supernatural Attributes to have a Gift that is strong in two or more respects.

# The Fatalists' Book: What Is

## Core Truths (of the Setting)

These are the only things you *must* understand about the setting of WTF.

### Resolving Disputes

If the players disagree regarding something about the setting,  
. . . and it's difficult to reach consensus at the player level,  
. . . and at least one person isn't interested in arguing the matter further,

then every player has the option of making a Knowledge roll. This is optional and you should make this roll if you feel you have a strong opinion.

Treat the player with the highest Knowledge roll as correct.

If nobody rolls, then everyone should consider their own opinion correct, remember that others may disagree, and move on.

### What if I Can't Roll?

The rules for players making rolls are not part of the setting.

Nothing in the setting, by definition, can prevent a player from making a Knowledge or Insight roll. Nothing in the setting can affect or supersede the rules governing these rolls' results.

That means that if something about the dispute prevents you from making a Knowledge roll and having its result stand--- e.g., it's a dispute about how many dice you can roll in Knowledge rolls--- it's a *rules* problem, not a setting disagreement, by definition, and you need the dispute resolution rules in the Theurgists' Book.

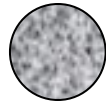
### Clear?

If you're clear on what to do if people disagree, does it really matter whether you've got the rest of the setting right or wrong?



# Ketu, the Contemplation Planet

Ketu, The Contemplation Planet



Contemplation Planet

Ketu is the dragon's tail. It is an invisible planet, one of two key secret planets studied in Vedic astrology.

## Prameya and Danda

Much like games of Cowboys and Indians or improvisational theater, stories told in WTF are constructs of the abstract substance *Prameya*. This is the narrative substance from which stories are built and the fundamental matter-equivalent for the dreaming kingdoms. Initially present in imperceptible unkindled forms *Prameya* accumulates layers of *Danda* – corroborative evidence – before finally becoming visible to the mind. Then it becomes a fictional world, events in that world, the meaning of those events, and the story constructed from those events.

Personal contemplation of the dreaming kingdoms, the attempt to witness “the genuine thing,” is the source of *factual data* regarding the world of the game. Unwitnessed data might in theory exist, but no one has ever witnessed it in the act of existing. Thus all Knowledge comes from contemplation and falls under the auspices of the planet Ketu.

## Dreaming the Dreaming Kingdoms

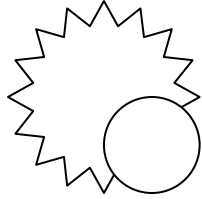
**Here is how to contemplate WTF.**

Decide that you want to open your mind to the infinite wonders of this game and choose an appropriate revelation tool.

Each revelation tool is a mandala through which the dreaming kingdoms can awaken your mind to their presence. Here are the standard components of these mandalas.



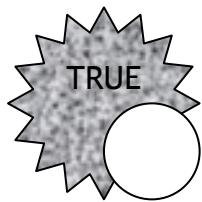
## Revelation Star



Revelation and Danda

This star represents a construct of Prameya.<sup>1</sup> It comes in the following types:

### Factual Star



Factual Star

Factual stars represent something real and concrete – who your character really is, what the story actually means, what's really going on in the game world. Start your mandala with a factual star if you wish to contemplate actual truth!

### Roleplaying Star



Play Star

Reveal the truth of WTF by playing WTF! These stars are the illumination you bestow on others.

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<sup>1</sup> The danda planet has nothing to do with the planets that help you play. I mean, except in that it is a planet, and it helps you play. But it's not, like, Mars or Pluto or anything.

### Authority Star



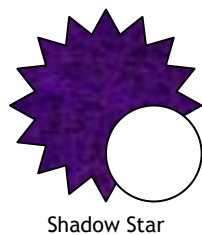
Sometimes the Weaver or a theurgist tells you what *should* be true in WTF. This is like a celestial light that illuminates the Prameya of your mind. When you filter this celestial revelation and interpret it in the context of your own understanding, that's an authority star!

### Enlightenment Star



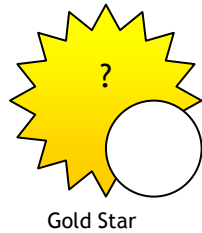
An enlightenment star opens your inner eye to the vistas of the dreaming kingdoms. You will see the truth of things--- the kingdoms, the story, even the true meanings behind how the other players choose to play.

### Shadow Star



The shadow star casts a pleasing darkness over your inner eye, sheltering you from unpleasant truths. Where the shadow passes certainty fades, revelation becomes falsehood, and insight turns cold!

## Gold Star

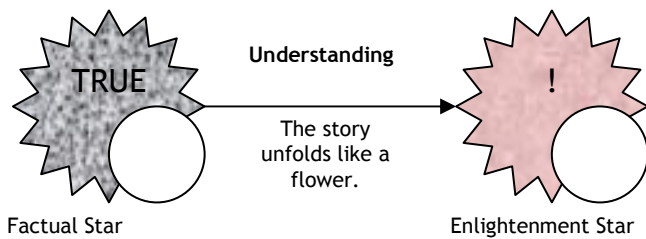


The only way to truly understand WTF is to communicate with the other players. This allows you to use them as chaotic input to the development of your own desires.

Sift through others' statements for ideas that prove useful to you and receive the shining gold star of revelation!

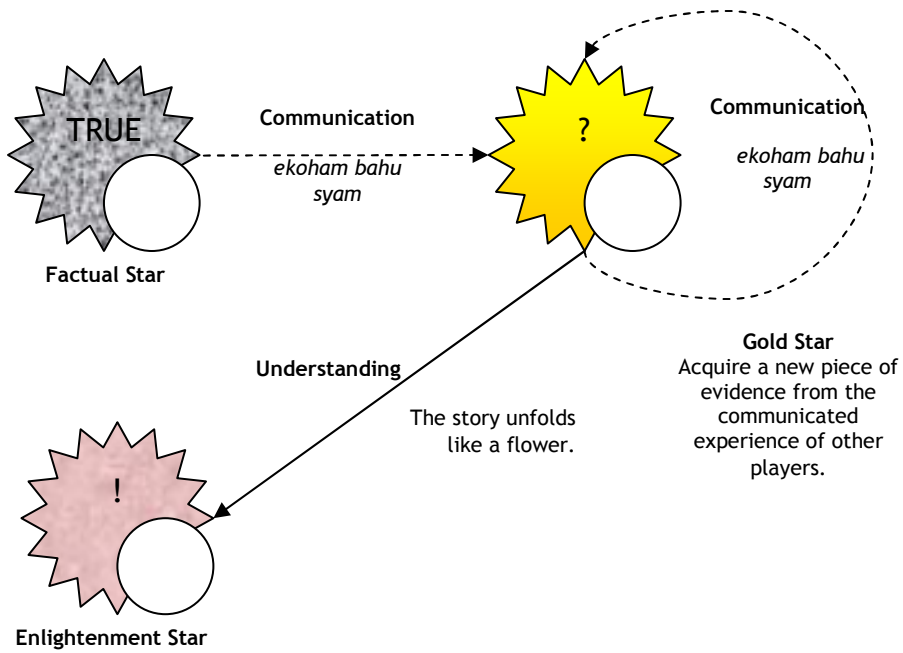
## Personal Revelations

### Personal Tool



You can use this tool when enlightenment beckons – even when you're alone!

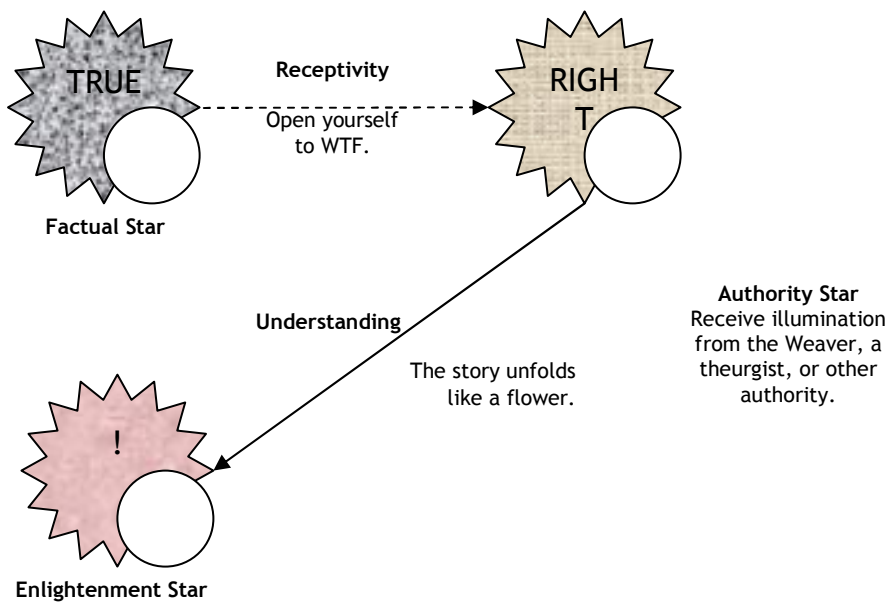
## Corroborative Tool



You can use this tool to develop ideas more efficiently in play.

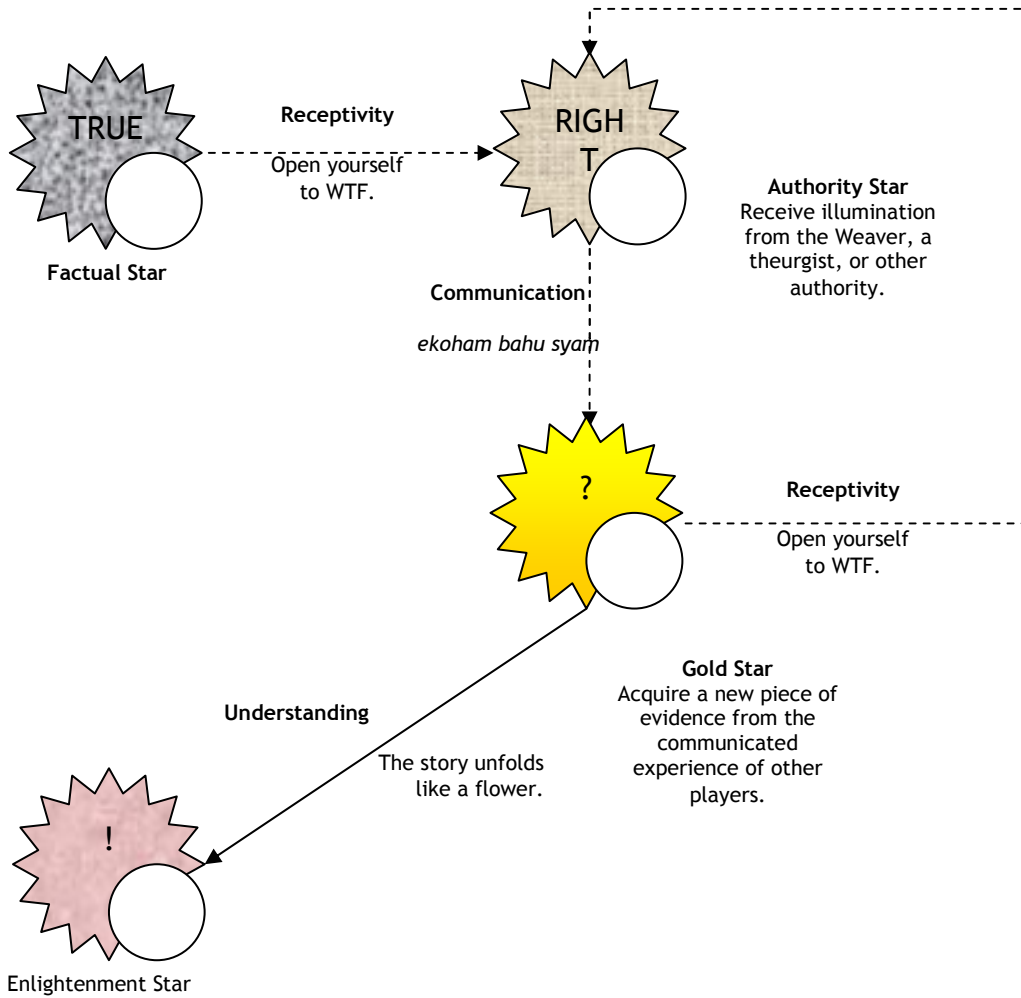
## Organized Revelations

### Illumination Tool



You can use this revelation tool to receive enlightenment from others.

WTF Tool



You can use this enlightenment tool to develop complex understandings of this game in play.

## Additional Setting Information

### On Kindled and Unkindled People

The nothingness that preceded the dreaming kingdoms was not the void but rather a fructile ocean of *Prameya*: the fundamental abstract energized material, previously mentioned, that suffuses the substrate and weft of pre-cognized existence. Imperceptible to the mind and body, creating neither sense-impressions nor false conceptions, this Prameya presents itself to the consciousness in an "unkindled" form.

What causes this to change and births the kingdoms?

As prameya lingers and brushes against the mind it creates a kind of "heaviness" or "weight" of impending experience. As it impinges thus it orchestrates an accumulation of *danda* until the looming possibility of its presence crosses a threshold; then, suddenly! It tips from non-being into being.

It "kindles" into existence.

The dreaming kingdoms thus divide into *kindled* and *unkindled* things: things of prameya, existing only by implication, and things of substance, existing in fact.

Look around!

The dreaming kingdoms are in good part empty. There are the marks of life and the signs of habitation. There are tilled fields and cleaned or dirtied streets. There is smoke in the air and trees that have fallen. But somewhere between one third and two thirds of the population is effectively absent. They do not exist. They evade the census: even the estimate of their numbers could be wildly imprecise. The studies of the sages falter in their presence, become bogged down with uncertainty and confusion. They are lacking the details and sensory evidence that would cement their existence in the mind.

Many people are born in the pains of their mother's or their maker's labor. Many others kindle---

They were not.  
Then they flared into existence.  
Now, they *are*.

### Practical Matters

Even weak Truth has a profound impact on the unkindled; strong Truth can destroy or kindle them.

Kindling is governed by the **Law Power**.  
Kindled and unkindled people are governed by the **People Power**.

### Moral Implications

Construe the existence of the unkindled as an implication of certain and provable failure on the part of the wisher to construct a solid firmament. Perhaps their fatalist will be inadequate, or they themselves will become corrupt, or they are fated never to locate the jewel at all.

At the same time recognize that the unkindled are potential evidence for almost any hypothesis---an undefined space necessary to prevent paradox during any construction of the world.

### Humans and Creatures

The law of the world is this:

*False conceptions, wrong ideas, and ethical crimes---*

When pursued with sufficient passion---

*Transform humans into creatures.*

Thus in this world there are dragons and chimerae and all manner of great beasts. Some kindle into existence from nothing and therefore have no clear origin. A few represent the natural proceeds of two unnatural creatures mating. But most of them evolve or devolve from humanity.

### Practical Matters

Transformation is a risk attendant on Gifts with weak Valence, on associating with the shadow, and on playing this game in an incorrect fashion.

This process is governed by the **Law Power**.  
Animals and great beasts are governed by the **Creatures Power**.

### Moral Implications

Construe most transformed creatures as manifestations of a rival moral framework that threatens the correctness of the wishers' ideas.

## Treasures

There are magical treasures in this world, rare in the lives of ordinary people but common enough in the lives of heroes.

Treasures are objects or animals moved to powerful emotion by the practices of humanity, which emotion causes them to take on power and sentience. Some admire humanity and become living tools, artifacts that act more as allies than as treasures. Others are shamed by human failure and become great weapons or powerful treasures to redress that failure. Some are disgusted by humanity and become cursed demon-treasures that bring all manner of sorrow.

Thus a key that opens any door might love the lifestyle of thieves and cat burglars, thrilling to their adventures in the night. It might be the grief-scarred transformation of a key that failed to open its owner's lock when he or she was pursued by killers to their door. It might be a hateful item that thinks humanity unworthy, slowly revealing its powers to unlock greater and greater means of travel, until at last it leads its pawn/wielder to the chains that bind down the demon Cescer 'Cen.

## Practical Matters

Transformed objects relate to characters through the characters' Gifts. Because they do not change the Valence of those Gifts, they typically reinforce it--- a magic sword makes weak Valence even more of a curse and strong Valence even more useful. At other times an object harbinges a change in Valence: if a wisher, for example, causes a Gift to become more meaningful, their wish might manifest through an object that becomes a treasure.

The process of transformation is governed by the **Law Power**.  
Treasures are governed by the **Substance Power**.

## Moral Implications

Construe most treasures as reinforcing or defying a moral framework, typically reinforcing a hostile framework or defying a wisher's ideas.

## Beyond the Edge of the World

It is said by the fatalists that the kingdoms of the world are like its people---as much unkindled as kindled. That beyond the edge of the world are endless unkindled places, and that the places that *are* burst into being through the same process that kindles life.



Further, the fatalists say<sup>2</sup>, that unkindled remnant is endless--- if only half the world is missing now, and should later be born into existence, still, when that is done, half the world shall remain to be.

The finiteness of the *is not yet* is dwarfed by the infinity of *could yet be*.

Be that as it may: be there Prameya beyond the world or only emptiness and stars:

There is something else beyond the boundaries of the world.

There is a shadow.

And if that shadow is not kindled yet--- for it is not, most fatalists believe--- then still it is as real as any kindled thing.

It is not "outside" the world in the sense that outside is a place. Rather, it is a condition of its existence that it lies outside the world's great boundaries.

It is a corruption that eats at the dreaming kingdoms.

It is an unrealized paradox, a desperate evil, a darkness that hungers to destroy every realized thing.

Is it a flaw in the desiring of the wisher?

Is it the corrosive possibility that the Jewel is lost, that God does not exist, that the world will die before it is ever made?

It is both these things, and more. It is everything and anything that will prove the falsehood of the wisher's path.

### Practical Matters

Don't play WTF when operating heavy machinery. Use caution when playing WTF while tired, drunk, or punchy, as it may increase the chance that the shadow lurking beyond the edge of the world shall immure you all in timeless misery. If you are or think you might be pregnant, talk to your doctor about playing WTF.<sup>2</sup>

The **Law** Power governs the conceptual boundaries of the world.  
The **Substance** Power governs the physical boundaries of the world.  
Only the **Shadow** Power governs the shadow beyond the world.

---

<sup>2</sup> Just ask them!

## Moral Implications

The shadow *is* a moral implication, but does not *have* one. Construe events accordingly.

## The Civilized Peoples

In the central and southern regions of the dreaming kingdoms there are well-civilized lands. There is the great jewel city Tin 'An, sprawling miles in every direction, with towers nearly tall enough to catch the sun. There are hamlets and towns of every sort and character. There are roads, and when the sun spins right some few of them have railways. There are iron factories that spit forth soot.

In the kingdoms of the civilized peoples there are mysteries and laws.

## Practical Matters

Civilized peoples will judge the characters and then kill, imprison, assimilate, or reject them. If rejection occurs alone (that is, without any other material threat) then it is paired with an unfavorable moral implication.

The **People Power** governs the civilized peoples and is useful in mitigating the dangers of civilization.

## Moral Implications

This is the central mystery of the civilized peoples---

**The law may be wrong  
yet bring a greater good.**

The implication is neutral until the characters either refuse to support the law or refuse to help those that the law would harm. At this point construe their actions as leading in the first case towards chaos and in the second case towards suffering--- or, more generally, to undesirable large-scale and small-scale outcomes, respectively.

Structurally the law works as follows. People have an individual right to life, freedom, and capital. The law recognizes this right but divests certain individuals from its pertinence in the name of common goals and common aspirations, including the concept of rights themselves.

Typical double-binds encourage the characters to:

✚ Flee an unjust law but a righteous lawman;

- ✚ Hunt a righteous criminal who flees an unrighteous law;
- ✚ Separate the righteous and unrighteous when the law tangles them together;
- ✚ Punish an unjust person whom the law deigns to shield;
- ✚ Prevent someone's efforts to sever righteousness from law; or
- ✚ Decide who must sacrifice for the greater good.

If a civilized people rejects the characters but does not seek to punish them through murder, imprisonment, or other meaningful harm, construe this as evidence that the characters are unworthy to find the jewel of all desiring and create a just and acceptable world.

## The Savage Lands

Beyond the borders of the civilized kingdoms there are savage peoples.

Their cultures are clean and spare and stripped of artifice. They live in impossible circumstances and deal with impossible troubles.

Individually and without regret or remorse, the savage tribes pay horrible prices to survive.

The Zihr abandon their dead for animals to eat. Who knows who among them has corpse bees in their brain, burrowing into their flesh the instant of their death? Better that one body be abandoned to the jackals than the cascading failure of the tribe.

The Malor have forsaken speech. They use hand gestures to talk and cut the tongues from unwary visitors. They do this lest sentence eaters rise from the mire to devour the Malor young.

And there are more, infinite such stories---

- ✚ The Ten 'ding expose their infants if they have too many.
- ✚ The Zhi must deny the gods.
- ✚ The Porlair run and sometimes rut with the antelope.
- ✚ The Mei 'li eat insects and spiders, often while still alive.<sup>3</sup>
- ✚ The Su-tchi maim their men.
- ✚ The Li Leng Mai send everyone older than 30 out of their tribe to die.

These things are not done from unschooled ignorance; rather they are the evolved compromises made between people and reality.

---

<sup>3</sup> Though I guess feeding dead people insects is an even savager custom.

## Practical Matters

Savage peoples are like the civilized peoples in that they will judge the characters. However their judgment offers room for strange phenomena passing in and out of their world--- they will not always kill, imprison, assimilate, or reject the characters. The danger may be further reduced by the use of the **People Power**, which governs even the savage peoples.

## Moral Implications

Construe the savage peoples as presenting insights that the characters must understand, and will not. This lacuna is problematic both for their ability to actually create the world and for their worthiness to do so; in failing to apprehend the truths at the core of the savage peoples' existence, the characters prove that they will lose their way.

The characters may fail in any of the following---

- ✚ Finding value in those of savage virtue;
  - ✚ Defeating those of savage cruelty;
  - ✚ Facing the unintended consequences of actions the characters thought innocuous---
    - That are to a tribe a promise of marriage;
    - That are to a tribe a promise of help;
    - That are to a tribe a commitment to do something;
    - That are to a tribe a commitment to do something impossible;
    - That endanger a tribe;
    - That force change upon a tribe;
    - That bind the characters into a tribe---
- In recognition of the nature of the lands; and
- ✚ Judging what must be done when niceties and savage realities conflict.

It is also worth pressing the wisher on why the world of their desiring should require such horrible compromises to survive.

## The Fairies

The fairies are not truly kindled---

Rather they are as projections cast onto the stage of the world by some firelight behind them, material renderings of an immaterial substance.

They are not part of **what is**. The true selves of the fairies are the domains of what should be and what must be. Still, in their courts there is *something* that

is, a set of puppets driven by the will of their unkindled minds and souls, creatures affecting life because they can think of nothing better to do, and in whose affectation of life there is such warmth and power and volition as the living creatures have.

### Practical Matters

The fairies will attempt to construe the characters as the agents of destiny that will find and wish on the Jewel of All Desiring.

They will fail on two grounds, causing the characters to lose the game.

The minor point of failure is that the fairies have a high standard for those to construe as the wisher and companions. The characters may fail to meet this standard

- ✚ As inadequate vehicles for the necessary exploration of moral questions;
- ✚ By failing to bring closure to some ancient troubles;
- ✚ By breaking with narrative conventions while achieving certain goals;
- ✚ By failing to achieve those goals within the constraints of narrative conventions;
- ✚ By refusing or failing to bring new troubles to some ancient peace;
- ✚ By failing to prove abstract superiority according to meaningless standards; or
- ✚ In deviating from a necessary script of facing a series of small troubles, a reversal at the edge of victory, the final seizing from the jaws of darkness of a new victory, and a denouement.

More importantly the fairies will be unable to construe any meaning at all for the characters because the stories of the fairies themselves will remain incoherent and contradictory.

It's worth stating that we're not talking about *players* when we bring up all this stuff about exploring moral questions and adhering to narrative conventions. In fact, the fairies are likely to look very poorly on players who inject themselves into these matters--- that's *cheating*, like when Greek heroes were inextricably fated to suffer or prosper in certain ways and didn't have to actively work at it.<sup>4</sup> It's up to the *characters* to fulfill the fairies' desires, and to do so in a world that explicitly does *not* bow to narrative conventions; if the players were willing to take care of all the details the fairies probably wouldn't fail to exist. It's up to the characters to make the romantic rules of story work out---

---

<sup>4</sup> "Bah, it doesn't matter if I put him in a casket and push him out to sea, I'm sure if he's supposed to kill me the inexorable workings of fate will arrange for it. Also, outlaw the discus."

And it's precisely because they can't do that, because reality can't be a perfect story where everything works out, that the wisher's journey is foredoomed.

### Moral Implications

You may construe the characters' participation in the stories of the fairies as evidence of a creeping broadening intrusion of irreality into their existence. Their acceptance of narrative causality---the *need* to accept narrative causality---implies the fundamental nonexistence and contingency of the world in which they live.

Conversely you may construe the characters' refusal to participate, or failure to participate, in the stories of the fairies as evidence of an incongruity between their actions and the foretold necessities of their actions---an incomplete and incoherent causal structure that *also* suggests the fundamental nonexistence of the world in which they live.

Put another way, you can construe knowledge of *what should be* or *what must be* as fundamentally corrosive to the independence and self-sufficiency of *what is*.

The fairies are governed by the **Creatures** Power.

### Map of the World

In the north there are ziggurats and candied mountains and rivers of pure water and the cascade of Seven Emph and the burning region.

In the south there is the kingdom Raif and the glory towers and the spark dancers and the plains of Rête and the Star That Fell and the place of wheat and wolves.

In the center there is the great jewel city Tin 'An and the burrows and the storms of ice and fire.

In the east there is the curling body of the seven-headed dragon on whose coils boats sail like the sea, and the island fish and Mount Tenubis and the iron stake that balances the sky and the forest of yearning trees.

In the west there is the glacier Sün Kin and the falling orchard and the river towns and the Citadel at the Edge of the World.

In the beith there are the careless mountains and the long low hills and the bandit region and the Garden of All Regrets and the balloon people and the hanging gate and the twelve and the City of the Air.

### Practical Matters

The substance and geography of the world are governed by the **Substance Power**. Its natural processes are governed by the **Law Power**.

### Moral Implications

Of the six major directions only beith is morally fraught. Construe accordingly.

### Under the World

There are meadows under the world with the ur-toads in them. These are flooded with golden light and are peaceful places, if one is not eaten.

Don't get eaten!

If all of the characters are eaten, you are no longer playing WTF.

### Practical Matters

The ur-toads will eat all of the characters, interrupting your session of WTF before you can win the game.

Also, they are governed by the **Creatures Power**.

### Moral Implications

The ur-toads are majestic and amoral instruments of annihilation!<sup>56</sup>

### The Shadows on the Sun

Above the world there is the sun.

The sun gives life to the world, but its surface is a great burning lake--- to live on the sun is a torment.

Great continent-sized fortresses of dark stone drift on the sun: the homes of thieves and blackguards too notorious to live within the dreaming kingdoms. There in that place of suffering *they* have cool cellars and great riches and ice brought in from the dreaming kingdoms. They transport them there easily, for every fire and every shadow is in potential a gateway to the sun.

---

<sup>5</sup> That is, not really.

<sup>6</sup> Though I guess it is kind of common for ur-toads to take on symbolic resonance over the course of the game!

### Practical Matters

The geography of the sun is governed by the **Substance Power**.  
The gateways to the sun are governed by the **Law Power**.  
The lords of the fortresses are governed by the **People Power**.

If the characters visit the sun then they will probably burn up.

### Moral Implications

Also they will probably fall in with thieves and bad company.

**WTF**



## The Fatalists' Book: Postscript

*scrawled over the blank pages where the atlas of the unkindled kingdoms ought to be.*

USING FATALISM	
<p><b>Declare that you wish to use fatalism.</b></p> <p>Ask one question about the setting.</p>	
<p>Set a target ranging from 0 to 7. This is the Knowledge result you will need to answer this question with fatalism.</p>	
<p>Make a Knowledge roll and declare your result.</p>	
OPTIONALLY	<p>If another player wishes to use fatalism to answer this question, they may make a Knowledge roll and declare the result.</p>
OPTIONALLY	<p>The Weaver may answer the question.</p>
<p>If the player with the highest result has a result that equals or exceeds the specified target, they have succeeded.</p> <p>Whatever answer a player that has succeeded believes to be true is now correct.</p>	
<p>The player who succeeds states the fact of their success.</p>	
OPTIONALLY	<p>Players, particularly any successful player, may now state what they believe the correct answer to be.</p>

## Knowledge Rolls

Here is how to make a Knowledge roll.

Roll a number of six-sided dice equal to your Knowledge score plus your score in the most relevant Power.

If this is "0" dice then roll one die and subtract 1.

Your result is the highest die rolled.

If you roll more than one 6, add +1 to the result for each extra 6 you roll.

If you are rolling to determine which player has the highest Knowledge result, and there is a tie for highest roll, eliminate all of the players who did not roll the highest result and re-roll.

## Truth

Here are some notes on Truth.

The Truth of a Gift is part of the setting. You can strengthen or weaken the Truth of a Gift with a Knowledge roll and an appropriate question.

- ✚ You must warn the other players of this intention when you make your roll.
- ✚ You should set a target of 5 or greater.
- ✚ You must receive the highest result.
- ✚ You must state the answer to the question.
- ✚ You must state the new Truth value for the Gift.

You may use this ability to remove a Gift's Truth entirely. It retains its normal Valence and Mechanical Support until such time as the author of WTF releases errata formally removing that Gift from your game.

## Creating Gifts

Here are some notes on Gifts

The existence of a Gift is part of the setting. You can create a new Gift for yourself with a Knowledge roll and an appropriate question.

- ✚ You must warn the other players of this intention when you make your roll –
  - including a rough description of the Gift you intend to create.
- ✚ You should set a target of 7 or greater.
- ✚ You must receive the highest result.
- ✚ You must state the answer to the question.

The Gift begins with weak Mechanical Support, ordinary Valence, and whichever level of Truth you prefer.

## Destroying Gifts

Here are some notes on destroying Gifts.

You can destroy one of your Gifts with a Knowledge roll and an appropriate question.

- ✚ You must have destructive Knowledge.
- ✚ You must warn the other players of this intention when you make your roll.
- ✚ You should set a target of 7 or greater.
- ✚ You must receive the highest result.
- ✚ You must state the answer to the question.

# The Theurgists' Book: What Should Be

## Core Rules

These are the only things you *must* understand about the rules of WTF.

## Resolving Disputes

If the players disagree regarding something about the rules,  
. . . and it's difficult to reach consensus at the player level,  
. . . and at least one person isn't interested in arguing further,

then every player has the option of making an Insight roll. This is optional and you should make this roll if you feel you have a strong opinion.

Treat the player with the highest Insight roll as correct.

If nobody rolls, the Weaver states their opinion; treat this as correct.

## What if Some Rule Prevents Me from Making This Roll?

You are always allowed to make this roll. This is a rule that transcends all other rules in **WTF**: if you are not allowed to roll Insight as part of dispute resolution, you are no longer playing **WTF**.

## What if We Can't Agree on Who Is A Player?

All involved parties must stop playing **WTF** until you agree on who is playing.

## What if We Can't Agree on How to Roll to Resolve a Rules Dispute?

First, see if you can get a compromise solution based on group tradition, the Weaver's thoughts, or common sense--- something like, "deciding whether something is **Creatures** or **Law** is an Insight roll based on the higher of the two Powers."

## What if We Still Can't Agree on How to Roll to Resolve a Rules Dispute?

Every player who chooses to make the roll rolls one six-sided die. The person with the highest number has the highest Insight total. If there is a tie for highest number, eliminate the players with lower numbers and repeat the process with the remaining players.

### What if We *Still* Can't Agree on How to Roll to Resolve a Rules Dispute?

If you still cannot come to a consensus on how to resolve rules disputes, you are no longer playing **WTF**. God knows what you're playing. Probably Hybrid.

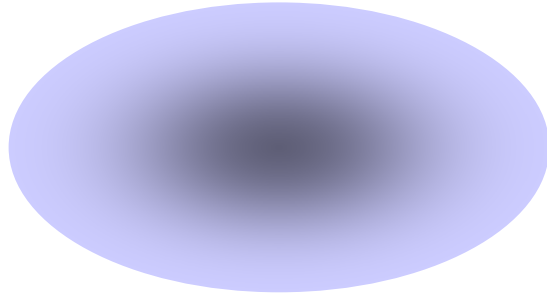
### Clear?

If you're clear on what to do if people disagree about the rules, does it really matter whether you've got the rest of the rules right or wrong?

**WTF**

## Saturn, the Royal Planet

Saturn, The Royal Planet



Saturn is the planet of Kings. It is not an invisible planet but it does have a ring. Around it hangs a haze of recumbent authority. That's Saturn!

### Pramana and Mimamsa

*Pramana* is the quality of Prameya that causes it to move and change. It is the fundamental god-magic of both theurgists and the Weaver---in practical terms, the mantle of authority.

The theurgist speaks of *what should be*, and the dream of the dreaming kingdoms changes---

Transforms, boils, rekindles into something else.

For the Weaver it is different. To the Weaver there is only one Prameya that changes according to imperceptible processes within the brain; the Weaver uses *Pramana* to make manifest in others' dreams the change that has already birthed itself in the Weaver's own.

Whether this distinction has substance or only arrogance to it is a matter of great attention in the dreaming kingdoms, and many a learned volume of debate.

Regardless.

*Pramana* churns the substance of the dreaming kingdoms, disrupting their forms and accidents with its power. An intercessory element of *mimamsa* (interpretation) forms, accumulating the *danda* of the disrupted world and taking on new forms according to the theurgist or Weaver's intention. This *mimamsa* then "cools" and "sets," becoming the substance of Prameya once again.

One school of thought holds that Pramana is a power not immediately part of the experiential world. It exists only in motion---in the invisible timeless transition states between the reality of one moment and the reality of the next. In this theory Pramana never instantiates as a real thing or substance.

Another school alleges that Pramana is always an inherent and integral part of *what is*, an energy that pervades all substance and causes it to live.

The truth of the matter is indiscernible with the tools available in this game. You might try rolling something using the rules of one of your other RPGs.

## The Power of the Shadow

It is the power of the shadow to disrupt *danda*.

For the fatalist therefore the shadow is a thing of slow decay---a quiet hungry nonbeing at the edge of the world that slowly unkindles the *what is*. It is difficult for a fatalist to look at the shadow directly because the experience of the fatalist is conditioned on *danda*. It requires a peculiar trick of the mind, wherein absence becomes a thing and the disintegration of theory becomes a theory of its own, for a fatalist to fall to the shadow's sway.

For the theurgist it differs.

The theurgist is an intimate associate of the shadow because when theurgy and the shadow meet the result is magic gone awry. The theurgist stirs the dreaming kingdoms but *mimamsa* does not manifest; what is left is a senseless ruin.

Thus on the one hand the theurgists are the foremost line of defense against the shadow. They cultivate the garden of *danda* and seek to make the world more real than it was; in so doing they constrain the flexibility of their powers but augment too their force.

On the other hand the theurgists are the shadow's greatest servants, for they wear a mantle of *Pramana* and bring change wherever they go. In stillness the shadow gnaws but does not prosper; only in times of great turmoil may it gulp whole chunks of world at once.

Put another way, the theurgist deals in *what should be*, and that--- as has been stated before and will be stated again--- is both dangerous and necessary to *what is*.

## Corrupt Insight

The process for the corruption of Insight emerges out of play.

It may so happen that the Weaver declares that another person's Insight is *corrupt*.

This initiates a conflict.

The Weaver and the accused theurgist make Insight rolls. The Weaver has a +2 bonus.

Each success reduces the *sense* of the world, burning out the coherence and completeness of some element of the game---as if a civilized people were to become fairies, or the sea were to float above the land, or the rules for something were to detach entirely from consequence. This is most like the effects of "weak" Mechanical Support on a Gift: the devastated region appears in theory to retain its attributes but practice contradicts it.

The classic forms for this reduction are the introduction of a paradoxical or nonsensical element into the world or the loss of the practical impact of a thing. In the first case, fire might become cold; in the second, you might just never notice fire burning or heating anything again.

Three times---

Out of up to five rolls, which may be held in quick succession or over the course of time---

Three times the Weaver must win<sup>7</sup> to prove their point that the target theurgist is corrupt. If they should do so, it has the following effects:

- ✚ The target should write "Corrupt" next to their Insight;
- ✚ The target loses two dice on all future Insight rolls<sup>8</sup>;
- ✚ The target is no longer bound or obligated in any fashion to honest advocacy when using Insight. They may declare anything they like regarding how things "should be" and use Insight to back that up;
- ✚ If the person who wishes on the Jewel of All Desiring does not explicitly forsake any and all corrupt theurgists and cast them into darkness, you have lost the game.

The consequences for the theurgist's victory are equally dire. If the theurgist wins three times--- succeeding with the highest result--- the accuser is no longer the Weaver. They are cast down from their exalted place and immured in horrible durance within the world.

---

<sup>7</sup> that is, succeed with the highest result

<sup>8</sup> until reset by the acquisition of a new Insight score the next time you create characters



The defending theurgist is now the Weaver.

## Destructive Knowledge

For fatalists the process of corruption is simpler.

A fatalist may always declare their own Knowledge destructive. This frees them from their reliance on *danda* and opens their inner eye to the contemplation of the shadow.

Fatalists with destructive Knowledge are no longer obligated to report honestly on the world of the game and may delete Gifts from their own character at whim. More generally, they gain the ability to unmake, revise, and retcon the facts of the game to suit their desires and principles.

And what of the world?

There is no thing *automatically* lost when someone declares their Knowledge destructive--- for the shadow is as True a thing as any other. Rather the interpretation of the player's words becomes problematic from that point forward, diminishing the capacity of everyone in the game to clearly distinguish what is True from what is Not.

## Deceptive Harmony

The disintegration of Harmony is not so much declared as recognized. When Harmony is lost, it is incumbent upon the group that one player be found to declare another person's Harmony *deceptive*.

Divide the players then into two groups--- those who *support* the contention and those who *deny* it.

The accuser rolls a number of dice equal to the number of players who support their contention (including themselves).

The defender rolls a number of dice equal to the number of players who deny the contention---likely including themselves.

Except for the change in the number of dice, this functions as a Harmony roll, following the other rules in the postscript to the wishers' book.

Each success reduces the *moral weight* of something in the world---burns out its relevance to the search for the Jewel of All Desiring. Dilemmas become meaningless games; horrors become tricks of prose; and pillars of hope and truth become tinny pabulum. What had worth and valence becomes set dressing

for the game. This process is not reversible through Harmony until the struggle ends.

Three victories again---

Out of five rolls---

And one side may claim the matter closed. If it is the accuser who wins then the defender has deceptive Harmony. This means the following:

- ✚ Construe the defender as an adversary;
- ✚ The defender may make Harmony rolls "from the Shadow's perspective" to advocate virtues the defender does not support;
- ✚ If the defender wishes on the Jewel of All Desiring, the players lose the game.

If the defender wins, then the attacker is no longer playing WTF.

# Additional Rules Information

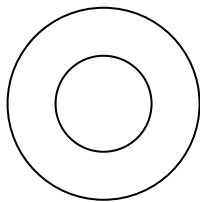
## Rules Toys

Here is how to achieve something using the rules.

Declare your intention to achieve something using the rules. The Weaver picks an appropriate *rules toy*.

Each rules toy is a conceptual machine built out of rules that tells you what to roll to achieve your objective. Here are the standard components of rules toys.

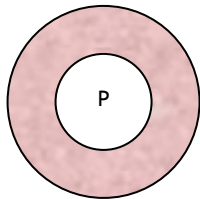
## Event Donut



Donut Data

The event donut represents an event. It comes in the following types:

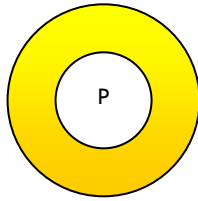
## Player-Driven Donut



Player-Driven Donut

This event donut represents a player interjection. Every rules toy begins with a player-driven donut to make sure that nobody uses it when there are no players around.

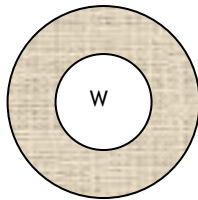
### Gold Donut



Gold Donut

This event donut represents a *different* player's interjection. Some people believe that the Kings and Queens of Raif possess the Pad' Aig rules toy, which features a gold donut.

### Weaver-Driven Donut



Weaver-Driven Donut

Weaver-driven donuts cause something to happen, but the exact details are up to the Weaver.

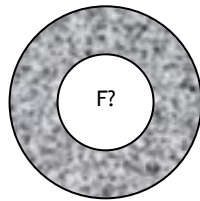
### Roleplaying Donuts



Roleplaying Donut

Roleplaying donuts require the player to satisfy the Weaver or the other players in some fashion before continuing.

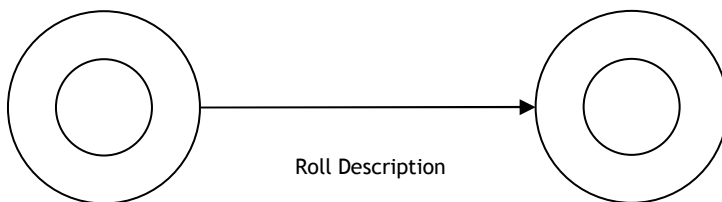
## Fatalism Donut



Fatalism Donut

Fatalism donuts cause something to happen or be true in the world.

## Straight Connector



To follow a straight connector, you make a dice roll. If you succeed, follow the connector; if you fail, follow the connector anyway.

Use **Mechanics** rolls to reach Weaver-driven donuts, **Confidence** rolls to reach fatalism donuts, and **Meaning** rolls to reach roleplay donuts. If you are playing **WTF**, you can reach a player-driven donuts automatically, and if you are not, you have no legitimate need for the **WTF** rules.

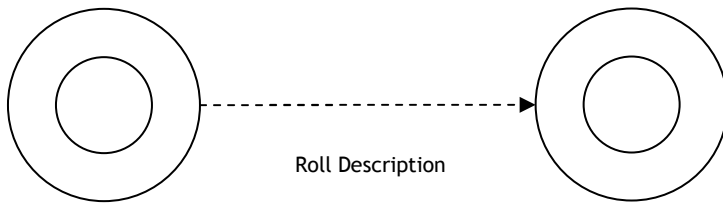
### How Dice Rolls Work

Even the best swordfighters have off days. Even John Galt and Aslan are prone to occasional moral stumbling. Into even the most brilliantly-edited of corpuses the occasional continuity error crawls: and where the brightest banners are raised the greatest causes tend to fall.

Skill alone is not enough. There is also a random element to the world.

In roleplaying games such as **WTF**, the players roll dice to provide or simulate that random element. The numbers on the dice, as modified by fixed factors such as the Truth of a given Gift, determine whether the roll "succeeds" or "fails."

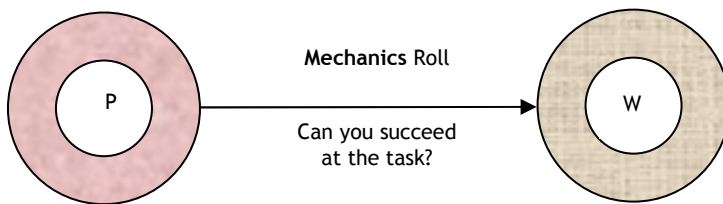
## Dashed Connector



To follow a dashed connector, you make a roll. If you fail, you cannot follow the dashed connector at this time.

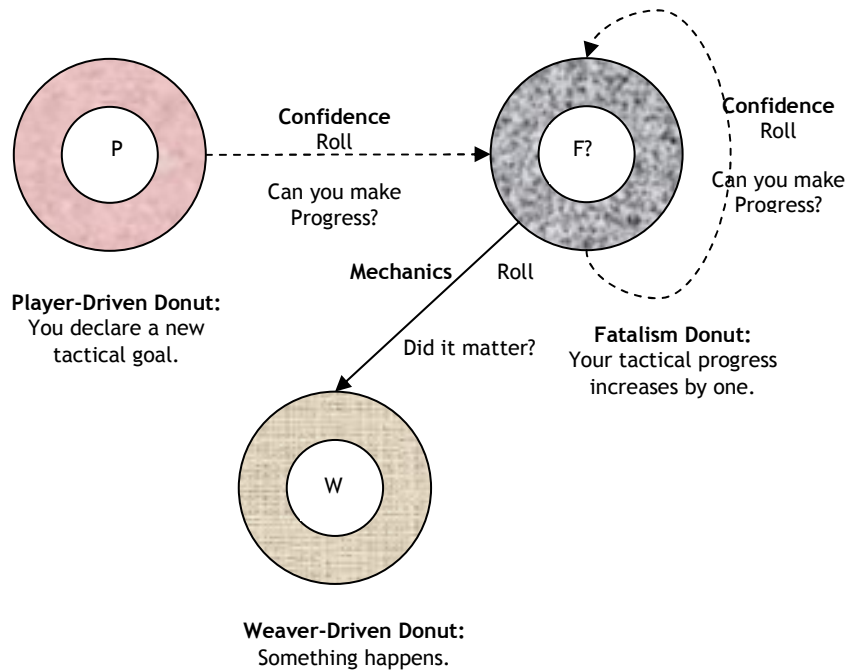
## Task-Based Rules Toys

### Task Toy



You can use this rules toy to accomplish a straightforward task using the rules.

## Tactical Toy

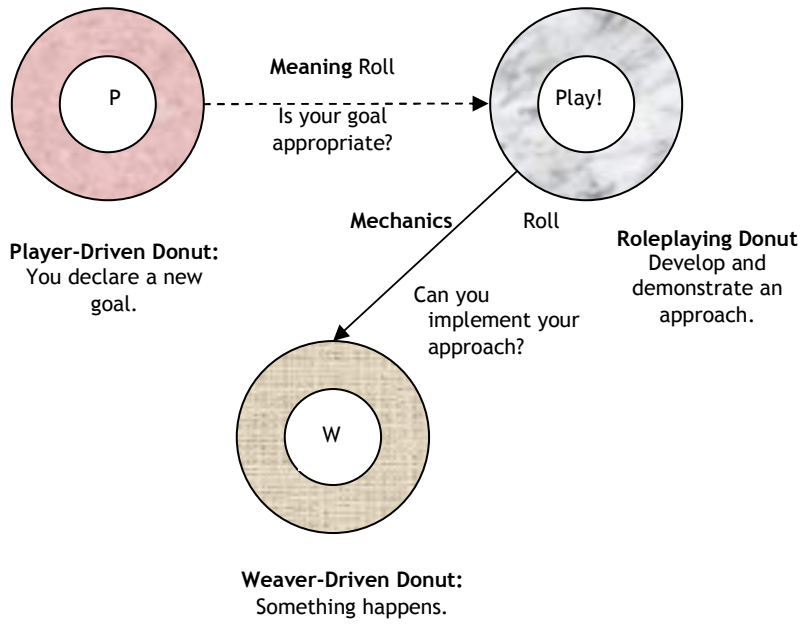


### Achieving Tactical Goals in a Conflict

You can work on tactical goals in a conflict. Your tactical progress on the declared goal is a number that typically starts at 0. Each time you increase that number you make progress towards your goal. Finally, you apply that progress towards the larger conflict.

# Outcome-Based Rules Toys

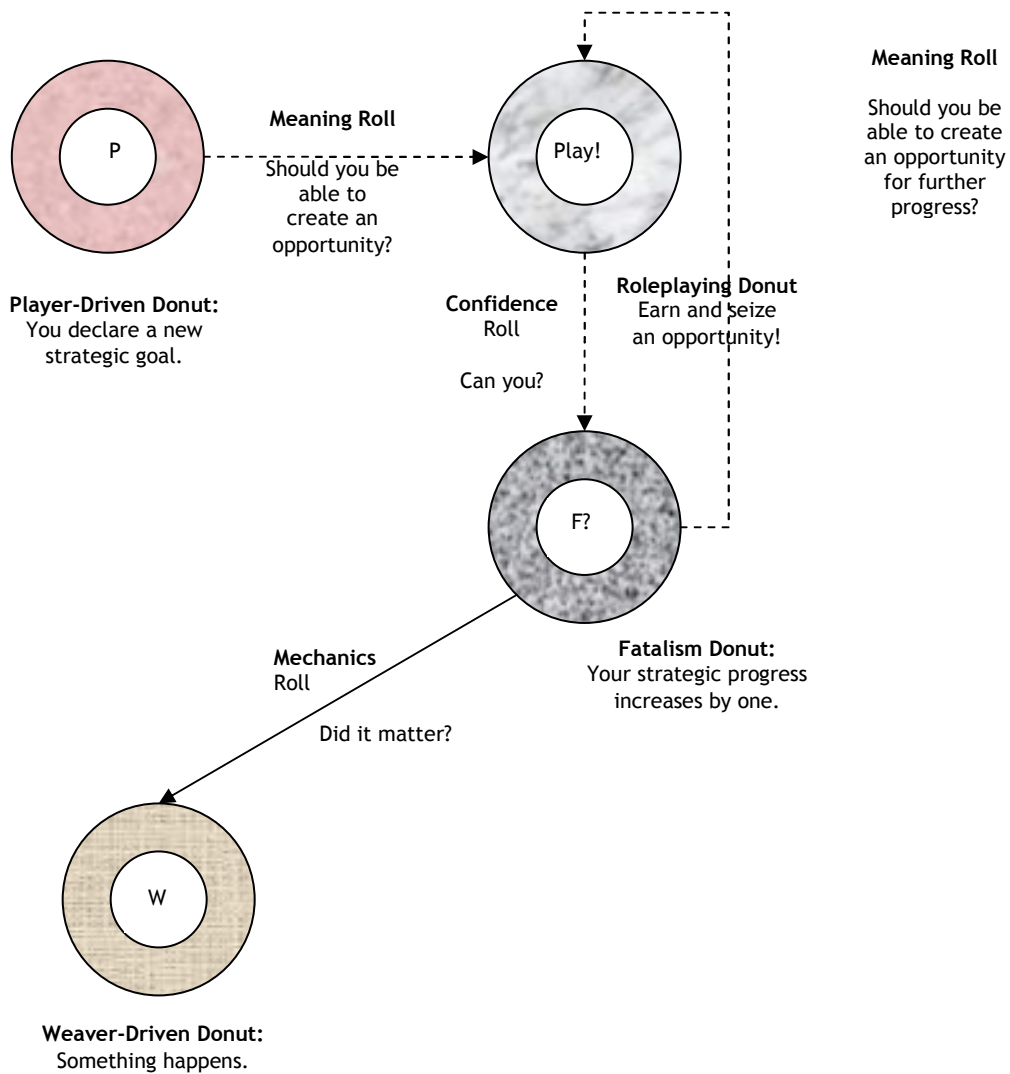
## Outcome Toy



You can use this rules toy to achieve a desirable outcome using the rules.



## Strategy Toy



## Achieving Strategic Goals

You can work on strategic goals in the game as a whole. Your strategic progress on the declared goal is a number that typically starts at 0. Each time you increase that number you make progress towards your goal. Finally, you exploit that progress.

## Additional Toys

Players can discover additional rules toys over the course of the game.

## The Theurgists' Book – Postscript

*certain mad sages hypothesize a substrate upon which the rules toys rest.*

USING THEURGY	
<p><b>Declare that you wish to use theurgy.</b></p> <p>State that you believe something about the rules, setting, or situation <i>should</i> be the case.</p>	
<p>The Weaver sets a target ranging from 0 to 7. This is the Insight result you will need to apply theurgy and make what you believe should be true, true.</p>	
<p>Make an Insight roll and declare your result.</p>	
<p>OPTIONALLY</p>	<p>If another player wishes to support your statement or state that something different should be the case, they may do so, make an Insight roll, and declare the result.</p>
<p>If the player with the highest result has a result that equals or exceeds the Weaver-specified target, they have succeeded.</p> <p>The setting, rules, and/or situation change such that what the successful player has stated or confirmed should be true is now correct.</p>	
<p>The player who succeeds states the fact of their success.</p>	

### Insight Rolls

Here is how to make an Insight roll.

Roll a number of six-sided dice equal to your Insight score plus your score in the most relevant Power.

If this is "0" dice then roll one die and subtract 1.

Your result is the highest die rolled.

If you roll more than one 6, add +1 to the result for each extra 6 you roll.

If you are rolling to determine which player has the highest Insight result, and there is a tie for highest roll, eliminate all of the players who did not roll the highest result and reroll.

## Mechanical Support

**Here are some notes on Mechanical Support.**

The Mechanical Support of a Gift is in the domain of theurgy. You can strengthen or weaken it with an Insight roll and an appropriate question.

- ✚ You must warn the other players of this intention when you make your roll –
  - including which character this will affect and
  - which Gift you intend to change.
- ✚ The Weaver should set a target of 5.
- ✚ You must receive the highest result.
- ✚ You must state and explain the new Mechanical Support value for the Gift.

# The Wishers' Book: In the Shadow of the Invisible

## Core Rules

These are the only things you *must* understand about how to play WTF.

## Resolving Disputes

If the players disagree about how to play WTF,  
. . . and it's difficult to reach consensus at the player level,  
. . . and at least one person isn't interested in arguing further,

then every player has the option of making a Harmony roll. This is optional and you should make this roll if you feel you have a strong opinion.

This text endorses the opinion of the player with the highest Harmony roll.

If nobody rolls, then this text can't help you.

## What if We Disagree About *How* to Make a Harmony Roll?

Treat that as a rules question. Use the rules in the Theurgist's Book.

## What if We Disagree About Whether I Can Make a Harmony Roll?

How are they planning to stop you?

## What if I am Physically Prevented from Rolling?

Please your captors in whatever fashion your conscience can bear until you find an opportunity to escape.

## What if I am Physically Unable to Make a Harmony Roll?

Pick an equivalent randomizer. You shouldn't play WTF unless everyone has a randomizer that everyone agrees that they can use.

## What if We Disagree about Whether this is a Rules Dispute or a How to Play Dispute?

Break it into two questions. The second question is the matter at hand. The first is a dispute about how to play —

“Is this the kind of thing that one treats as a rules dispute when playing WTF?”

With regards to this first question, this text endorses the answer of the player with the highest Harmony roll.

### Clear?

The author has a strong sense of what you're supposed to be doing when you play WTF.

That said – you can't read her mind.

It's protected by the fundamental isolation of personhood and the unbridgeable divide between soul and soul!

So don't worry too much about the author. If you can figure out what *your group* thinks you're supposed to be doing, does it really matter if the author would approve?

### Postscript:

What if Someone Asks, "Is Deciding How to Roll Harmony the Kind of Thing One Treats as a Rules Dispute When Playing WTF?"

You might think that, having anticipated this problem, we'd have a solution.

Instead, we have a koan.

Once upon a time, a famous Zen master offered to truthfully and faithfully answer any question.

"What is 2+2?" asked one of his students.

"5," answered the Zen master.

It turned out that it was a completely different Zen master that had promised to tell the truth. *This* Zen master had promised to lie!

**WTF**

## Venus, the Dramatic Planet

Venus, The Dramatic Planet



Venus, the Dramatic Planet

Venus is the planet of love. It is not a hidden planet but Vedic astrologers studied it anyway. Also it has a very hot atmosphere.

## Natya and Rasa

The techniques by which players imbue the substance of WTF and the dreaming kingdoms with universal love are called *Natya*. These illumine the dreaming kingdoms with light or, when used deceptively, cover it in shadow. As you exert your love you produce *rasa*, the characteristic of enjoyment or relish<sup>9</sup> that people feel in the presence of things that know and receive love.

The players' efforts to incarnate and instantiate a transcendent spirit of infinite universal love in the fabric of the game are the source of the *meaning* of the game. It is the contention of the author that players cannot help but catch fire with this burning spirit as soon as they attempt to play WTF, preventing any inappropriate uses of the mechanics below.

## You and WTF

**Here is why you are playing this game.**

Fate is not an external or an internal force. Rather fate flows out of the person you are and the world you are living in.

One can look at fate as the inexorable consequences of being yourself.

Your fate to play WTF works itself out through one of the procedural flowcharts below.

---

<sup>9</sup> Not a condiment.

## Fate Node



Fate Node

Procedural flowcharts begin with your fate to play WTF. If you're a creature outside of fate then you can't use these flowcharts.<sup>10</sup>

## Manifestation and Eventuality Node



Manifestation and Eventuality  
Node

The manifestation and eventuality node represents the contingent instantiation of your fate to play WTF. If you reach this node on any flowchart<sup>11</sup> you manifest the sense-details and cognitive appurtenances of playing WTF. Now you are playing this game.

## Enacting Node



Enacting Node

The enacting node represents the behavior patterns necessary to enact WTF in the material world.

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<sup>10</sup> Unless you start in the middle and create a mystic ambiguity about how you got there.

<sup>11</sup> May not apply to user-created flowcharts.

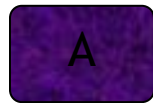
## Societal Node



Societal Node

The societal node represents the social and societal structures that facilitate and code your sense of the experience of this game.

## Shadow Node



Shadow Node

The shadow node represents the willful ego that does not want to play WTF.

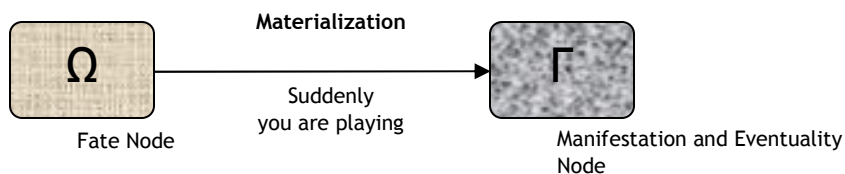
"It's unplayable!" you cry.

"She's gone off the deep end this time!"

We love nothing so much as to exceed ourselves and grow, and struggle against nothing so hard as our transcendence.

## You are a Child of the Divine

### Unexpected WTF



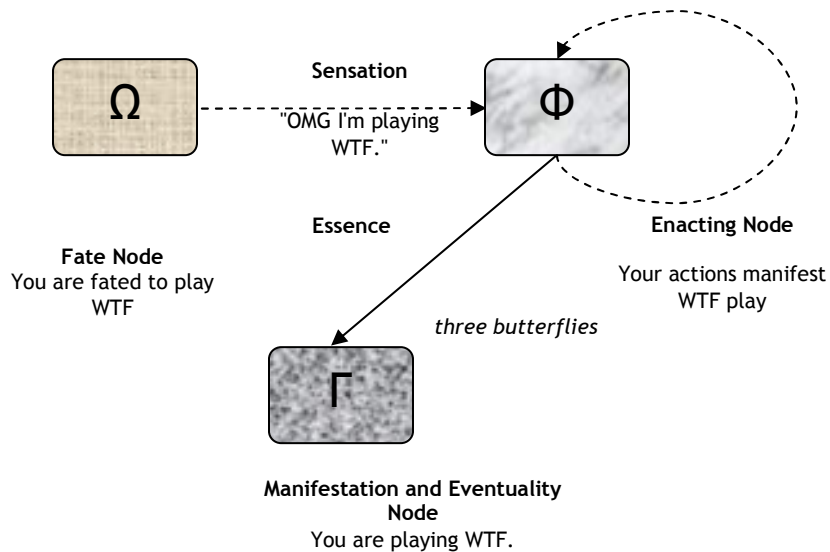
This procedural flowchart covers unplanned WTF with no ego-intervention. Your fate-potential to play is dormant. Then you are playing.



How did this happen? YOU DON'T KNOW.

The truth is, you probably do know, if you go back and intellectualize every step along the way. But why would you do that and spoil the delightful *now*?

## Sensation-Cognition Action WTF



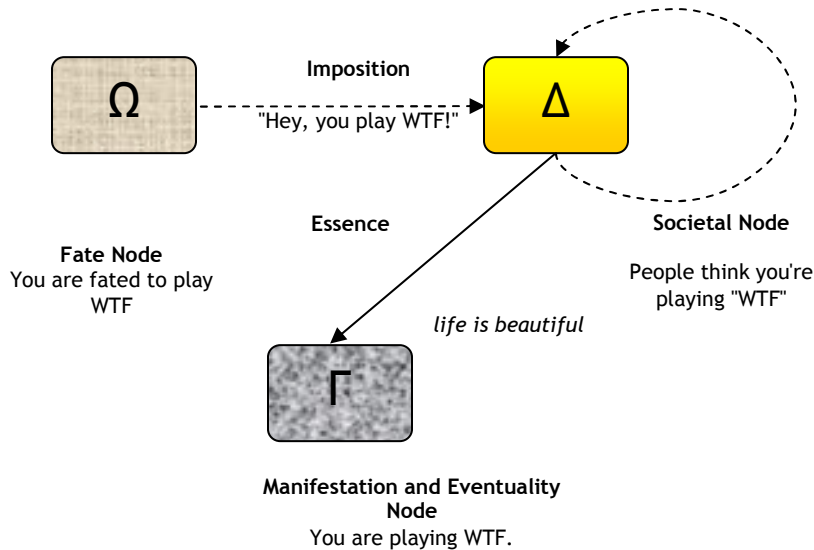
This procedural flowchart explains how a person gradually transitions from a pre-WTF state into active play. The initial sensation of play is misleading, though not outright false---you *feel* as if you're playing WTF, but you have not yet reached the genuine experience. Instead you are driven by an inaccurate sensation or conception that you are playing WTF into enacting WTF play. This in turn creates additional sensory and cognitive illusions of play. Yet delusion is transient and the truth remains. As you struggle through the cycle of rote action and sensation, the distracting ego-sensation fades away and the genuine experience begins to bloom. Suddenly---

*three butterflies*

---love blossoms inexplicably and fills your play with light.

## Caught between Chaos and Order You Unfold

### Feedback-Induced WTF



This procedural flowchart presents a crisis that faces the individualized soul.

It begins with the fate of a person who will play WTF. This fate is recognized by others who categorize and conceptualize it falsely---

Providing false images of what it means to play WTF.

Yet just as the true thing shone through the morass of sensation and ego-conception that built up in the Sensation-Cognition Action WTF procedural flowchart, genuine roleplaying can manifest through the shroud of others' ideas.

Suddenly as you struggle in their petty and confined ideas of who you are and what you are doing---

*life is beautiful*

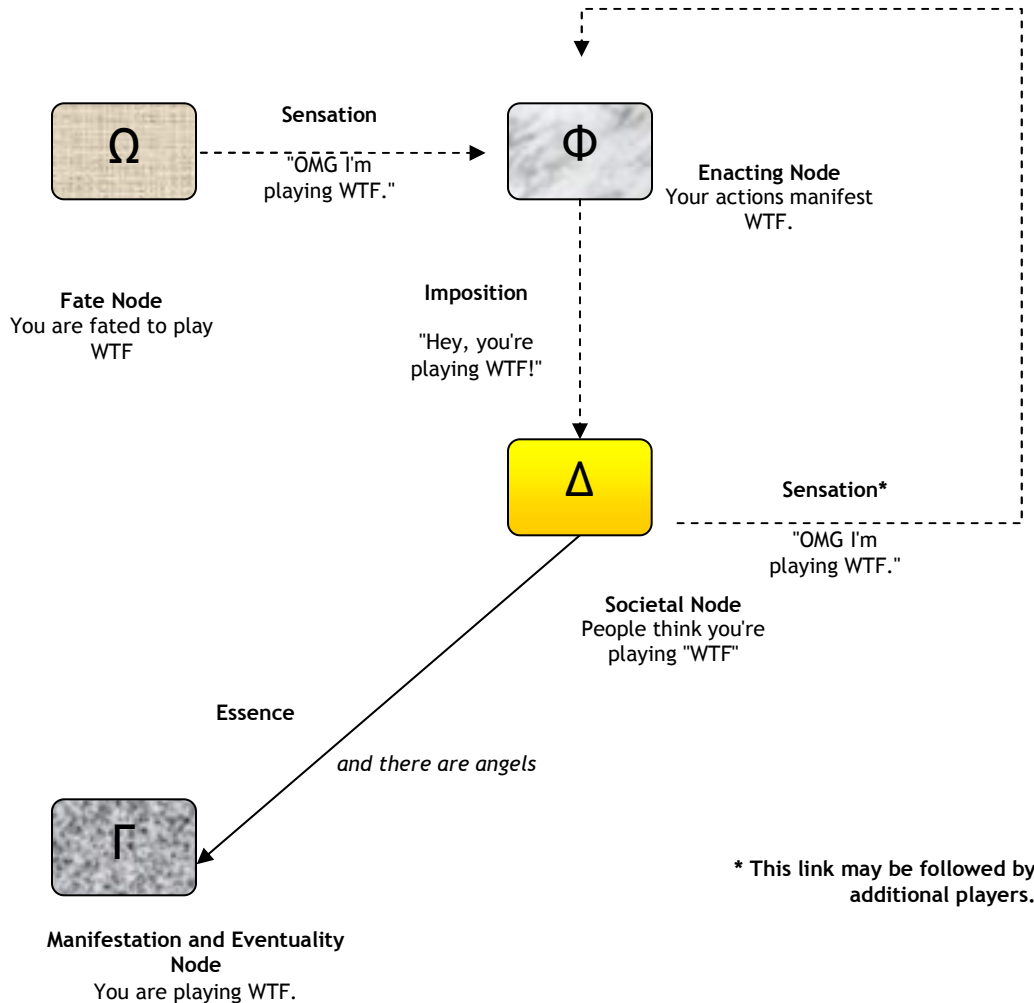
---the seed of truth quickens and all things fall into order; your fate and your role and the immanent god-spirit in existence suddenly align.

A moment ago you were playing because other people wanted you to, or expected you to, or falsely imagined that you were.

Now suddenly they see you as playing because you *are*---and that recognition transforms and shatters the boxes they'd put you in. You are made anew, the gamer behind the game.

And you will laugh to know it so and to see how much the fool---and how greatly wise---they were.

### Autopoietic WTF



This procedural flowchart represents true self-generating WTF.

A person lives in a condition of chaos---threatened always by the potential emergence of death, disaster, and despair.

Or, of course, great beauty.

And into that state, as a means of reckoning with the tides of chaos, a person takes a moment to realize---

"OMG I'm playing WTF."

And no sooner is it realized than it is enacted; no sooner enacted than noticed; and suddenly it spreads.

At first it is simple correlation. Then it is harmony. At first it is one person playing. Then there is a union.

We are all parts of one great creature. We are all capable, if given the opportunity, of flowing into one.

*and there are angels*

And there is WTF.

## Structure of Play

Here is some additional information on what you do during play.

### Before Play

If you are playing WTF, it is obviously too late to do anything about what happens before play. It's best not to worry about that part too much.

## Character Creation

### Introduction

Before beginning to tell the story, get together with the other players.

Create characters together.

Encourage everyone to create a character simultaneously--- that's the recommended way to do it!

If you find that some people have already created characters, though, go ahead and create yours on your own.

Discuss the characters and the world with the other players so as to make yourself more aware of possible opportunities for fun.

### Process

**Here is how to create your WTF character.**

If this is the beginning of the game, players go through these steps together — everyone does stage 1, then everyone does stage 2, then everyone does stage 3, etcetera.

### Stage 1 – Character Concept

Decide on a brief character history and concept, if you have not already.

Spend at least fifteen seconds and at most XX<sup>12</sup> minutes expressing this concept and history in writing or aloud.

---

<sup>12</sup> Construe this as sufficiently descriptive.

## Stage 2 – Supernatural Abilities

### Attributes

Pick one of Harmony, Insight, or Knowledge to be your highest Attribute.  
Your highest Attribute starts at 4.  
Your other two Attributes start at 0.

Divide two bonus points among the three Attributes in any fashion you desire.

#### Examples

You could have Harmony 1, Insight 5, and Knowledge 0.  
You could have Harmony 4, Insight 0, and Knowledge 2.

### Powers

Pick one of Creatures, Law, People, Self, Substance to be your highest Power.  
Pick one of Creatures, Law, People, Self, or Substance to be your second-highest Power.  
Your highest Power begins at 3.  
Your second-highest Power begins at 1.  
All other Powers, including Shadow and all specialty Powers, begin at 0.

#### Examples

You could have Creatures 3, Law 0, People 0, Self 0, and Substance 1.  
You could have Creatures 0, Law 1, People 0, Self 3, and Substance 0.

### Customization

You have 3 customization points.

For one point, you can:

- ✚ Add +1 to the Creatures, Law, People, Self, or Substance Power, to a maximum of 5.
- ✚ Add +1 to a specialty Power, to a maximum of 5.

For two points, you can:

- ✚ Add +1 to an Attribute, to a maximum of 5.
- ✚ Add +1 to Shadow Power.

#### Examples

You could add 3 to your Substance.  
You could add 1 to Shadow Power and 1 to Law Power.  
You could add 1 to Harmony and 1 to People Power.

### Stage 3 – Are you the Weaver?

Decide whether you are the Weaver.

If you are the Weaver, announce this to the group. Note that only one person is the Weaver. If you are the Weaver and someone else speaks up, it's up to you whether to denounce them now or let their heresy flourish. (But don't let their heresy flourish if they're going to take the later denunciation seriously. That way lies hard feelings!)

### Stage 4 – Gifts

Write down up to four Gifts for your character.

Decide which Gift is going to benefit from a "strong" Quality, and which Gifts (that is, all the rest) will have to have a "weak" Quality.

#### Superior Gift

If you have at least one Gift, assign one Gift either---

- ✚ **Strong Truth,**
- ✚ **Strong Mechanical Support, or**
- ✚ **Strong Valence.**

#### Additional Gifts

For each other Gift, assign it either---

- ✚ **Weak Truth,**
- ✚ **Weak Mechanical Support, or**
- ✚ **Weak Valence.**

#### Remaining Qualities

The remaining Qualities of your Gifts are Ordinary.

#### Customization

You may do one of the following:

- ✚ Write down an additional Gift with one weak and two ordinary Qualities.



✚ Increase one Quality of one Gift.

### Example Character

**Sid**, a Wisher

Sid was raised by the ur-toads under the world as a perfect, strong, and simple lad whose desires would be healthy for everyone. He likes to taste random things he finds.

**Harmony 4**

**Insight 1**

**Knowledge 1**

**Creatures 3, Law 1, People 2, Self 0, Substance 0, Health 1**

**Gift:** Strong and Hale

**Gift:** Knows the secret ways of the ur-toads (strong Valence)

**Gift:** Taster (weak Mechanical Support)

### The Story

If you're playing WTF anyway, you might as well try to have fun.

The best way to have fun with WTF is to work with the other players to tell a story – a story about wishers, theurgists, and fatalists, possibly featuring such things as fairies, ur-toads, and palaces on the sun.

What's the story about?

Well, maybe it's about what you want to be true. Or maybe it's about what *is* true. Or maybe it's about what you *think* is true.

The meaning of the story sometimes kind of gallops past you like a cowboy on the back of an overcharged ur-toad, so it's good to keep a wary eye out and hope you'll find out what it is.

Unlike a novel or play, this story won't have editors and readers making sure that it has strong narrative qualities. Instead it will showcase the creative spirit, personal character, and wondrous dreams of you and the other players. Be prepared for both sides of this amazing and terrible coin.

## Scenes

The game will play out as a series of *scenes*. Each scene defines and then resolves a problem---

More generally a "situation"---

That the characters face.

Each scene also introduces, raises the stakes on, or resolves one or more *crises* facing the characters---serious problems that threaten their ability to find the Jewel of All Desiring and win the game.

The Weaver is responsible for providing these crises and situations if they do not naturally emerge. The Weaver is also responsible for not stifling natural processes by which crises and situations emerge. If the Weaver fails in these charges (or if you are atheists who do not believe in the Weaver) it becomes the duty of the theurgists to bring a proper resolution to the matter.

## Interacting with the Game

During the game players will shape the resolution of the scene by talking. Ultimately however it is only the application of Fatalism, Theurgy, and Harmony---either formally through rolls or informally through expressions of intent and methodology---that the players may avert the many nasty fates awaiting them.

If you've wondered why the fatalism section is chock full of gloomy predictions about how the characters die and/or the players lose the game, that's why!

Ultimately it's Insight, Harmony, and Knowledge that can change or refine that doom.

## Survival and Construal

The goal of the players during each scene is to generate favorable outcomes and meanings for themselves while avoiding corruption. Prudent use of Knowledge and Insight can guarantee the characters' survival, while Harmony and intelligent use of the other Attributes can guarantee their moral worth. Imprudent or excessive use of the Attributes risks corruption.

In practice Attributes may preempt the use of rules toys, setting information, and procedures of play or they may work within them. It is equally valid to declare an immediate victory with Insight or to work subtly within a rules toy to facilitate tactical and strategic progress. Harmony may be used to work subtle changes in the meaning of events or to skip straight to the end of Book

5. Knowledge can explain lacunae in the setting or overwrite all of it with "we're in the world of Law and Order."

Don't be afraid to think big---

But start small.

Don't go too far and fall into shadow before you've had the chance to taste the game!

### Passive Attributes

It is possible to use the Attributes without actively rolling them, particularly when there is a sympathetic Weaver or no Weaver at all. You may apply Knowledge simply by stating things in a very confident, in-character fashion. You may apply Insight by making a coherent argument about how things should be. You may apply Harmony by making a good case about what the players or characters should do. Passive use of your Attributes minimizes your risk of corruption----instead, you risk having your efforts invalidated because you never backed them up with the dice.

### Arcs and Chapters

The scenes of the game will organize into "story arcs," "character arcs," "chapters," and "books."

Story arcs and character arcs are larger plotlines that progress over the course of many scenes. They focus on a single crisis or a set of linked or successive crises. When they end, they resolve a large portion of what it means to play WTF.

Chapters are storylines that progress over the course of *consecutive* scenes. They provide a set of related situations in which the various crises play out. Usually a new chapter begins every time you get together to play WTF and ends when you have to stop for the day. Sometimes that won't work out, in which case, go with the flow.

Books are collections of consecutive chapters. The five books of WTF are the entire corpus of a single universe of play.

### A Digression: How to Talk

We might have been a bit cavalier when we said that the players shape the resolution of a scene by talking---so here's a bit more information on how that works!

The elemental basis of communication in WTF is sound and gesture---vibrations that you transmit through the air and gross physical motions that you use to adjust the pattern of light that you reflect. These vibrations and physical movements acquire meaning from three sources:

- ✚ Your use of characteristic patterns that order them into standardized or identifiable units of meaning;
- ✚ Your use of standardized or personal references that others might recognize as having meaning;
- ✚ Your intention to express yourself and to communicate your meaning to the target.

Ultimately this communication isn't a guide to any thing in the dreaming kingdoms. Instead, it gives others data about *what you are*, or, more specifically, what your intentions might be regarding WTF.

## Making Statements

Here is how to express basic data regarding WTF.

Conceive the pure intention to communicate something to the other players.

Pick the form in which you'll express that thing. You can use one of the standardized forms below or you can invent your own.

Then speak!

## Statements Regarding the World

“My character sneaks into the thief’s fortress.”

A statement regarding the world.

These statements use **data-dense relationships between words** (the “expectingness” or “heavy Prameya” with which words interlock to form complex data blocks) to manifest your pure intention.

In essence you are describing the entirety of a concept – a factual star shading towards enlightenment – in a dense cluster of words and relying on the purity of that concept in itself to express your intention to others.

The fatal flaw of these statements is **hubris**. These statements manifest a universal truth only to the extent that you have authority. Yet because these statements are so dense it is inevitable that they will overreach. Thus, in the example above, you might have strong authority over your character; precedent might very well indicate that you can in fact sneak into the thief's fortress; everything you present might be true, yet it all collapses in a moment if the Weaver reveals that the thief's fortress fell off of the edge of the world two days before. In such a case where is your pure intention?

**Note:** When using these statements to discuss your character, it is customary to use your character's name, "I", and "my character" interchangeably.

### Statements as Made by Your Character

"Before the moon sets twice, I will walk away with your treasure and your heart."

A statement as made by your character.

These statements use **the established pattern of your character's "voice"** and **context wherein your character is speaking** to manifest your pure intention.

In this case your intention is to describe what your character says, more or less verbatim.

The fatal flaw of these statements is **multiple constraints**. These statements have to be appropriate in two contexts at once – the game world and the real world. For example, you might face interruptions in reality while in theory your character has the opportunity to continue speaking.

### Statements as Made by Other Characters

". . . But I don't have a heart."

A statement as made by an ur-toad.

These statements use **the context wherein some character is speaking** to manifest your pure intention.

In this case your intention is to describe what some character says, more or less verbatim.

This technique is most commonly used by the Weaver to speak for non-protagonist characters, but anyone with authority over what another character says can reasonably use this form.

The fatal flaw of this technique is **ambiguity of character**. In the absence of a well-established player-character connection, it is sometimes difficult to firmly establish for others whom you are speaking for.

### Statements Referencing Rules or WTF Concepts

“I want to use the rules to build a castle.”

A statement referencing the rules.

These statements use **highly recognizable references to rules or WTF concepts** to manifest your pure intention.

In essence by referencing some established concept you ground the entirety of your statement in that concept.

The fatal flaw of this technique is **ambiguity of reference**. Because you do not have perfect understanding of WTF, your references implicitly convey an alien intention as well as your own. This intention could in theory come to ripeness within your statement, destroying your statement’s vital organs and parasitically converting it to the service of an alien purpose. For example, you might discover that using the rules to build a castle is more difficult than you had thought!

### Procedural Statements

“Wait, time out – what?”

A procedural statement.

These statements use **highly recognizable references to the current context of communication** to manifest your pure intention.

In this case your intention is to request some specific effort of contemplation, authority, expression, love, or treasure.

The fatal flaw of this technique is **player-character ambiguity**. Sometimes procedural statements exactly resemble things that your character might say. Suppose that something surprising has just happened and a player's uttered the example procedural statement above. There is a highly recognizable reference to the fact that something surprising has just happened, but it is potentially obscured by the fact that both player and character have reason for surprise!

**WTF**

# The Story of the Game

## Prologue

The players discuss what it means to find the Jewel of All Desiring and create the world. Initial statements are *statements regarding the world*---objective statements in the player's voice. However, it is possible at any point to shift into character and begin using *statements as made by your character* or describing the ways in which your character wrestles with the problem laid out above.

Not long after the discussion begins it becomes possible for characters to use supernatural Attributes to shape key elements of how the story will play out.

Will the characters cooperate with or seek to defy the Weaver?

Is this the kind of game where the Weaver starts things off with a plot hook that pulls the characters from their sleepy hometowns or the kind of game where each character's story begins with a "Kicker"---a player-chosen crisis that drives them immediately into action and is relevant to the theme and story of the game?

Are you playing yourselves or are you making up new identities for the course of the game?

And then as suddenly as that it begins.

## Introductions

Each character catches up to the present---simultaneously or in turns.

They are facing a crisis---a Kicker or some other problem tied to their circumstances.

Unfortunately, they fail and everybody dies.

## Book 1: The Civilized Lands

### Raif

In a standard game of WTF the characters then assemble in Raif to begin their quest. If you all died, I guess, just handwave it or something, you're not really supposed to lose the game before Book 1.

Anyway.



In a standard game of WTF the characters assemble in Raif to begin their quest.

Having lost the Jewel of All Desiring, the royalty of Raif has become vampiric, treacherous, cold-blooded and bloodthirsty monsters. They have elected to help in the discovery of the Jewel. Setting forth without their blessing would be unimaginably improper.

### Practical Threats

Vampires.

Characters get abducted and eaten at the Weaver's discretion. They may also be coopted by Raif, entangled in its politics or dynasties.

It's civilization.

### Moral Threats

It is possible to lose the game right here in Raif.

Right now--- that is, prior to the use of Attributes--- the characters are not worthy of finding the Jewel of All Desiring.

Also they are unable to work together adequately.

For these reasons Raif will *rightly* refuse its blessing to the characters.

### Travelogue

A short travelogue may spontaneously manifest during which there is no imminent practical or moral threat. Allow it to come to fruit, whisking characters quickly through the civilized regions, and murder it brutally if it looks like it will go on too long.

If your group enjoys spending time in random civilized kingdoms, you'll find good apocalyptic scenarios for each of them in the section on the civilized peoples in the Fatalists' Book---you can insert a practical or moral threat or two here.

## Tin 'An

It is common for the characters to proceed from Raif to Tin 'An. Why, I'm sure I couldn't say.

Tin 'An is calcifying. Its people are dying. Its Symposia and scholars and the urchins who live on the bridges above the buildings offer much useful information. The Axeman, sworn to the service of the Duke, hunts wishers in accordance with an ancient law that forbids attempts to wish upon the Jewel. It is appropriate to pay one's respects to the Duke and the Foremost Scribe.

### Practical Threats

Tin 'An offers all the threats of the civilized peoples. It will kill, imprison, or assimilate the characters. The Axeman will personally dispose of any wishers that do not go native and join the Court of the Duke.

Also the characters do not know where to go next. That is why their mission must end in ignominy here.

### Moral Threats

Why did the wisher want Tin 'An to die?

I want to leave it like that, but I'll write a bit more. Looking at Tin 'An, you have to ask yourself, is this a feature of the world your wisher will create? Supposing that it isn't, you have a real problem.

Supposing that it is---

Well, this isn't a deal-breaker. I'm not going to say that you're unworthy of finding the jewel just cause you put a few cities like Tin 'An in your perfect vision of the dreaming kingdoms.

Heck, *some* of you came up with a perfectly good explanation for this kind of thing in the *prologue*.

It's not a deal-breaker.

But it's something to be aware of. Something to think about. Something that might need an Attribute roll, not necessarily *now*, but sometime.

Think about it.

And when you've figured it out, and if you're still alive,  
it's the end of Book 1.

## Book 2: The Savage People and the Fairies

### Character Arcs and Kickers

If you happen to have character arcs, this is a good time to be moving them forward a bit.

You can also make new Kickers, if you want. There's always time to start over from the beginning.

### The Savage Peoples

During this book the characters must travel through the lands of the savage peoples. You can pad the story here with various crises where the characters get killed (or almost killed or assimilated or whatever). It is common but not obligatory to include one moral crisis; see the section on the Savage Peoples in the Fatalists' Book.

#### Practical Threats

Savage peoples may kill, imprison, or assimilate the characters.

#### Moral Threats

Savage peoples may reject the characters, demonstrating their unworthiness.

The characters will fail to learn something that it was necessary for them to learn.

### Travelogue

Now and then you'll find travelogues springing up as the characters go hither and thither among the savage peoples.

Like before, let 'em bloom, but watch 'em, and chop 'em down if they go kudzu.

### Fairies

After leaving the civilized lands the characters must make enquiry among the fairies.

The fairies do not exist. They are not there. Their lives are full of many stories. Many of these stories are incoherent and need a character's help to complete them. The fairies are beautiful and magical and tragic.

### Practical Threats

The fairies will be unable to construe the characters as the agents of destiny that will find and wish on the Jewel of All Desiring.

Unfortunately, that means the world doesn't exist.

For more details see the section on Fairies in the Fatalists' Book.

### Moral Threats

It turns out that the world doesn't exist *anyway*. It's made of Prameya or quantum foam or something.

You have lost WTF.

Anyway, if you *DEFY THE CLEARLY WRITTEN RULES* and *ARE STILL WINNING*, that's as good a place as any to end Book 2.

## Book 3: The Dragons of the Deeps

You can skip this book if you don't have time, although that means never knowing what happened in it or if the characters found the Jewel of All Desiring when you weren't looking.

### Civilized and Savage Peoples

This book features further adventure among savage and civilized peoples.

### A Series of Discoveries

The characters perform a set of tasks or journeys or interactions. After each they learn more about the location of the Jewel of All Desiring.

### Moral Threats

It is increasingly important as this book progresses that the characters develop a strong sense of what they will do and what it will mean when they actually find the Jewel.

There is no fixed schedule, but the characters have to completely resolve the matter by the end of this Book and possibly before then or they will lose the game.<sup>13</sup>

Also the lack of unanimity on this point will tear the group apart and lead one or more into corruption.<sup>14</sup>

### Shadows on the Sun

If the characters visit the sun it will likely be during Book 3 or Book 4.

### The Dragons of the Deeps

There are dragons who live in the water. One of the best dragons is the dragon-ocean of the east. However all that is necessary is that the characters visit dragons of the deeps at some point.

The dragons are not typical inhabitants of WTF and are not bound by its rules. They may drive people out of Book 3 and into Book 4---or characters may

---

<sup>13</sup> This is the same as any other loss, which is to say, it can be finessed.

<sup>14</sup> This can also be finessed, unless someone actually winds up with destructive Knowledge, corrupt Insight, or deceptive Harmony!

become discouraged by their various defenses and skip to Book 4 without first experiencing their meeting! The dragons may redeem characters who have fallen to shadow or free a Weaver immured within the world. It is possible to lose the game during an encounter with the dragons of the deeps, but nobody knows how.

You may encounter the dragons of the deeps when you are not aware that you are playing; then you will turn around and realize that you were playing WTF all along.

The dragons of the deeps were born with the world. They will not die with it. They are deepness and greatness and inspiration and they war against the shadow.

They may eat you. You certainly---

### Practical Threats

Oh. I suppose that's a practical threat.

They may eat you. You certainly can't find them. Paths can't take you to them. People really shouldn't visit them. Swarms of undines defend them, trying to keep you from reaching them before you get frustrated and move on to Book 4.

### Moral Threats

Really, this entire section is problematic, even if you skip it.

## Book 4: The Ur-Toads

### A Series of Discoveries

If you skipped Book 3, you'll need to move "A Series of Discoveries" to this Book. Helpfully, you can use these discoveries to explain why the characters must travel under the world to the realm of the ur-toads.

### Shadows on the Sun

If the characters have not yet visited the sun now might be a good time. See the discussion on moral and practical threats there in the Fatalists' Book. However, please note that it's a lot more important that characters go under the world than over it.

### Traveling Under the World

Characters may encounter difficulties when traveling to the underside of the world, since after all there is rock in the way. In general however it is the opposite. Characters find it suspiciously easy to get to the other side of the world. Methods practically offer themselves.

### Practical Threats

Rock, I guess, but I've as much as admitted you'll find your way somehow.

### Moral Threats

The ease with which you reach the other side of the world should make any reasonable person suspicious!

### Encounters with Ur-Toads

The ur-toads are really big toads.<sup>15</sup> They have jewels in their foreheads. These jewels are not the Jewel of All Desiring which is why there are so few lily pads in the world. They should be insanely cool, dreadful, and awe-inspiring. It is helpful to imagine that they are mysterious and sagacious. They are immune to most mortal mechanisms of force and expel dreadful poisons when baited.

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<sup>15</sup> Not to be read simultaneously with the section on "Knowledge and the Truth."



### Practical Threats

The ur-toads will eat all of the characters. The game then ends immediately, preventing the discovery of the Jewel of All Desiring. That is some wickedly eschatological stomach acid they've got going there.

### The Oracle

If you don't know yet where the Jewel of All Desiring is you may obtain an oracle regarding its location here from the ghost of Tiresias or some other Tiresian spirit.

### Practical Threats

The oracle might say, "There's no such thing!" Or "You're too late, the shadow has wished on it."

### Moral Threats

The oracle might make some other apocalyptic pronouncement to bring Book 4 to a nasty ending. Typically the Weaver will run away at this point to ensure that this pronouncement acts as a cliffhanger---otherwise, the wisher is likely to spin it immediately into a positive light. By next session this is not necessarily true: the longer the wisher has to mull over an idea, the more difficult it is to casually twist it without becoming deceptive in the process.

## Book 5: Conclusion

The characters take the last few steps of their journey.

### Practical Threats

The Weaver may opt for a big confrontation with some recurring enemy that tragically kills all of the characters after they made it all the way to Book 5.

## Finale

The characters find the Jewel of All Desiring and---

### Practical Threats

Somebody is going to have to die to become the firmament of the world.

If the characters are in an uneasy or temporary alliance, they are practical threats to one another.

### Moral Threats

I kind of have to start with the fact that the theurgists can judge all of the available wishers unworthy.

But that's not the big thing.

I mean, it's the big problem in theory, but by the time you've made it this far, it's not going to stop anyone.

The big problem in *practice* is, why should you be God? And why is *this* world the world of everything you desire?

I don't get to say that you haven't solved that yet.

I haven't been watching your game.

But I do get to squint at you a little and remind you that right now, you have to solve it as best you can. You have to solve it and maybe the answers that seemed so good five minutes ago don't seem so perfect now. You have to deal with those two questions, among others.

Because if you want to win, you're going to have to pick up the Jewel of All Desiring and make this world---

This fictional world---

The reality that is everything you've ever wanted, and everything you dreamed.

## The Wishers' Book – Postscript

*I totally wrote this.*

USING HARMONY	
<b>Declare that you wish to use Harmony.</b>	
State that you want to explain what something means.	
Any number of players may now set a target ranging from 0 to 7. You must equal or exceed the maximum such target on a Harmony roll to make your explanation worth believing.	
Make a Harmony roll and declare your result.	
OPTIONALLY	If another player wishes to offer an explanation, they may do so, make a Harmony roll, and declare the result.
If the player with the highest result has a result that equals or exceeds the specified target, they have succeeded.	
The player who succeeds states the fact of their success and explains what the relevant thing means.	
Everyone should now play WTF in such a fashion as to make believing that explanation both appropriate and valuable.	

## Harmony Rolls

Here is how to make a Harmony roll.

Roll a number of six-sided dice equal to your Harmony plus the most relevant Power.

If this is "0" dice then roll one die and subtract 1.

Your result is the highest die rolled.

If you roll more than one 6, add +1 to the result for each extra 6 you roll.

If you are rolling to determine which player has the highest Harmony result, and there is a tie for highest roll, eliminate all of the players who did not roll the highest result and reroll.

## Valence

Here are some notes on Valence.

The Valence of a Gift is in the domain of Harmony. You can raise or lower the Valence of a Gift with a Harmony roll.

- ✚ You must warn the other players of this intention when you make your roll –
  - including which character this will affect and
  - which Gift you intend to change.
- ✚ Some player should set a target of 5.
- ✚ You must receive the highest result.
- ✚ You must state the new Valence for the Gift.

# Example of Play

## Before Play

Wynona is troubled by her destiny as an example player in a WTF game. "OMG," she thinks, "I'll be playing WTF."

Unwilling to cower and live in fear, she elects to face her destiny head-on.

She gathers avid gamers Theresa and Tomas and Hitherby Dragons readers Fiona and Froderick.

These will be her gaming group.

"Are we actually playing?" Fiona wonders. "I mean, even now?"

"No," concludes Tomas bluntly.

"No?"

"This is still before play. If we were playing, then 'before play' would be in the past and we would no longer be able to affect its accidents."

"An eccedent," Theresa says, "is when you see something you didn't expect."

On this uncomfortable note we start the game.

## Character Creation

The group creates their characters.

Wynona opts to make a wisher, choosing Harmony as her highest Attribute.

Theresa and Tomas create theurgists, favoring Insight.

Fiona and Froderick create fatalists, favoring Knowledge.

Tomas declares himself the Weaver.

"I had thought," Wynona says, "that we'd try this without a Weaver."

"You had thought that," Tomas agrees.

"There isn't any rule," Theresa says, after a moment, "for removing Tomas' declaration. If it does not manifest a corrupt Insight, it flows from an immanent and immediate truth within his heart."

"Your Insight can't be corrupt," Wynona criticizes, "if we haven't started playing yet."

There is a pause.

"I retract that portion of my statement," Theresa says. "Still, there is nothing to be done."

## Prologue

**Tomas:** We now begin the play of WTF.

**Wynona:** I don't know if I'm in a state of infinite universal love yet.

**Tomas:** You are.

**Wynona:** ... good to know!

**Tomas:** What kind of characters do we have?

**Fiona:** I was thinking that I would fall through a hole in the sky and land in the dreaming kingdoms.

**Wynona:** Wouldn't you break your legs?

**Fiona:** I am indomitable!

**Theresa:** That's an interesting approach.

**Fiona:** I think it is more that the winds above the world caught me on their cross-paths and shearings and I came down softly at last and fortuitously wearing pants instead of skirts. Because these skirts would be a problem in a multi-mile fall.

**Froderick:** There aren't any miles really. The sky is lower than on Earth.

**Fiona:** Really?

**Froderick:** People are always reaching it and such. Miles is a long way to go up without an aeroplane.

**Fiona:** Well, it is certainly very far; if you haven't fallen a long ways, you can't say how many miles it feels like.

**Tomas:** And you, Froderick?

**Froderick:** I am a humble shoemaker commanding knowledge over all the arts and sciences. Why? Because I have a lot of time to think while my hands are busy making shoes. I indulge, even, in a little . . . extrapolation. But my overall ideas are sound.

**Wynona:** It seems a clear-cut choice which of you shall be the foundation of the world.

**Fiona:** Unless the sky and ground are turned around.

**Theresa:** Why would she choose to have them turned around?

**Fiona:** The perversity of her nature.

**Wynona:** Projection, dear.

**Fiona:** So they say. [sighs]

**Tomas:** That's actually something of a point---

**Wynona:** ...

**Tomas:** I mean, if the world is built on Fiona and not Froderick, then it's up to you to choose accordingly. Your nature is presented to you by the world---or you were never the wisher after all.

**Wynona:** Why, cruel fate, have I chosen to torment myself with such accomplices? . . . is what you mean?

**Tomas:** Precisely so.

**Wynona:** No responsibility for any of you, then? It is all on me?

**Tomas:** That is the power of the Weaver, to utterly shed all responsibility for my own actions and place it all on yourself. To that end, I think I shall be a prince of Raif.

**Fiona:** I thought you were weaving?

**Tomas:** I am a prince of Raif, a theurgist, and I am also God.

**Fiona:** A full plate.

**Tomas:** It is my tragedy; I wear many hats and fit in none.

**Fiona:** And Wynona?

**Wynona:** Me?

**Fiona:** What are you playing?

**Wynona:** I don't know really. I want to . . . I didn't really plan on playing WTF, you know. It was just my inexorable fate. I guess I want to be the kind of person who can make . . . make the world into a place of beauty and compassion without killing everyone to do it.

**Theresa:** [laughs]

**Theresa:** [pauses]

**Theresa:** Sorry, I was picturing Tomas' hats. Could you be a painter, Wynona?

**Wynona:** That's . . . not right either. Because it might imply that . . . it's just art. I kind of want to be like Tomas. Just kind of omnipresent.

**Tomas:** I am not omnipresent. I lurk in specific locations as suits my specific mandate.

**Wynona:** God is not omnipresent?

**Tomas:** I exaggerated my prowess; my divinity is conditional in the setting and requires the mediation of the rules to have full force. For the wisher, the same applies: you realize yourself fully only through the imposition of your ideals on play.

**Wynona:** So I play a small creature but my . . . spirit diffuses through the world?

**Tomas:** Yeah.

**Fiona:** That could be your Kicker. Oh no! Your spirit is diffusing through the world!

**Wynona:** I think that my Kicker is that the world is full of suffering and reality is an illusion. And I guess that I'm . . . I want to be a grandmother spirit. For some House that is waning in power and has had its own kind of grandmother god for all the centuries of its power. Like, a noble House. Like, Romanish.

**Theresa:** Wishers shouldn't ought be gods, I think.

**Froderick:** Gods are born to answer emptiness.

Pause.



**Theresa:** Adverse contentions.

**Tomas:** What are you playing, Theresa?

**Theresa:** I'm in the game?

**Tomas:** You created a character.

**Theresa:** Oh.

**Tomas:** I could make you play a duck.

**Theresa:** I could cast you down from your throne and immure you beneath the world.

**Tomas:** Bring it.

**Theresa:** I want to play my fighter.

**Tomas:** No.

**Theresa:** I could be a stripper ninja, with katanas.

**Tomas:** No. You are going to be Gandalf.

**Theresa:** Once I was a vital spirit of the world, an angel of prameya, an impulse born at the birth of creation; but now I have lived so long in an ordinary kind of flesh that I have forgotten my nature?

**Tomas:** Yes.

**Theresa:** All right.

**Tomas:** Wynona, the world is full of suffering and reality is an illusion. What do you do?

**Wynona:** I fix it.

**Tomas:** Oh, snap.

**Wynona:** I guess I should try to find the Jewel of All Desiring.

**Tomas:** Why?

**Wynona:** Because I am lingering in melancholy in these ever-emptier halls and realizing as time passes that the world is not what it ought to be; and thinking, realizing, suddenly one day, "Then make it better."

**Tomas:** But the world *is* full of suffering. That'd be your wish!

**Wynona:** Is it?

**Tomas:** Eh?

**Wynona:** Isn't that just a sense-impression that I have? What if everybody laughs and takes off their masks and says, "We were just playing with you. We've always had the beautiful life you wanted for us."

**Tomas:** I am a prince of Raif; I *will not have* a beautiful life. Will not, do you hear?

**Theresa:** You're not there.

**Tomas:** I can damn well knock on her door.

**Fiona:** Oh dear.

**Tomas:** [knocks firmly on the table] Bang bang bang! You in there! I hear you've been planning to make the world a better place!

**Wynona:** Excellent. You can approve my quest for the Jewel of All Desiring.

**Tomas:** It is already quite hard to sustain my belief in the importance of the machinations of the court; I do not need your frivolous ideas undermining it further.

**Fiona:** I land.

**Tomas:** You've just fallen from the sky into an argument between a vampire and a god.

**Fiona:** Yay!

**Tomas:** You here, you can arbite this.

**Fiona:** Heehee. You said 'bite.'<sup>16</sup>

**Tomas:** Listen, this woman is planning to find the Jewel of All Desiring and make it so that my pretensions are moot. That's the end of all social order! Also, I won't get to be emo.

**Fiona:** That's her altruistic intention!

**Tomas:** I should never rely for moral backup on women who fall through holes in the sky. That's the real lesson here.

**Froderick:** Also, you totally bogarted Fiona's Kicker.

**Tomas:** Ha! That's right! You're FALLING---what do you DO?

**Fiona:** Aim towards the most important thing in all the world.

**Tomas:** [hides head in hands]

**Wynona:** I want you to give your formal approval and then I don't have to go to Raif where everyone gets attacked by vampires.

**Tomas:** I totally won't, and also, trying to get out of going to Raif is just sleazy.

**Wynona:** [peacefully] Well, we can head in the direction of Raif, and if I talk you into it before we get there, that's more my moral superiority than my *fault*.

**Tomas:** Why am I not killing you?

**Wynona:** That would be a definitive reality-changing action on the part of your character and characters indwelt by the Weaver don't do that. Also, I don't think WTF can end in the prologue.

**Tomas:** Right then! Froderick, Theresa, what are your Kickers?

**Froderick:** I have shoes.

**Tomas:** I am eliminating that statement from the world with somebody else's destructive Knowledge.

**Theresa:** I don't want people to read all this stuff about Kickers and think that WTF is an indie game. That's why I wanted to play my fighter and have my hit points and armor class.

**Tomas:** I'm totally too bossy for an indie game, so suck it up.

**Froderick:** One day I am making shoes and I realize that it is inevitable that the world will die and fade away to nothingness.

**Tomas:** OK.

**Theresa:** I am dreaming. I am dreaming and my eye wanders over the world. And then for just a moment in the dream I remember who I am. It isn't something that I can grasp. It's not something that I can hold on to. It's too big for the ego. But that recognition . . . it remakes me. I know I have to become large enough to hold that somehow. I have to be a better kettle for my soul.

**Tomas:** OK.

**Theresa:** But I need you to tell me where I woke to because that is part of my Kicker too that what I face is not . . . just something I made.

---

<sup>16</sup> Strangely, he didn't pronounce it that way.

**Tomas:** Then Froderick: it is inevitable that the world will die and fade away to nothingness. What do you do?

**Froderick:** I fall on my knees and cry out with despair.

**Tomas:** You do?

**Froderick:** "Heaven! Answer me! Is all I have known and all I have made useless? Is this world merely senseless trash, as soon known as forgotten? Weaver, why have you made this fate?"

**Tomas:** I poke my head in your shop. "Get over yourself," I say. "You're a shoemaker."

**Froderick:** You are . . . God?

**Tomas:** Check out my shoes.

**Froderick:** You *are* God. But . . . explain yourself, then!

**Tomas:** I was on the way back to Raif after trying to harangue this woman--- [thumbs over his shoulder]--- into giving up her senseless quest. So I heard you yell.

**Froderick:** That is not the explanation I was looking for.

**Tomas:** That's your own fault, then. Are you coming? I am thinking of presenting you all to my fellow princes as a new kind of menagerie.

**Froderick:** Two people isn't a menagerie.

**Tomas:** Some chick fell from the sky, she's around somewhere. She isn't wearing a skirt.

**Froderick:** That was unnecessary information.

**Fiona:** Also ambiguous!

**Froderick:** Oh, hey.

**Fiona:** Hey.

**Froderick:** You look like the kind of woman who knows everything about the arts and sciences.

**Fiona:** [blush] You too.

**Froderick:** ...

**Fiona:** I mean, masculinely.

**Tomas:** Why do I do this to myself? YOU, Wynona, why do you do this to me? Assuming you aren't just a wannabe pretend wisher whom my family's going to eat?

**Wynona:** It is the inexorable influence of fate.

**Tomas:** Theresa, I have no idea where you wake up.

**Fiona:** Then it must be at the edge of the world.

**Theresa:** Eh?

**Fiona:** Because the Weaver doesn't know where you are. So somewhere out in the unkindled places, or at best---

Because you do have to be somewhere---

At the very edge, dangling from the cliff of the world, over the unkindled places.

**Theresa:** That's true, isn't it?

**Tomas:** You can be somewhere else if you want.

**Theresa:** But no. It makes sense. Not . . . not by my fingers. But in my bed. In my bed, in my house, at the edge of the world. And I get up and I look at my

hands and I look at my hair in the mirror and I realize that I have no idea who I'm supposed to be. But that I'm bright. So I have to take a spirit walk. I have to go deep inside myself and see what's there. Because I'm too much of a coward to just walk out into the dreaming kingdoms and find myself there. There might not be any food or any place warm.

**Tomas:** I don't know how that works in terms of party togetherness.

**Wynona:** It's OK.

**Theresa:** It's OK?

**Wynona:** I don't know where you are. I don't know if I've ever met you. But I can give you courage. I can give you power. Come help me.

**Theresa:** Hope hurts.

**Wynona:** It's OK.

**Theresa:** I guess I'm getting to my feet. I guess I'm calling up a horse from the cold winds.

**Tomas:** Where are you going?

**Theresa:** I have an appointment to keep in Raif.

## Book 1: The Civilized Lands

### Raif (Scene 1)

**Tomas:** Book 1: the Civilized Lands.

**Tomas:** Scene 1:

**Tomas:** Raif.

**Tomas:** I have to introduce you guys to my Mom now. She's going to judge you and then kill you.

**Wynona:** Is that the crisis in this scene?

**Tomas:** I think the *loomingness* of it is the crisis. Though . . . hm. Maybe we should start a little smaller. When you get to the city, I give you these coins that are also symbols---basically, marks that show you're legitimately aspirants to be the wisher and companions. Only you're by this waterfront, on this marble walk with the dank misty shore below you and a sparkling fountain behind you, and somebody bumps into Wynona, and she realizes a few moments later that they've stolen her coin. And . . . Theresa, you're stopped at the gates. "The prince's said, no theurgists. Cause they might dethrone him and immure him deep within the world," they say.

**Fiona:** I wonder if the Weaver was meant to be quite so much in character.

**Wynona:** Let him be meta; it's his only joy in life. Also, oh no, my coin.

**Tomas:** If you don't have the coin, you're going to get eaten without even getting judged first.

**Fiona:** But that's *better*.

**Tomas:** Eh?

**Wynona:** . . . I think we want her judgment so that she can say, "oh hey you are worthy."

**Fiona:** Old vampire queens don't have good judgment. You should just realize that you're telling yourself, don't waste your time!

**Tomas:** Or maybe the *real* wisher is somewhere laughing at you and weaving fate so that you've lost your chance before you even began---did you think of that?

**Fiona:** Such matters are beyond my concern. I will happily trip the thief and send them accidentally sprawling as they pass, though.

**Theresa:** I'm casting magic missile.

**Tomas:** Eh?

**Theresa:** It is my desperate cry for attention.

**Tomas:** Oh. I mean, you can respond to the guard.

**Theresa:** These walls and this guard should melt away like dreams; they stand between me and myself.

**Tomas:** Seriously?

**Theresa:** I will test the matter by advancing past him and pushing open the gates before I use theurgy.

**Tomas:** He goes a little pale but stands firm. The gate is locked.

**Theresa:** It is remade unlocked as my hand touches it. I have 5 dice to roll; give me a target.

**Tomas:** 3.

**Theresa:** 4, 1, 1, 2, and 6. The first accomplishes the matter; the rest are afterthoughts.

**Tomas:** "I locked that myself!"

**Theresa:** "You are not a bad man." [hesitation] "You are simply part of that which does not know what ought to be. Do you really . . . want to serve a person like Tomas? Is that what you want your life to mean?"

**Tomas:** "Don't try to implicate things at me! I know you're a theurgist!"

**Theresa:** Please don't make me hurt him.

**Tomas:** That's Wynona's problem, not mine. So we should swap over there and see if she can get to you in time to help?

**Theresa:** . . . I am not helpless in Harmony rolls . . . but I agree.

**Tomas:** Fiona has certainly tripped someone, but is it the thief? It's a gamine and she's standing up again and going "Oi, hey!" She doesn't look guilty.

**Fiona:** I'm making sure she doesn't go far.

**Wynona:** "Dear child, you're an NPC. What would you do with a coin like that?"

**Tomas:** "I don't know what you're talking about." She looks around shiftily. "What's an NPC?"

**Wynona:** "Won't you tell me what's in your heart?" I ask. I come closer to her.

**Tomas:** No. And you can't make her. Though she's clearly terrified.

**Wynona:** I don't know how to connect Theresa in here. Um. [heroic pose] I *emanate an afflatus of happy endings!*

**Tomas:** What?

**Wynona:** So that Theresa doesn't have to kill the guy and can show up and do theurgy on this girl to overcome her as an obstacle.

**Tomas:** What's an afflatus?

**Wynona:** . . . a divine emanation. Like saintbows.<sup>17</sup>

**Tomas:** But what does that even *mean*?

**Wynona:** I want to explain what it means. I will need Harmony targets.

**Theresa:** 0.

**Fiona:** 5.

**Theresa:** Why 5?

**Fiona:** I like the idea of inexplicable afflatuses.

**Tomas:** Anyone higher than 5?

[pause]

**Tomas:** OK, roll.

**Wynona:** 1, 1, 1, 3 . . . um, which is my most relevant Power?

**Tomas:** Fiona, if I wind up staring into the abyss of endless confusion I will blame you.

**Fiona:** I think it is governed by Law.

**Wynona:** 4, 5!

**Tomas:** Oh, good.

**Wynona:** It means that a person can always find a path to their awakening that doesn't hurt anybody else. Maybe they won't. But they always *can*. And maybe it means that it's time that this group got together and moved forward as one.

**Tomas:** Look, the guard's in a no-win situation here. If he stops her, then by the rules he ceases to exist or something, but if he doesn't stop her, he's failed the royalty of Raif.

**Wynona:** Then let him go free. Let him find his happy ending somewhere else. He doesn't have to stay in Raif. He doesn't have to slave to a vampiric royalty's dictates! He can go somewhere that isn't in the shadow of the loss of the Jewel and *live*.

**Tomas:** He can't escape me.

**Wynona:** "Tomas, you're wriggling."

**Tomas:** ". . . what?"

**Wynona:** "You're engaging in machinations as the Weaver to ensure that we don't resolve this situation. I won't have it; if you don't stand down, I'll--- I'll kick you out of the game."

**Tomas:** "Oi, 'e's the Weaver?" The girl pales. "That means--- he's royal?"

**Wynona:** "Yes."

**Tomas:** She faints.

**Theresa:** Yes, you're terrifying in your imagination, Tomas.

**Tomas:** You shut up. And come on in, the guard is off pursuing his lifelong dream of being a traveling salesman or something.

**Theresa:** Obstacle . . . circumvented. Hello, Wynona. I dreamed of you.

**Wynona:** Hi!

**Theresa:** And the man who thinks he's the Weaver.

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<sup>17</sup> Saint-emanated rainbows. Also, she is wrong.

**Tomas:** I am totally the Weaver. Look, I'm creating ducks. [spreads his hands, as if ducks were exploding into being.]

**Theresa:** A common vampire trick.

**Tomas:** You totally have to roll fatalism for that.

**Theresa:** I need not roll; the evidence is before me.

**Froderick:** I've reclaimed the coin. Now I'm twice the aspirant.

**Fiona:** Hi, I'm Fiona. I fell.

**Theresa:** I suspect Fiona of brain damage.

**Fiona:** Oi! No theurgy!

**Theresa:** It is an unfocused suspicion.

**Fiona:** I like my brain! It sloshes!

**Froderick:** Froderick.

**Theresa:** It's nice to meet you all.

**Wynona:** We're having a crisis where this girl stole my coin. At any moment vampires may sweep down and declare me ineligible to be eaten.

**Froderick:** And then eat her.

**Wynona:** Vampires. [Her gesture connotes: "What can you say?"]

**Theresa:** And why shouldn't they eat you?

**Wynona:** Well, I'm not a virgin.

**Froderick:** Do tell.

**Theresa:** That's unicorns.

**Wynona:** I mean to say, I want the world to be a better place, but it'll be a worse place if I'm eaten.

**Theresa:** Most meals propose a similar calculus.

**Wynona:** Don't you want me to survive and be the wisher?

**Theresa:** These idiots in Raif think they can judge you. But they're already in the past and they don't know it yet. Listen. I'm going to put my faith in you. Explain to me why you're worth my doing that. Prove to *me* that you're going to qualify as the wisher and I'll melt any vampire that says otherwise. Or don't, and believe me, I will let you die.

**Wynona:** [smiles]

**Theresa:** What?

**Wynona:** You give me hope, strange acerbic shouter. Let's both do our best.

**Tomas:** And there ends scene 1, resolving the immediate crisis. Let's get back together after a break to confront the Queen of Raif.



## Raif (Scene 2)

**Tomas:** The Queen of Raif explains to you, "The houses of Raif strive against one another; and while they do so, I retain the stability of my throne. Also it does not hurt that my son is God."

**Fiona:** That's what *she* said.

[pause]

**Fiona:** The Virgin Mary, I mean.

**Tomas:** "I dispose of you thus. Fiona, to be thrown from a windmill; Froderick, to serve as loremaster to the Western House; Wynona, as consort and meal to the heir of the Eastern House; and this theurgist to be shackled and blinded and serve as oracle in my court. Balance is preserved; the houses that snipe one against the other shall owe me and fear me and remain at odds; and the matter of 'seeking' the Jewel ends here."

**Theresa:** Just try it.

**Froderick:** A moment. There are only two houses?

**Fiona:** I think there's like a southern house that really likes windmills.

**Froderick:** I'm unimpressed by the scope of these dynastic intrigues.

**Tomas:** There's extra noble houses for other wisher-wannabes.

**Theresa:** . . . you don't want people seeking the Jewel.

**Tomas:** Just caught that, did you?

**Theresa:** I was distracted by the threat of blinding and shackling. O Queen, surely you would rather live in an existing world?

**Tomas:** "I have lived a very long time and now I live by bloodshed," says the Queen. "The world is dry and bitter to me. And I have come to find a certain solace in the knowledge that it is meaningless dust that will blow away. Can you overcome that emptiness, theurgist, with your petty magic and your laws? What good is it to have a world if it should host such living death?"

**Theresa:** You were supposed to be better than this.

**Tomas:** She cackles. "You're going to make me a better person with your magic? Hardly."

**Tomas:** She signals to her guards. They're ready to interrupt Queen-altering magic with a battle.

**Tomas:** And then she says, "And what would that even mean?"

**Theresa:** I'm going for it. I'm increasing her tactical Goodness trait.

**Tomas:** With theurgy?

**Theresa:** Nah, a rules toy.

**Tomas:** [flips through the rules] Give me a Confidence roll.

**Theresa:** [picks up dice] [thinks] [thinks more] [puts down dice] 27.

**Tomas:** Wow. That's better than I expected.<sup>18</sup>

**Theresa:** I'm a tactical goodness confidence queen.

**Tomas:** The Queen is now better---but is it really good enough?

**Theresa covers her face in her hands.**

**Theresa, after a moment:** Yes?

**Tomas:** "I'm sorry," says the Queen, quietly. "I am the Queen of Raif. I . . . cannot be otherwise. Let the sentence take place."

**Wynona:** Three days.

**Tomas:** Eh?

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<sup>18</sup> Neither of them is mentioning aloud that there don't seem to be any rules for rolling Confidence.



**Wynona:** Give me three days to find an answer for you. To show you why the world should be. Hold off on the blinding and the windmill-throwing until then.

**Tomas:** You're going to need to use an Attribute.

**Wynona:** Knowledge, then. Vampires crave bleakness but they need, too, a kind of an end to bleakness. They need a boundary to the emptiness. Does that make sense? She doesn't want purpose. She doesn't want hope. But she can't just toss the need for those things aside. If she could she wouldn't be afraid.

**Fiona:** That's not Knowledge. That's philosophy.

**Wynona:** Well, I'm not making a general point about people. Just vampires. I don't know about people really. But I think . . . I'm going to set my target for this roll to 0.

**Fiona:** Then I'll roll too.

**Wynona:** I yield the floor; fatalist, am I wrong?

**Fiona:** She's too dry. She can't have that longing you described. That's not why she gives you the three days. It's not for hope.

**Wynona:** Then why?

**Fiona:** For Tomas.

**Tomas:** Eh?

**Fiona:** [To Tomas] She doesn't want you to lose your wisher. That is what remains to her after all this time. The sense that if you are running a game of WTF wherein the Jewel is found, she has . . . been a living Queen, and a vampire after, correctly.

**Tomas:** Make your roll, then.

**Fiona:** 5.

**Tomas:** It suffices. You may have three days. Froderick, you are haled off to service in the Western House where they sneer at you for being a lowly shoemaker and boil with rage at this insult that the Queen has sent.

**Froderick:** I explain to them how to defeat the Eastern House and achieve supremacy over Raif. It is actually very simple when you understand the biological processes of snails.

**Tomas:** This plan interests me; do tell.

**Froderick:** It would fly over your head; suffice it to say that it is the case that I can provide it, and our House shall use geometry and slime trails to achieve supremacy in Raif, conquering first the Eastern House and then the armies of the Queen. I will roll Knowledge if necessary to make it so.

**Tomas:** I count a 75% reduction in their sneering; but trouble probably impends. Fiona, what are you doing?

**Fiona:** I am entering into the Queen's confidences.

**Tomas:** . . . how?

**Fiona:** I am aware of trends of fashions that have not yet reached Raif. Also, I am charming and delightful and too disposable to mistrust.

**Tomas:** Two days in she eats you.

**Fiona:** An error! That was a dressing mannequin in her chambers that she took for me by mistake.

**Tomas:** Another day and the hunger is too great to control.

**Fiona:** This time it is a statue.

**Tomas:** She becomes suspicious. By what mechanism are you achieving these duplications?

**Fiona:** Logic.

**Tomas:** Logic?

**Fiona:** It is foreordained that we shall gather again in three days in the palace in the heart of Raif; it was written on the far side of the sun and whispered of by ur-toads before any of us was born. That given, I cannot be eaten; knowing her tendencies, and seeking with a valiant heart to avoid paradox, I ensure the presence of many things around me that resemble my delicious neck and yet are not.

**Tomas:** Your tricks fail; she has vampiric senses and you do not.

**Fiona:** Curses! Fortunately I may blur those senses with the use of a cinnabar ointment.

**Tomas:** I concede defeat; Theresa, she seeks you out as oracle.

**Theresa:** I cannot help you; it is not in your interest to bite Fiona, but only a dark urge sponsored by your inner demons. If you have convinced me to serve you, then I cannot serve you in this fashion; if I am unconvinced, then I will not serve you in this fashion. Also, WTF, she's my adventuring companion.

**Tomas:** . . . actually, she isn't asking about how to bite Fiona without accidentally gnawing a Fiona-shaped display case. She's in a meditative mood, and she comes to where you're chained up and says, "I could let you live if you find her unworthy."

**Theresa:** You shouldn't compromise your principles, o Queen.

**Tomas:** Then I slay you here, in the night, and knowing that I break no bargain to do so.

**Theresa:** That's all right.

**Tomas:** It is?

**Theresa:** I'm totally going to show up *anyway* the third day, garbed in white and being all shingly deus ex machina.<sup>19</sup>

**Tomas:** And lastly Wynona, given over to some other vampire prince who is not the Weaver and is kind of emo, brooding, and nasty.

**Wynona:** Does he sparkle in sunlight?

**Tomas:** Is that your virtuous belief in the goodness of all creation or your unnecessary mockery of the Twilight books?

**Wynona:** I like people that sparkle in sunlight. They make me smile.

**Tomas:** He looms around saying vampiric consort things to you but you realize after a while that he's nervous about actually hurting or getting within 20 feet of you just in case you're the wisher.

**Wynona:** Ha! I try to scare him more--- no, I shouldn't. The poor beast. Boo! No, I shouldn't. I didn't do that. Fiona, make it so I didn't do that.

**Fiona:** Regrettably you're talking to a pile of laundry that happens to resemble Fiona. Not long afterwards, the Queen of Raif bites it, swears, and wanders off. Also, that would be destructive Knowledge and I don't do that.

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<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, word processors believe that this phrase is "dues ex machine."

**Wynona:** Seriously, guys, what am I going to do? Time develops stuff in fullness but it's going to be like half an hour later in real time and not three days by the time three days are up.

**Tomas:** At . . . MARK.

**Wynona:** What if I just--- say I came up with a solution?

**Tomas:** You could do that.

**Wynona:** Yay!

**Tomas:** I'd construe it as indicating that the entire universe was nothing more than a rhetorical device, wished into being with semantic cheating and reckless assumptions, but you could do that.

**Wynona:** Oh.

**Theresa:** Tomas exaggerates. The *mechanism* by which you wave the problem away is relevant.

**Tomas:** Oh, of course. The universe would be elided in totally different ways if you used Insight than if you used Harmony.

**Wynona:** Then tell me what happens when Froderick's new House makes its bid for the throne after conquering its rivals; when the Queen turns and sees Theresa alive; what it was that Fiona knew would happen when she spoke of three days from now; how I got to the Queen when my captor would be the . . . Western? . . . House's first target?

**Tomas:** You know. Um. Stuff.

**Wynona:** That's a total double standard.

**Tomas:** Hee. Yeah. OK. I think it's more likely that the Queen has advance word of what's coming; that her forces join the Eastern House's on the field; that she helps humble the insurgent Western House--- perhaps because of her unexpected presence, perhaps by my will, or perhaps because Fiona helped her see through Froderick's master plan.

**Fiona:** Hi. [waves]

**Froderick:** Hi. [blushes]

**Tomas:** And I think it's on that battlefield, among the slain, as you pull away from your captor who has actually gone so far as to grab your arm in the confusion, and as you see Theresa walking towards you from somewhere full of light, that the Queen asks. That she says, "So, wisher. What can you give me to make this world worth living?"

**Wynona:** I stab her through the heart.

**Tomas:** What?

**Wynona:** "You don't have to the Queen of Raif any more," I tell her. "You can be light."

**Wynona:** And it pours from the hollow in her like the dawning sun, more light and power than it seems possible that she could have contained, and it washes across the battlefield like a benediction; and from her collapsing empty corpse a bird of light goes free.

**Tomas:** Why?

**Wynona:** Why?

**Tomas:** Why any of that? Why does that work? Why does it have meaning?

**Wynona:** Look at Theresa.

**Theresa is thinking.**

**Wynona:** I did that, and it worked, and it has meaning because I promised I would give Theresa courage. Because she needs to remember what it means that all of us are angels of prameya inside our mortal flesh.

**Froderick:** Isn't killing people wrong?

Pause.

**Wynona:** [gravely] Yes. That is my bad.

**WTF**