



UNTIL DAWN COMES

A mini-RPG by Melville and Côme Martin, for 1 Astronomer and 3 to 5 Constellations. Written in April 2018.

You are constellations watched by an astronomer. You get to tell him about the story of the cosmos during a whole night. But beware! If you try too hard to shine, you might end up disappearing completely...

First light: Choose a constellation in the margin and draw it with phosphorescent stars if possible. Those that are not chosen will be used as NPC (Non-Player Constellations) during the session.

The Astronomer and their questions: Alone in their tower, the Astronomer watches the movement of constellations and writes down the tale they're telling. They start the session by asking a question to all the PC (Player Constellations) involving one of the NPCs and a cosmic event: "Tell me how the cosmos almost got destroyed by Orion's Sword;" "Tell me how Ursa Major refused to appear on our maps during a century"... This question will be the common theme of the story.

The PCs which want to answer the Astronomer and weave a story which will be drawn on a stellar map throughout the session.

The Astronomer can rekindle the story between two narrations by asking specific questions, which always begin with "Tell me how...", either to build on an idea ("...you discovered this planet you've mentioned") or to introduce a complication ("... you reacted when a black hole appeared near the Charioteer"). The Astronomer never interrupts the PCs and waits for silences to intervene.

Answering questions: The PCs can try to answer questions by rolling a d12: rolling above or equal to their current number of stars is a success. A 1 is always a failure. It's always the PC who rolled the lowest which speaks; the Astronomer decides in case of ties.

When a PC succeeds, they start a long narration: they weave the story's thread with as many details as they want, and by using the symbolic aspects of constellations. The other PCs can interrupt them, occasionally and briefly, by giving them one of their stars, but the winning PC always has the last word.

The PC who failed the roll immediately loses a star. If none has succeeded, the PC with the lowest roll start a short narration, answering the Astronomer with one or two sentences.

A PC can also let someone else speak when they succeed; if they roll lower or equal to another PC's number of stars, they steal one in addition to letting them speak.

A PC can also offer one of their stars to another PC they wish to interrupt. Interruptions are always brief and aim to add information or deny some of the details mentioned.

Metamorphoses: A PC going higher than their initial number of stars (maximum 10) can choose to change their name and appearance; in this case, they briefly speak and describe this metamorphosis.

If a PC has no more stars, it dies down and cannot intervene in the story anymore. Their player then becomes an Assistant of the Astronomer and can ask questions to the other PCs, just like their master.

A story lasting one night: The Astronomer decides how long (in real time) the night will be for the constellations: 30 minutes for a summer night, 1h for an autumn night, 1h30 for a winter night. They regularly remind the PCs how much time they have left to tell their story, with sentences like: "The night is already half over, hasten your tale, my dear stars!"

At the end of the night, the Astronomer says: "The day is coming, I almost can't see you anymore...". They leave their tower, and each PC can narrate a brief epilogue, in ascending number of stars left (the Astronomer decides in case of ties). They choose in the following list; each epilogue can only be chosen by one of the PCs.

- Shines even in the brightest day
- Inspires a poem
- Permits a great scientific discovery
- Becomes a symbol of ill omen
- Is eclipsed by another celestial body
- Is no longer visible from Earth

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