

The Bonds That Tie Us - Abridged Rules

by Alison Huang (drazillion.itch.io)

Creating The Setting

Together, come up with a setting where the characters would be acquainted with each other. Think about how it might give characters motivation to interact.

Creating Characters

Give your character a **name** as well as **pronouns**.

Set your character's **Stress** score to 2.

Assign your relationship, or **Bond** with the character on your **right** as **Positive**, **Neutral** or **Negative**. When everyone is done, do the same with the character on your **left**. You cannot choose the same type for both.

Your character's Bonds with any other characters are **Neutral**.

If players assign the same type of Bond to a certain relationship, it is **Mutual**. Otherwise, the Bond is **One-Sided**.

For each Bond, choose one of that Bond Type's three segments to start in. Characters in a Mutual Bonds have to stay in the same segment.

Negative **Neutral** **Positive**

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|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| +3 | +2 | +1 | +0 | +0 | +0 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|

Playing The Game

The game is divided into **Chapters**, which contain **Chapter Questions**, **Scenes**, **Scene Questions** and **Reactions**.

Chapter Questions happen at the start of a Chapter. **Scene Questions** happen after a Scene. They can be found on the next page.

In Scenes, you narrate what your character does. If you do something that might fail, roll **1d6**.

If a Bond would help you, add **d6** up to the number on that Bond's segment.

If you're doing **something kind or selfless**, you succeed if you roll **above your Stress score**.

If you're doing **something hurtful or selfish**, you succeed if you roll **below your Stress score**.

If your result is **equal to your Stress score**, you succeed at a cost that you describe. Your character's Stress increases by 1.

If you fail, your character's Stress increases by 1.

Stress cannot go lower than 2, or go higher than 6.

If a character spends an entire Chapter at 6 Stress, or if their Stress score is at 6, and their Stress needs to increase again, they are **out of play**.

You can **Abstain** your character from a Chapter. At the end of the Chapter your character's Stress decreases by 3.

If your character wasn't in a Scene but is impacted by it, you can **React**. Your character's Stress increases by 1. Narrate a Scene about that reaction.

Ending The Game

When everyone feels that the game is over, end the current Chapter. One by one, narrate what happens next for your character as a result of what happened.

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Chapter Questions

For the first Chapter, answer these questions in order to determine the first Scene.

Are there any Mutual Negative Bonds?

If yes, the first Scene features two characters in a Mutual Negative Bond, and a character with a Positive/Neutral Bond with one of them.

Are there any One Sided Positive or One Sided Negative Bonds?

If yes, the first Scene features a character with a One Sided Positive/Negative Bond, and the character they have that Bond with.

Are there any Mutual Neutral Bonds?

If yes, the first Scene features at least two characters in Mutual Neutral Bonds.

For subsequent Chapters, answer these questions in order.

Will this be the last Chapter before the game ends?

If yes, focus on resolving everything.

Are there any characters that haven't been focused on yet?

If yes, have at least one Scene revolve around each of these characters.

Is there a particular Bond that is preventing everything from resolving peacefully?

If yes, have at least one Scene revolve around the characters in this bond.

Have the characters had a chance to relax yet?

If no, have at least one Scene feature characters getting a break.

Do all of the characters have a clear goal?

If no, introduce a goal for every character.

Are any of the characters trying to ignore, or suppress, a truth about themselves, or another character?

If so, that truth becomes too difficult to ignore.

What is the easiest solution to everyone's problems right now?

That easiest solution is unavailable.

Scene Questions

Do you think a relationship changed as a result of this Scene?

If yes, move that Bond by one segment to the left or right.

Do you think your character's Stress level reflects how they feel after this Scene?

If no, your character's Stress increases or decreases by 1.

In this Scene, did your character forgive, or reconcile with, a character that they have a Negative Bond with?

If yes, change that Bond to a Positive Bond. Your character's Stress decreases by 2.

In this Scene, did your character have a falling out with a character that they have a Positive Bond with?

If yes, change that Bond to a Negative Bond. Your character's Stress increases by 2.

In this Scene, did your character confide in, or show vulnerability with, another character?

If yes, and that other character supported them, move that Bond by one segment to the right. Your character's Stress decreases by 1.

If yes, and that other character ridiculed them, move that Bond by one segment to the left. Your character's Stress increases by 1.