

THE FINEST (there will be no music)

a game by HB and Fniff, with special thanks to Frajic, Leonshade, Solomon Key and Kazumi Chin

The adventure has not yet begun. The world is dark. The heroes gather together and wait. What do they do to pass the time?

This game is an exercise in character building for two or more players, best played as a prelude or interlude for a different game.

First of all, choose a different character-based game you intend to play or are interested in playing. **Create characters** for it if you haven't yet, either together or separately. These will be your characters in the Finest. If the game you intend to play after this has a game master, the game master also plays a character, but creates them according to a non-player character procedure.

The Finest is an enclosed space that your characters have reason to spend some time in, such as a tavern, a vehicle on a journey, a ramshackle shelter, a forsaken crag or any liminal space of your choosing. Decide together what you'd prefer it to be. Whatever it is may vary, but all versions of the Finest obey five important rules:

1. **There is no music.** The only music allowed must be made by the players as an active effort.
2. **There are no drinks.** Your characters will remain sober and focused for the duration.
3. **Nobody else is around.** And nobody else shows up. You only have each other for company.
4. **You cannot leave.** If you would like to leave anyway, you must think of a compelling reason not to, such as a storm outside, wild dogs howling in the streets, not wanting to be out there alone, or anything else that seems rational at the time. Anything you establish about the outside as you invent an excuse becomes true in the fiction until proven otherwise.
5. **All parties lose in a fight.** Open conflict in the Finest is invariably an indecisive, depressing event, resulting in nothing but minor injuries, humiliation and awkwardness. Should you like to try it anyway or have no alternative, every party involved describes how they come out of it looking and/or feeling worse than before.

When your characters are ready and you know what the Finest is, **set a timer** for however much time you need to kill, generally somewhere between one and four hours. Until the timer runs out, you are inside the Finest. While inside, your characters may do these things:

1. **Speak freely.** To one another, or nobody in particular.
2. **Perform trivial actions.** Things that require no effort, such as walking around, sitting down, picking something up, pulling something out of your bag or standing on a table. The only trivial thing you cannot do is leave.
3. **Wonder aloud.** Pose a question about the surroundings. Anyone else may answer if they want. If nobody answers, make your best guess as to what the answer might be. Whoever answers, their answer is the closest thing to the truth you'll get without further action.
4. **Remain silent.** If there is a lull in the conversation, don't be afraid of saying nothing. Listen to the minutes ticking by.
5. **Perform undertakings.** For an action that would obviously take some effort, time or concentration, collectively decide how many minutes it might reasonably take. Once that many minutes have passed in real time (that is, for the players) and somebody takes note of the time elapsed, the undertaking is done. Until then, the one who agreed to do it is occupied with it and cannot perform another undertaking.

Once the timer runs out, the Finest's hold on you loosens, and you are allowed to leave. Once everyone leaves, the game ends, and you may launch into the game you originally intended to play.