

MAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE



The Story

Mage Against The Machine is a game about time-traveling wizards going back in time to stop the robot apocalypse.

The way things sit now, The Machine cannot be stopped. It is everywhere, it is everything. Your only hope is going back to when it wasn't to make sure it never is.

You must do what you've been warned about your whole life. You must travel back in time and meddle with reality.



Introduction

Mage Against The Machine is a quick GM-less role-playing game played in a single session. If you've never played a role-playing game without a GM, that's okay!

Instead of one person running the game and making all the decisions, every player is responsible for this. This kind of game requires players follow a few simple principles.

First, practice active listening. Don't think about what you're going to say next. Don't hold on to the way you want things to go. Listen to the story being told and run with it.

Second, say the first thing that comes into your mind. Don't overthink things, let your initial instincts guide the story.

Third, share the spotlight. This is a collaborative game. If you're the only one telling the story, then you're missing out on half the fun.

Starting A Game

Starting a game of Mage Against The Machine is really simple. First, you have to decide how The Machine came to power.

Using note cards or scraps of paper is going to be helpful for the next steps. Each player writes down two memories that are emotionally impactful to their character.

To create your memories, first choose a person, place, or event you have a deep emotional connection to.

Next, choose one of the following emotions that best represents your feelings: Joy, Gratitude, Hope, Pride, Love. Then answer the following two questions:

- Why was this memory so important to you?
- How does this memory affect the way you live in the present?

Next, you each have to determine the pivotal events that lead to the robot apocalypse. Think small. This should seem almost inconsequential in the grand scheme of things.

This event should be somewhere after humanity started tinkering with artificial intelligence, but before it affected every computer on the planet and took absolute control. Choose one of each:

First, create a starting event. This is an event where you know something odd happened, but don't know why it's important in the grand scheme of things.

Second, create an ending event. This is an event where you know the end results of what happened, but not what lead up to that moment.

Pair each event with one of your memories, then arrange them in a timeline. Work together to determine the order the events happened in and lay them out in a line.

Playing The Game

Start the game by jumping into the first memory in the timeline. The player whose memory this is describes to the other players what is going on in this memory.

Unfortunately, they cannot directly interact with their memories. Instead, their job is to answer the other players' questions about the memory.

Whenever another player wants to know a detail, fact, or the significance of anything in the scene, they ask the leading player a question, and the leading player answers. Don't feel like you need to know everything, just give the first answer that comes to mind.

Depending on whether you know how this event started or ended changes how you react to it.

If you know how it started...

Declare how you think the event will end and how you are going to put a stop to it, then roll the dice.

On a 5 or 6 you succeed and resolve the incident

On a 3 or 4 any player says why the incident still isn't resolved

On a 1 or 2 add an anomaly and any player says how things get worse

If you know how it ended...

Describe one theory about how the event could have started and how you are going to put a stop to it, then roll the dice.

On a 5 or 6 you succeed and arrive to put a stop to it

On a 3 or 4 any player says why it didn't work or how it was a dead end

On a 1 or 2 add an anomaly and any player says how things get worse

In either case, describe in detail what exactly you are doing to resolve things. If you use mundane means, you roll only a single die.

You may alternatively use magic to bend reality. When you do so, choose one adjective that fits what the spell does and describe the effect. The roll gets +1 whenever you use magic.

Keep track of the adjectives you use. The group may never use the same adjective more than once. However, using a synonym automatically generates an anomaly.

Whenever the leading player answers a question, any player may spend an anomaly to change the answer to something different and complicate the scene.

Try to use anomalies when you have a fun idea for how to twist things. The group starts with one anomaly, and will continue to generate more as they move from memory to memory. Keep track of how many anomalies were created during each of your

memories; they'll be important during the resolution.

Once all of the memories have been resolved, you have saved the day, and it's time to return to your timeline to enjoy saving the world.



Resolution

The last step is resolution. For each of your memories, roll a number of dice equal to the number of anomalies generated during that memory, plus the number of unspent anomalies. Use the lowest die to determine the result.

5 or 6 this memory happened exactly as you remember it

3 or 4 this memory did not happen in this timeline

1 or 2 this memory went the exact opposite in this timeline, describe how this twisted memory makes you feel the opposite emotion.

Joy becomes grief. Gratitude becomes bitterness. Hope becomes despair. Pride becomes shame. Love becomes hate.

Describe what exactly happened in the new timeline and your character's reaction to it.

