

Damn the Man

SAVE THE MUSIC



A ROLEPLAYING GAME
FOR 3-4 PUNKS
BY HANNAH SHAFFER

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Thank you!

DAMN THE MAN, SAVE THE MUSIC!

a Make Big Things game

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REVOLUTION

FRANCE
ERE!



with the original
FINGER FELLAS!

PERFORMING LIVE
IN THE TOWN HALL
ON AUG 19-22, 30 & 31

**DAMNSTER
FIRE**

Handy in the DAMNSTER
DRINK BUDS
\$5!!

THE DAMNSTER AND DAMNERS

HELP
~~WANTED~~
DESPERATELY
NEEDED!

PART-TIME
POSITIONS
AVAILABLE
- require audition
- SHORT-HAIRLED FASHIONS
NEED NOT APPLY

@Bambalola
and the
other members of
the band
are all available

TAKE OUT DINNER
SUN 24 @ 8PM
\$45 COVER
ALL ARESHAWME

DO YOU
SEE THIS MAN?

COOL JUST WINKING

FOUND
TRUCK

LOST
SENSE OF PURPOSE
REWARD IF FOUND

LEARN TO PLAY
MASTER GUITAR
Like a master!

DONK
PORK



NO DOGS
WALLEDS THEY HAVE
EXTREMELY GOOD TASTE

not the rick
not the fish

PERFECT BEACH
to have you in your
backyard

NO
LULL GAWING

NO SHIRT?
NO SHOES?
-NO-
PROBLEM

YES,
we buy tapes!
NO,
not your shitty
mix & tapes!
HOWEVER,
we DO sell shiny
mix tapes!

SUPPORT
YOUR
LOCAL
URCHINS

UPDATE:
WE SELL
SHIRTS

ACLE
CAKE

DO NOT
DRIVE PERSONS

the
dental
2005

DAMNIGANS

ONE NIGHT ONLY
Free to all
\$100-\$150

OPEN MONDAYS
and MOST OTHER DAYS
PLUS SOME NIGHTS
From 10^{ish}
to WHENEVER

JEFF Needs
Braces!
Benefit Concert!

THIS
16 A
Jesus
RAVES
+
Godly
ESTABLISHMENT
HALL SATAN

LOST CAT
\$50-\$1000

"MICHAEL CATSON"
555-1848

WHERE'S MY
BICYCLE
YOU GODDAMN
ANIMALS

-Please-
WIPE YOUR BOOTS
ON A FASCIST
BEFORE ENTERING
-☺-

ALL
ARE
WELCOME

except
fascists
SPAT OUT!

SELVETS
& TOOLS
NEED
NOT
APPLY

DANNED
Punk'n' Mean
Steve
Pidgeons

tips



INTRO

WHAT'S THIS GAME ABOUT?
WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO PLAY
THE SETTING
THE STRUCTURE
PLAYER ROLES
GETTING ON THE SAME PAGE
GAMEPLAY EXAMPLES

WHAT'S THIS GAME ABOUT?

DAMN THE MAN, SAVE THE MUSIC! is a roleplaying game about making a last-ditch effort to save something you love. You play a group of punks, outcasts, and weirdos fighting to save your '90s indie record store from succumbing to the Man. You'll work to find moments of meaning and connection while trying to achieve your own goal and meet your boss's demands.

Can you appease a has-been rockstar *and* find true love? Can you sell enough CDs to make the rent *and* join a band? You've got from 10 a.m. to midnight to try.

It's very likely that everything will go wrong, but at Revolution Records, that's business as usual.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO PLAY

PEOPLE

- ♪ Four or five people—three or four players, and one facilitator, who runs the game

TIME

- ♪ About three hours

MATERIALS

- ♪ White and black six-sided dice (five white, five black)
- ♪ Deck of playing cards (jokers removed)
- ♪ Printouts
 - Character sheets
 - Facilitator's Guide
 - Player's Guide (a copy for every player)
 - The Boss, the Bigshot sheet
 - Tunes List
- ♪ Pencils (one for each player)
- ♪ Scrap paper or index cards for notes and doodles



REAL TALK

FEELING NERVOUS ABOUT FACILITATING?

I always feel anxious before facilitating a game. I worry about forgetting rules or fumbling when players are looking to me for story guidance.

I've included support tools in *DAMN THE MAN* to give the facilitator a lot of creative backup. You'll find suggestions for everything from character names (pg 25) to potential scenes (pg 84) and store troubles (pg 40).

Don't hesitate to re-read the book and reference the rules as you play. There are no bonus points for memorizing everything.

Printer-friendly versions of all printouts can be found at makebigthings.com.



THE SETTING

DAMN THE MAN takes place in a fictional record store sometime in the mid-'90s. Exact dates don't matter. Think grunge music, emergent hip-hop, side ponytails, and swooshy, brightly colored windbreakers. Your characters probably aren't walking around with cell phones, your store's internet is dial-up, social media isn't a thing yet, video stores are alive and well, and there are some really good cartoons on TV.

All of the characters you'll play in this game are employees of Revolution Records, though how much work they *actually* do there is up to you. The store opened its doors back in 1975 and has struggled to stay open since. The golden age of vinyl has come and gone, indie record stores are getting steamrolled by CD retail chains, and the neighborhood around Revolution Records is quickly gentrifying. Bodegas are being replaced by trendy coffee shops. Liquor stores are being rebranded for "wine and liqueur." Every time you host a show, someone files a report with the Community Betterment Council.

Nowadays, Revolution Records relies on a good old annual has-been celebrity record signing to pay the bills. No one likes swallowing their pride for the sake of the Man, but when rent comes due, what does he care?

REAL TALK

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE FOR THE GAME?

Before facilitating a game of *DAMN THE MAN, SAVE THE MUSIC!* you'll want to read through the rules in full. You don't need to memorize them, but before jumping in it's good to know the scope of the game and to understand your role as facilitator.

You'll also want to print the pages listed in **Materials** (pg 9). The **Facilitator's Guide** (pg 88) includes all of the main rules, so it's great to keep nearby during play.

Finally, I'd recommend making a playlist. That playlist will set the mood when folks arrive and add flavor to each montage scene. More on that on page 48! For now, that's all you need.



THE STRUCTURE

DAMN THE MAN plays in three acts—act 1 is Opening, act 2 is the Big Event (a record signing for the has-been rockstar), and act 3 is Closing. Following these acts is a brief epilogue, where everyone figures out whether the store is saved or doomed.

The whole story takes place over one day, roughly from 10 a.m. to midnight. Every player takes on the role of a store employee, while the facilitator helps guide the story, plays other characters, and throws challenges at the characters along the way. The game begins and ends with musical montages, and the store's troubles will escalate through the day.

In each of the three acts, each player will get to play out one scene. During each scene, the spotlight player will try to meet the demands of the day while sharing moments of connection with their friends and working to accomplish a big personal goal. You'll roll dice to resolve the action of a scene, and you'll draw cards when new troubles hit the store.

Three acts, one scene per player per act, dice-rolling, card-drawing. Read on for the specifics!

123.

PLAYER ROLES

DAMN THE MAN is designed for three to four players and one facilitator. If you're reading this, you've likely decided to take on the facilitator role.

AS FACILITATOR, YOU'LL BE EXPECTED TO:

- ♪ Welcome the players to the game and introduce the setting.
- ♪ Guide players through creating characters and relationships.
- ♪ Explain the escalating troubles of the store.
- ♪ Explain the rules and give rules reminders when necessary.
- ♪ Prime the players for roleplay by describing scenes, playing NPCs, and throwing out ideas about the directions a scene can go in.

That might sound like a lot, but the game is here to support you! Your job is to listen, gently guide, and keep the mood positive. If you're ever in a creative pickle, the game includes lots of suggestions for getting out of it.

FACILITATOR

- Some players might not be familiar with acronyms like PC (player character) and NPC (non-player character). Let players know that they'll be playing the PCs (the protagonists) and you'll be playing the NPCs (the supporting characters and extras).

Once you have a facilitator, everyone else at the table will be a player.

AS A PLAYER, YOU'LL BE EXPECTED TO:

- ♪ Decide when to double down and help the store, when to work on your relationships, and when to pursue your goal.
- ♪ Support other players during their scenes.
- ♪ Be true to your character.

Not sure what that looks like in play? That's okay! The facilitator will offer you guidance when it's needed and will help you decide when it's time to roll dice to resolve your scene. You'll also have your character sheet and a **Player's Guide** (pg 95) in front of you, in case you need some rules reminders.

REAL TALK

NOSTALGIA TRIPPIN'

DAMN THE MAN, SAVE THE MUSIC! takes place in a fictional record store sometime in the '90s. The characters all share a passion for music, but this isn't a game about musical expertise. It's okay to enjoy a little '90s nostalgia during play, but not everyone will be familiar with '90s music and subculture, and that's okay.

Keep table chatter about actual '90s songs and bands to a minimum, and make up names and dates wherever possible. No arguing about which album came out when!

GETTING ON THE SAME PAGE

A game of *DAMN THE MAN* might feature drugs and alcohol, sexual content, and characters dealing with suicidal ideations or depression. Facilitator, you'll want to tell the players this and make sure they're all on board before the game begins.

If a player is okay seeing this content in the game but is worried about losing agency over their character, let them know that **they always have control over their character's thoughts, feelings, and body.**

EXERCISING VETO POWER

Player agency is an important part of *DAMN THE MAN*, and it's important that the players feel empowered to exercise **veto power** if they feel uncomfortable.

Your gaming group might already have norms in place for managing comfort, consent, and sensitive content at the table. If you don't already have norms in place, consider using an **X Card** during your game. The X Card is a way to quickly exercise veto power during play. Simply draw a large X on a piece of paper, and keep the X where everyone can see it or reach for it.

When someone puts their hand on the X card or just says “X card” or “veto” aloud, it’s time to drop the vetoed content from the game and go in a different direction. It’s okay to ask for *clarification* if what’s being vetoed isn’t clear, but don’t ask for *justification*. Trust your fellow players to know what’s challenging for them, and work together to find an alternative.

REAL TALK

CONTENT CONVOS

As the facilitator, it can sometimes be helpful to start conversations about content by giving players an example of something you wouldn’t want to see during play. For me, that list includes harm to animals, nonconsensual sex in an otherwise light roleplaying game, and vivid descriptions of things growing in the back of the fridge.

If you’re not comfortable opening the conversation by sharing your own “off limits” content, or you can’t think of any examples to share, feel free to borrow from mine.

GAMEPLAY EXAMPLES

From this point onward, you'll find transcripts of gameplay moments in boxes like the one below. These **In Play** examples won't replace detailed explanations of the rules, but they'll appear alongside the rules throughout the text. Use these examples to get a sense of how play flows and what the rules look like in action.

The following example introduces the players and shows Alanna, the facilitator, walking the players through an overview of the game and then introducing veto power.

IN PLAY

ALANNA: Hey, everyone. Thanks for joining me for a game of *Damn the Man, Save the Music!* This is my first time facilitating a game, so I'm feeling nervous but excited.

I know that some of you are new to roleplaying games, and we haven't all met before. Let's do a quick round of introductions, sharing names, pronouns, and anything else you'd like us to know.

TARYN: I'm Taryn. I really like marine biology and art, and I even sell some of my illustrations online. I've played a little D&D with coworkers, but this is pretty new to me. "She/her" pronouns for me.

MAX: I'm Max! I work at a coffee shop and I make a mean cappuccino, though I'm actually not much of a coffee drinker. This is my first ever roleplaying game. I do play a ton of video games, though. "They/them" pronouns for me, please.

JOSHUA: Hey, I'm Joshua! I'm a game designer, so I've played a lot of roleplaying games. I tend to play sci-fi games, but I love music, so this is right up my alley. "He/him" pronouns for me.

ALANNA: Cool, thanks everyone. I'm Alanna! I've played maybe three roleplaying games before. I do theater and stand-up comedy, so I feel comfortable with improv, but the type of improv that happens in RPGs still feels new to me. I've never played or run this game, so this will be a new experience for all of us! "She/her" pronouns for me, thanks!

So, *Damn the Man* is a game about a bunch of oddballs working at an indie record store trying to save their store from the Man. The game plays out over a single day, and each of you will take on the role of one character. You'll be trying to accomplish a big personal goal while things fall apart around you, and I'll help guide the story. I'll play NPCs, like your boss and a has-been rockstar, I'll assign you tasks throughout the day, and I can offer suggestions during a scene if you ever feel stuck.

The game has three acts: Opening, the Big Event (a record signing for the has-been rockstar), and Closing, where we figure out if we saved the store or not. Any questions so far?

MAX: Do we need to know how the system works yet? Like when we roll dice?

ALANNA: Nope, not yet! I'll talk about rules before the first scene begins. So, two things before we jump in.

First, we're all coming in with different relationships to '90s music and '90s pop culture. To keep the game fun for everyone, I'm going to

encourage you all to make up band names wherever possible. You can even make up fake '90s cartoons and trends. Basically, let's level the playing field by keeping real names and dates to a minimum.



JOSHUA: So, in this universe, we've got Atlantis Moristand and her grunge-pop hit "Isn't It Pedantic?"

ALANNA: Exactly! Second, *Damn the Man* might feature sexual content, drugs and alcohol, and characters dealing with mental health stuff. Beyond those themes, we can all exercise veto power if something comes up during the game that we're uncomfortable with.

I've put a card on the table with a big X on it. You can tap this card at any time or say "veto" if you don't want to go there in a scene. I really hate clowns, so I'd tap the X card if we found ourselves in the middle of a weird carnival scene. Does anyone want to pre-veto any content? Like my clown example?

TARYN: I'll veto graphic violence.

ALANNA: Yup. Good one.

MAX: I'm not sure if there's anything I want to pre-veto. If my character ends up in a scene where someone makes a sexual advance and I'm just not down with it, can I veto then?

ALANNA: Absolutely. Even if the dice aren't rolling in your favor, you always have control over your character's thoughts, emotions, and body agency.

JOSHUA: I'm in agreement with all of this!

ALANNA: Awesome! Let's dive in, then!



HITAZ
LEUCH

ACLE
CAKE

DIGITAL
MUSIC

GREEN
SIGN

FINGER
FELKS

SETUP

THE BIG DAY
CHARACTER CREATION
CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS
THE BOSS, THE BIGSHOT
THE FIRST TROUBLE

FACILITATOR

- Read the following section aloud, or have another
- player read it aloud.

THE BIG DAY

Welcome to Revolution Records. The kind of place that's been on the verge of closing since opening day. Located down that little side street in the part of town your mom doesn't want you to visit.

We all know CD Emporium's been sniffing around, looking to turn this place into a corporate boy-band vending machine. If we don't settle up with the landlord this month, we're out—and the Emporium is in.

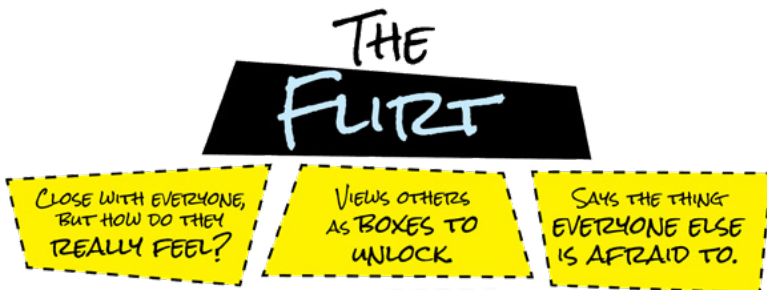
We've got one chance to keep the music playing. At 11 a.m. tomorrow, the Bigshot will walk through these doors, and half the town will be here to get shitty signatures on their shitty records. If we can sell every one of them a CD, that's enough to float us for another year.

So, the question is: can we make it through just one day without a huge fucking disaster?

CHARACTER CREATION

It's time to choose characters! Facilitator, gather up the character sheets and read aloud each character archetype and the brief description below their archetype, then place each sheet on the table. You don't need to read out everything on the character sheet, just enough to give a sense of the types of characters available before the players have to choose.

Read this section of each character sheet aloud before placing each sheet on the table:



After the facilitator reads the character archetypes and flavor text aloud, each player picks a character that seems fun to play. If two players are interested in the same archetype, talk it out. After everyone has chosen, there'll be some leftover character sheets out on the table. You can save these for a future game or recycle them—not every character archetype will appear in every game.

FACILITATOR

- A character's archetype is their public persona. These are inspired by '90s movie personality tropes, but you'll want to encourage players to think outside the box with gender, and feel free to twist tropes this way and that. Teen movies of the '90s tended to sideline people of color, and they used gay characters as a way to add edgy jokes. Use your game as an opportunity to do better.

NAME, DRESS, AND TUNES

Players, take a moment to think about the character you're going to play. On your character sheet, write down your character's EMPLOYEE INFO:

- ♪ **NAME:** Full name, just a first name, or a nickname.
- ♪ **AGE:** Many characters will be teenagers, but yours doesn't have to be. Some of the best games have featured much older—or younger—characters working at the store.
- ♪ **TIME EMPLOYED:** One hour? Three months? Three years? Ten years?

You'll also want to think about and write down your character's STYLE:

- ♪ **DRESS:** Ripped jeans and flannel? 1920s vintage suits? Crop tops and high-waisted miniskirts?
- ♪ **TUNES:** Your favorite music genre or band. You can use the **Tunes List** (pg 26) for guidance, or make something up!

FACILITATOR

- This is a good place to encourage players to make up band names, album names, and even genres. Use
- the **Tunes List** (pg 26) as a guide, but freely make
- up details along the way.

If anyone's having trouble coming up with a name, here are some ideas:

Carlos	Amy	Erin
Randall	Laura	Beans
Brandon	Dawn	Chance
Zachary	Beth	Cheddar
Victoria	Chrono	River
Derek	April	Red
Shane	Chad	Jacqueline
Alex	Corey	Dakota
Wendy	Wolfie	Boots
Jamie	Bea	Romeo
Sean	Ash	Jinx
Amanda	Jesse	Devon





TUNES LIST

NEO SOUL

Influenced by traditional smooth R&B, with a less conventional sound. Incorporates elements from jazz, funk, hip-hop, and traditional African music. Confident, soulful.

G-FUNK

Origins in west coast gangster rap and hip hop. Uses less sampling than other types of hip-hop, more background vocals. Smooth rapping, flowing lyrics, hypnotic beats.

GRUNGE

Musical movement and fashion statement. Combines punk and metal with distorted electric guitars. Themes of teen angst, apathy and nihilism, and social isolation.

BRITPOP

Inspired by the British greats, like the Beatles and the Kinks. Emphasis on British life and politics. Thoughtful lyrics with upbeat melodies.

POST-INDUSTRIAL

Experimental, electronic, genre-hopping. Makes use of noise and sometimes unconventional instruments, like power tools and bones.

NU METAL

Old metal meets new hip-hop. Dark themes, lots of parental shock value.

TRIP-HOP

Evolved from British hip-hop and house. Downtempo electronica. Heavy use of sampling, connected to the senses.

SINCERE WOMEN WITH GUITARS (AND PIANOS)

Folk rock and singer-songwriter music, composed by women who play their own instruments, often incorporating feminist themes and soul-searching questions.

J-POP

Japanese pop with influences from American rock. Not exemplified by a single musical style, though often associated with bubblegum pop.

BLUESY JAM BANDS

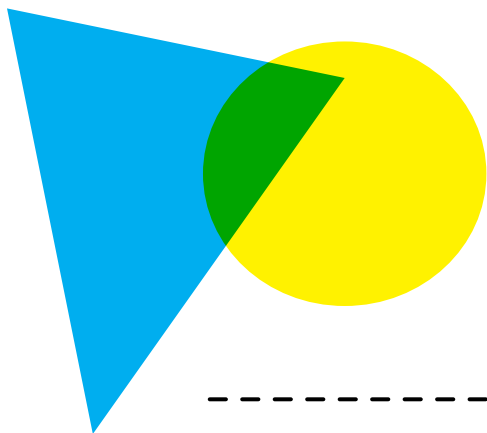
Blending psychedelic vibes with classic folk and blues. Think guys with beards and tie-dyed shirts.

THE CLASSICS

Timeless tunes, be it 1960 or 1660.

BOY BANDS

All-male pop bands with a carefully crafted image. Music and style marketed predominantly at young teenage girls.



GOAL

Finally, circle one goal for your character from the GOAL list on your character sheet. This is your character's most urgent desire, and for whatever reason they've got to fulfill it today! You'll have a chance to fill in the two Progress boxes below your goal during play.

GOAL PROGRESS

I'M DETERMINED

I HAVE A PLAN

MAKING UP YOUR OWN GOAL

What if you want to make up your own goal, instead of choosing one from the list? That's totally fine! Your goal need only be something you can at least *try* to accomplish today, even if the road ahead looks rocky.

Here are some examples of custom goals that might work well:

- ♪ Beat the store record for most CDs sold in a day.
- ♪ Finish the final boss battle in Return to Wolf Castle.
- ♪ Get my brother a job at the store.
- ♪ Open the mysterious puzzle box.
- ♪ Fix the boss's marriage.
- ♪ Eat the spicy challenge from Casa de Taco's "secret menu."

A goal like "decide to attend college" isn't so great because it's hard to think up a scene where your character could work toward that goal. Likewise, a goal like "find my true purpose" is too big and abstract. If you're not sure whether your custom goal will work well in the game, try choosing a goal from the list on your character sheet and tweaking it to match your character.

INTRODUCTIONS



At this point, everyone should have:

- ♪ Their name, age, and time employed written down
- ♪ Their dress and tunes written down
- ♪ A goal circled

When everyone is finished filling in details, the players will briefly introduce their characters. Players, you'll share important information about your character aloud—your archetype and the way you act, employee info, style, etc. Feel free to expand and embellish to give everyone a better sense of who you are.

IN PLAY

TARYN: I'm Chaz, the Aspiring Poet. I'm seventeen and I've been working here a little over a year, which feels like an eternity. I've got the grunge thing going on—ripped flannel, ripped undershirt, ripped jeans—but I take meticulously good care of my hair. My hair is all slick and nice and formal. I think my mom combs it for me before I leave for school. I like my mom.

I'm into grunge music and garage bands. My favorite band is the Grimey Goobers...they haven't made it big yet. I'm a poet, though, so I'm also really into sincere women with guitars.

ALANNA: What did you choose for a goal?

TARYN: Oh yeah! My goal is to pay back a debt. My mom loaned me money so I could get my first car, but she works two jobs and I know it was a huge strain. I'll have saved up just enough money to pay her back today, and I want to surprise her with that money before the mortgage is due.

Max introduces their character, Dawn the Overachiever. Dawn is eighteen, making her the oldest employee, and she does everything with a sense of seniority. She's been working here for two years. Her goal is to get a promotion, she has a noteworthy collection of turtlenecks, and she always wears a side ponytail.

Joshua's character is Amy, the seventeen-year-old Space Case. Despite what everyone thinks, Amy doesn't smoke pot. She's tall with unkempt blonde hair, wears tie-dye and neon hats, and has been working here a little over a month. Amy's goal is to confess her love to her crush.

CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

Now each player will establish their character's relationships with the people sitting to their left and right at the table.

Every character will have a relationship with **two** other characters. This doesn't mean you can't interact with all the characters—it just means two of your relationships pack an emotional punch.

EXAMPLES OF CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

Twins, though only one of us ever gets in trouble

Smoking buddies...we met at bible camp

Gal pals, and we'd never admit there's something more there

In competition for coveted "store manager" position

Best friends, unfortunately

Manager who's always asking me for advice

Life mentor who's also my dealer

Hate crush

Lifelong rival who's secretly in love with me

Childhood friend who's acting too cool for me

FACILITATOR

- Make sure everyone knows that they have veto power over relationship suggestions. Anyone can suggest
- a type of relationship, but both players must
- agree. If the relationship doesn't work for you, anyone can suggest alternatives until you've found
- something that does.

A relationship of “siblings” is a good start, but it's not interesting enough on its own! Are you twins who complete each other's sentences? How about a pesky younger sister who follows her older brother to work and is basically an honorary employee?

Build out these relationships until everyone has a clear connection. To help you, the facilitator and other players should add flavor to relationships by asking each other one or two questions that deepen those relationships.

EXAMPLES OF RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS

Why do you love to hate this person?

What did this person do to break your heart?

Whom do you admire so much it makes you shy around them?

When did you have a falling-out, and what was it about?

Who acts like the manager even though they have no authority?

Whom do you think is totally hot but you'd never admit it?

Who's sleeping with the boss?

Who stole something, and what did they steal?

You may want to avoid established romantic relationships (*she's my girlfriend!*) at first. Letting those relationships reveal themselves during the game tends to be more exciting. An exception is a relationship that has been happening in secret, which makes for juicy drama and a satisfying reveal.

Asymmetrical relationships are totally okay, so long as both players consent to the nature of the relationship.

To Jesse, Jessica is his lifelong crush with hair that smells like jasmine. To Jessica, Jesse is like a brother...who also has good weed.

Both of your relationships in *DAMN THE MAN* will start off **Uncool**, meaning the “We cool?” box is not marked. Even if you’ve established that you’re lifelong besties with one friend and sleeping with the other, the store’s troubles are putting undue pressure on those relationships today.

During the game, you’ll have the opportunity to heal these relationships, marking the box and making the relationship **Cool**.

RELATIONSHIPS	
RELATIONSHIP 1: Felicity - My dealer, store's asst. manager	WE COOL? <input type="checkbox"/>
RELATIONSHIP 2: Carlos - New best friend I want to impress	<input type="checkbox"/>

THE BOSS, THE BIGSHOT

After creating relationships between the PCs, it's time to figure out what the Boss and the Bigshot are all about.

Place the **The Boss, the Bigshot** sheet where everyone can see it. As a group, you'll answer all of the questions below to build these characters into believable (or at least lovably weird) people.

THE BOSS

- ♪ What does everyone call them?
- ♪ What's their management style?
- ♪ How do they dress?
- ♪ What are they really like, below the surface?

THE BIGSHOT

- ♪ What went wrong in their career?
- ♪ What's their stage name?
- ♪ What do they look like?
- ♪ What do they want out of this day?

Go around the table a few times until every player has had a chance to answer one of these questions, or has added something to the character's description. Jot down these character details on **The Boss, the Bigshot** sheet. During the game, you can refer to this sheet if you need a reminder or if there are new details you'd like to add.

IN PLAY

The players collaboratively create the characters of Deb, the Boss, and Rick Rhinestone, the inimitable Bigshot.

Deb runs a tight ship, and everyone gives her a bad time for it, but she inherited the store from her father, and her stern hand is the only thing that keeps bringing it back from the brink of collapse. Below the surface, she only wants to keep everyone happy, fed, and safe. Deb always wears high-waisted, acid-washed jeans over long-sleeved leotards.

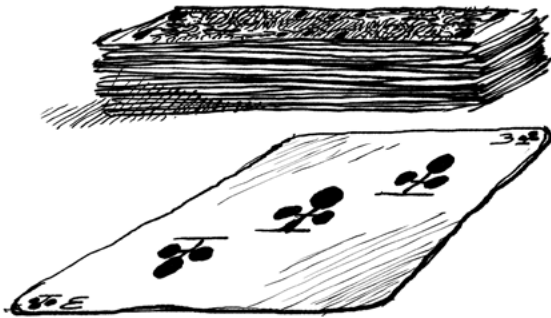
Rick Rhinestone was a one-hit wonder whose glory days have long since faded. He's managed to extend his fame through a series of TV commercials, and is always appearing as the official representative of some new weight-loss drink. Aside from his spray tan, everything about him is bleached: his teeth, his clothing, his hair.

He tends to draw crowds because of his unpredictable public behavior, which was both his downfall and what's kept him marginally famous. He doesn't really want anything out of this day. It's his publicist who's sending him on a record-signing tour, in hopes of improving his public image before re-releasing his "Greatest Hits" CD. Deb knows hosting Rick Rhinestone is a risk, but she's too shrewd to pass up this business opportunity.

FACILITATOR

- There's a bad trope you'll want to avoid in games where the Boss is a woman. That's the trope of "the bitch."
- It can be easy to fall back on stereotypes when putting a woman in a position of power. Is it okay to make the Boss a real hardass? Totally. But she can be a hardass in a way that doesn't use played-out stereotypes and gendered insults.
- If you see the players heading in this direction, guide them toward more creative choices in making the Boss a real, relatable human being—someone with weird flaws and lovable quirks, no matter their motives. You can straight up use veto power here as well.

THE FIRST TROUBLE



Revolution Records is a store in trouble. After wrapping up character creation, we'll learn about the latest trouble that hit just yesterday!

Shuffle and draw a card from the deck. This card's suit represents one of the store's four **troubles**. This trouble will begin at an escalation of 3, so everyone writes down "3" at the top of their character sheet below the matching suit.

Every other trouble will begin at 1, so everyone writes down “1” below each other suit. Here’s what the troubles should look like on everyone’s character sheet:

REVOLUTION RECORDS MAY BE CLOSED DUE TO:	
 COMMUNITY 3	 MONEY 1
 MORALE 1	 THE BOSS 1

The number under a given suit represents the severity of that trouble.

A trouble at 1 represents a concern on the distant horizon, 2 is a pesky background problem, 3 represents a serious problem, 4 is a nightmare, and 5 represents total anarchy and collapse.

- ♪ **In a three-player game**, the store collapses if the game ends with any trouble at 5.
- ♪ **In a four-player game**, the store collapses if the game ends with any trouble at 6.

The facilitator will say what happened yesterday to cause the first escalated trouble. You don’t need to know every detail about this first trouble, and you can use the examples below as a guide if you need one. For now you can just say, “There’s been some drama surrounding the new Employee of the Month program.” You’ll expand on this trouble during play!

You don’t have to come up with ideas for any of the troubles at 1 yet. A trouble at 1 is too far distant for anyone to take notice.

These troubles will escalate throughout the game. You'll keep track of those escalations on your character sheet and will narrate each trouble as it happens. You don't need to know any rules about escalating troubles yet—just keep in mind that those low-priority, easy-to-ignore store troubles probably won't stay that way!

IN PLAY

The players draw an eight of clubs—a community trouble. Everyone writes a “3” on their character sheet under Community, and writes “1” under each other trouble.

Alanna says that the new, self-appointed neighborhood council has started to issue loud-music complaints against the store, whether music is playing or not. Yesterday, they set up a neighborhood patrol. A rotating cast of squares has been passing by the store since then, some carrying fake newspapers, others posing as office-supply salesmen. They even got a fake drug dealer, who offered Deb a bag of “the pot” that smelled faintly of oregano.

This community betterment is starting to look a lot like harassment.

TROUBLE EXAMPLES

COMMUNITY (CLUBS)



- ♪ Competition with new store
- ♪ Gentrifying neighborhood
- ♪ MASM (Mothers Against Satanic Music)
- ♪ Loud-music complaints
- ♪ Trouble with the law

MONEY (DIAMONDS)



- ♪ Leaky roof
- ♪ Register totals are off
- ♪ Donated the rainy day fund to Greenpeace
- ♪ Bought something we can't pay for
- ♪ Received an unusually high electricity bill

MORALE (HEARTS)



- ♪ Big drop-off in customers
- ♪ Someone we care about is seriously depressed
- ♪ Employee of the Month drama
- ♪ Someone lost the battle of the bands
- ♪ Fridge theft

THE BOSS (SPADES)



- ♪ New management
- ♪ Had to take a second job
- ♪ Going through a very public breakup
- ♪ Hasn't been showing up for work
- ♪ Spent the night in jail

REAL TALK

TAKING BREAKS

A full game of *DAMN THE MAN* runs about three hours, and that includes time for breaks.

You might be able to push through a full game without a pause, but there's no need to marathon it. I recommend taking at least one break for stretching or snacking before diving back in.

The first natural break point in the game is right here—after drawing and narrating the starting trouble, but before jumping into the first scene. Offer a break to all players now, and let them know it's okay to take a break at any point during the game.





PLAY

GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

OPENING MONTAGE

ROLEPLAYING SCENES

RESOLVING SCENES

EPILOGUE

GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

At this point, your characters are created, the Boss and Bigshot are ready for action, and the store's troubles have only just begun. Now that you're ready to dive into scenes, here's an overview of the game's structure and what you'll be doing next.

THE GAME HAS THREE ACTS

The story in *DAMN THE MAN* centers on the big day—a record signing for the Bigshot, a has-been rockstar. The story is divided into three **acts**: Opening, the Big Event, and Closing. The first act opens with a musical montage, and the final act closes with a musical montage, which serves as the game's epilogue.

EVERY PLAYER GETS ONE SPOTLIGHT SCENE PER ACT

In each act, every player will get one scene where their character is in the spotlight. So, in a three-player game, you'll play out three scenes in each act. In a four-player game, you'll play out four scenes in each act.

EVERY SCENE HAS A TASK

Every scene begins with the Boss (or sometimes with the Bigshot) delegating a task to the spotlight player's character. The task might be as simple as hanging up a few posters, or as complicated as finding a place to tether Starfall, the Bigshot's trophy-winning Shetland pony.

When your character is in the spotlight for the scene, you'll choose a **game plan** for approaching your task from three options: **doubling down**, **taking a moment**, or **shooting for your goal**.

If you choose to **double down**, you'll jump right into finding the perfect place to stash a small pony. No bullshit, no distractions. This pony needs a carrot and it needs it now. Because you're doubling down on the task at hand, you'll get a bonus die when it comes time to roll.

If you choose to **take a moment**, you'll set aside time so you can heal a relationship before jumping in. The pony can wait. You've got to apologize to Tracy for xeroxing her love letter and submitting it as your English assignment. You'll still get to roll some dice to see if you found a place for the pony, but the relationship will take priority in this scene, so you won't get a bonus die.

Finally, if you choose to **shoot for your goal**, you'll get to attempt both your goal and the assigned task, but you'll have to split up your dice between them. You may be able to deal with the pony *and* get a promotion in one fell swoop. But it's likely you'll have to make a hard choice between the two, delaying either the pony or your dreams of a promotion.

The facilitator is responsible for setting the scene. Facilitator, you can consult the **Facilitator's Guide** (pg 88) and **Scene List** (pg 84) as you go, but feel free to break away if you have a good idea for an unlisted scene.

YOU'LL ROLEPLAY OUT YOUR GAME PLAN

As the spotlight player, you'll explore the scene in a free-form roleplay. You'll talk about your intentions and actions, and the facilitator and other players will join in by playing supporting characters and describing the scene's details. This roleplay is informed by your game plan and culminates in a question: Will you succeed at your task? To answer this, you'll move to resolution.

YOU'LL RESOLVE THE SCENE BY ROLLING DICE

This is where you, the spotlight player, roll dice to see if your actions helped or harmed the store. Your game plan will affect your roll:

- ♪ If you **doubled down**, you'll get to roll a bonus die.
- ♪ If you **took a moment**, you'll be able to call on a friend for help—or you can save the help for later.
- ♪ If you **shot for your goal**, you'll be able to put some of your dice toward accomplishing your goal as well.

The result of this roll informs how the scene concludes, generally along with some roleplay or discussion to describe it. After the scene ends, you'll move on to the next spotlight scene, moving from person to person until everyone has been the spotlight player once for the act.

Once everyone has been the spotlight player, the act ends, and a new trouble will hit the store, except in act 3. Once you've played through three acts, the game concludes with an epilogue.



THE GAME ENDS WITH AN EPILOGUE

The **epilogue** is a montage of short scenes that wraps up loose ends and gives everyone an idea of what the characters' futures might look like. Going into the epilogue, you'll have extra options available if **both your relationships are Cool**, if you've **accomplished your goal**, and if as a group you've **saved the store**.

In the sections that follow, you'll learn the details about how to roleplay montages and scenes and how to resolve a scene.

OPENING MONTAGE

What's a game about a '90s record store without a musical montage?

There are two montages in *DAMN THE MAN*: one at the beginning of the game, before the first scene, and one at the end of the game, as part of the epilogue. Guided by the facilitator, montages are mini scenes that set the stage for the act to come. Montages should last no more than a couple minutes, and serve as a sort of call-and-response between the facilitator and the players.

To begin a montage, the facilitator either starts playing a background song or describes a fictional background song being played. Then, while the song is playing, the facilitator will place each character in the scene. The players respond with their thoughts and feelings. Some players will jump right in and describe what they're doing and how they're engaging with other characters. The facilitator can keep the scene moving by asking questions, like these:

- ♪ What does Tiffany think of this song?
- ♪ How are you looking at Jason after your big fight yesterday?
- ♪ You look tired. Did you get enough sleep last night?
- ♪ How do you feel about being at work right now?
- ♪ What looks out of place to you?
- ♪ What poster did somebody paste to the door last night?
- ♪ How are you gonna get the coffee machine working in time?

IN PLAY

Alanna, the facilitator, picks a well-known '90s pop song for the first montage.

ALANNA: Dawn, you're on opening, so you're the first to enter.

MAX (DAWN): I immediately jump in and start sweeping. I swept last night, too, but you know...I'm an overachiever.

ALANNA: Chaz, you're the next to arrive. You're usually not so punctual, but we know you're crushing on Dawn, so you'll take any opportunity to get a few minutes alone together.

TARYN (CHAZ): "Uh, hey, Dawn. Nice song."

MAX: "Oh, hey, Chaz. I didn't know you liked Natalie Indrooblia."

ALANNA: Amy, you're the next to enter.

JOSHUA (AMY): So as I come in I'm like, "Oh, Chaz doesn't actually like Natalie Indrooblia, he's just trying to—"

TARYN: "Don't you have somewhere to be, Amy?"

JOSHUA: "I'm here, man. Here is where I need to be."

ALANNA: Amy, you're on cash deposit this morning.

JOSHUA: "Actually, I'm on deposit. Catch ya later, losers."

ALANNA: So does Chaz secretly like Natalie Indrooblia?

TARYN: Yeah, but mostly because Dawn likes her. It's not disingenuous. It's just...love.

ALANNA: Cool, so that's when the Boss arrives...

The opening montage will be the first time that players are really interacting as characters, so the facilitator can focus on little moments that help establish each character's personality and remind the players about the relationships they established during setup. Go for quick lines of dialogue and reaction shots, and make sure everyone is present in the scene, even if they're not all in the same room.

FACILITATOR

- If you prepped music in advance, a montage is the perfect time to play a song.
- The opening and closing montages are pretty quick, but you'll want to be mindful of sensory overload here. If you or the players are struggling because your narration is competing with the music, you can either turn the volume down, or just describe the type of song playing in the background instead of actually playing it.
- Here's an example:
 - Alanna: "Amy, you hit the stereo. We want something loud and upbeat, but nothing that's going to scare customers."
 - Joshua (Amy): So of course Amy puts on Swedish death metal...
 - *Alanna's description of the music sets a mood, and the characters react accordingly.*
 - *Dawn is annoyed and can't focus, Chaz tries to start a three-person mosh pit, and the Boss shuts it all down fast when she arrives.*

ROLEPLAYING SCENES

In *DAMN THE MAN*, the future of Revolution Records depends on the actions of its employees. Over the course of the game, each player gets three **spotlight scenes**. Your spotlight scenes give you the chance to learn more about your character, work toward your goal, and help the store survive its troubles.

These scenes will involve some **open-ended roleplay**: acting out your character's thoughts, desires, and conversations, supported by the facilitator and the other players at the table. This section will describe that roleplay in detail.

SETTING UP A SCENE

Before diving in and acting out your scene, you'll want to set the stage for what's to come. First, the facilitator chooses who's going to take the spotlight. Scenes can go in any order, as long as every player gets one spotlight scene in each act.

FACILITATOR

- When deciding the scene order, consider what's happening in the story and which players are overdue for the spotlight.
- If Emily and Becky's characters shared a tense moment during Emily's spotlight scene, it might make sense for Becky to take the next scene, so you can follow the action uninterrupted.
- Likewise, if Sam's been a little quiet and hasn't appeared as an NPC recently, you may want give Sam the next spotlight scene so he has a chance to shine. Use the **Scene List** (pg 84) as a guide.

In a spotlight scene, the facilitator delegates a **task** to the spotlight player. The task can be from the **Scene List** (pg 84) or just one that feels appropriate to the situation.

FACILITATOR

- You'll often delegate tasks by speaking as the Boss or the Bigshot. You can give this task explicitly through these major NPCs, or the task can arise naturally from the situation—like when the coffee machine catches fire or Chaz spots a shoplifter.
- Sometimes, in addition to describing the task, you'll give some brief scene-setting details. "The place is packed! But so far, nobody has noticed the smoke coming from the break room." Just enough info for the spotlight player to get started.

IN PLAY

Alanna, the facilitator, opens this scene speaking in character as the Boss.

ALANNA: “Alright, folks. Alright. Come on. I want everyone listening right now. We’ve got a big day ahead of us. Rick Rhinestone is gonna be here in less than an hour.

“Yeah, I know. I don’t need to hear any groans. We’ve got one hour to get this place in shape. Dawn, that stupid new computer won’t turn on again. You know all the technology stuff, right? It needs to be working and computering again before the first customer walks in.”

Alternatively, Alanna could frame this scene out of character and then jump into character after delegating tasks.

ALANNA: Okay, so I’m going to start by gathering everyone for a big group meeting. We’ll start by having somebody try to fix the store’s new computer. Max, how do you feel about Dawn being in the spotlight for this first scene?

MAX: I’m game!

ALANNA: “Okay, listen up people...”

As the spotlight player, you’ll then decide on a **game plan**. You can choose to:

- ♪ **Double down** on the task at hand, or...
- ♪ **Take a moment** to heal a relationship, or...
- ♪ **Shoot for your goal**, taking a chance to attain your heart’s desire.

Your game plan will frame the action and affect how the scene resolves, as explained in the sections to come.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ROLEPLAY?

In scenes, players will spend some time roleplaying their characters. When you're ready to see the outcome of your character's efforts, you'll turn to the dice; but before that point, the scene can go many different ways.

What follows is a brief introduction to roleplaying in *DAMN THE MAN*, and tips for making the most of your character's meanderings.

DIFFERENT ROLEPLAYING STYLES

Some folks like to roleplay in first person:

■ *"I open the fridge, totally ignoring Chaz."*

Some folks like to roleplay in third person:

■ *"Dawn opens the fridge. She's totally ignoring Chaz at this point."*

And some folks use a mix of both:

■ *"I open the fridge. At this point, Dawn is totally ignoring Chaz."*

If you tend toward third person, know that this approach even works with dialogue:

■ *"Dawn starts rattling off excuses...stuff about her dog, her ancestry, the phase of the moon."*

You're welcome to use whichever style feels natural to you, whether you're a player or the facilitator.

FACILITATOR

- There may be times when it makes sense to stay in character, delegating tasks in the voice of the Boss or the Bigshot. There are also times when you may want to break character to answer a question, explain a rule, or establish a scene. Take on the role of the Boss when it feels fun and natural, but don't feel bound to speaking in character throughout the game.

REAL TALK

COOPERATIVE ROLEPLAY

Good roleplay is like good improv—every player builds on each other's ideas and support.

For example, when someone says, "The supply closet is filled with cats!" instead of saying "No, it isn't," try something like "Yeah! And June says, 'Oh, right. I'm keeping my cats here while my apartment gets fumigated. Is that gonna be a problem?'"

If an idea feels either way too gonzo or too serious for the tone of your game, it's okay to pivot, too. Step out of character to talk it out and brainstorm possible alternatives together.

This suggestion doesn't apply to content that crosses comfort lines. You can always veto ideas that venture into uncomfortable territory.

FACILITATOR

- Playing multiple characters in a scene can feel pretty awkward, so don't ever feel like you need to do so. If the Boss and the Bigshot appear in a scene together, and a player who's not in the spotlight is willing to take on the role of the Bigshot in this scene, let them have it!
- You may even want to offer this opportunity to players and keep yourself out of the scene entirely. Players who are excited to play NPCs can be protesters, shoplifters, religious zealots, cute baristas, or the guy who sleeps in the break room but doesn't actually work here. Giving players the opportunity to play NPCs in a scene not only gives you a break, but also helps the players to stay engaged even when they're not the focus of the scene.

ASKING FOR SUPPORT

At any point, you can break character to ask for support or clarification:

"Dawn opens the fridge. She's totally ignoring Chaz at this point. Actually, could I ask for help on a player level here? I'm not sure how to ignore Chaz without stalling out the scene."

It's always okay to break from roleplaying to ask these questions. Don't worry if the pace stutters for a moment—you'll find the rhythm of the scene again in no time.

ACTING OUT YOUR GAME PLAN

The game plan you chose at the beginning of your scene will frame your roleplaying choices! Let's start with what it looks like to double down during a scene.

DOUBLING DOWN

Doubling down is what you do when you want to help the store in a big way *and* you want to show what your character is all about.

With this game plan, you should jump right into the scene's task. Recruit your friends to help, play up your archetype, and take charge of the situation!

IN PLAY

In this scene, Alanna takes on the role of the Bigshot: Rick Rhinestone, the ultimate sellout. Rick used to be cool when he was part of Darkest Night, but he kept riding the wave of their one-hit single, "Twilight Never Rises," long after it had crested. He's flat broke and hasn't produced new music in years, but he still acts like the world owes him every favor.

ALANNA (BIGSHOT): "Nice place you got here."

MAX (DAWN): "Oh. This place? Thank you."

ALANNA: "You the owner?"

MAX: "Me? No. But I'm hoping to get promoted..."

ALANNA: "That's nice, kid. Hey. I don't see the pillows. Where are all my pillows?"

MAX: “Pillows?”

ALANNA: “Yeah. My people called ahead. I only sit on pillows.”

MAX: “Oh! I’m sure I can find a pillow for your chair..”

ALANNA: “No. No chairs. Just pillows.”

MAX: “Just pillows?”

ALANNA: “Yeah. Piles of pillows.”

MAX: “Right...I. Yes. I’ll get those for you right away.” So I guess I have to go get Rick Rhinestone a lot of pillows?

ALANNA: Oh yeah. Many, many pillows.

MAX: Alright, I think I’m going to double down here! So when the Overachiever doubles down, that looks like taking on too many things at once. I’m already trying to keep the store in order, and I definitely can’t leave my coworkers here alone. But maybe I *have* to leave them alone? And I still need to find the missing money from my first scene. Oh gosh. I think Dawn has enough on her plate already.

ALANNA: Do you want to roll to see if you succeed and then roleplay what that looked like, or roleplay then roll?

MAX: I’ll roleplay a bit to set up this scene and start my pillow mission! Then I’ll roll to see how that went. Then I’ll roleplay the scene’s resolution a bit more.

ALANNA: Sounds great!

TAKING A MOMENT

Taking a moment is giving attention to a relationship that's in need of healing before jumping into the task at hand. It can look like a moment of connection, a confession, or perhaps a shared truth.

Sometimes, you know you want to improve a relationship with another character, but you don't know how to get there. You can always ask the other player, "What would my character have to do to make things Cool?" They'll let you know.

After their fight yesterday, Chaz might stop to show Amy the only known copy of Svennson Seven, a little-known single from Amy's favorite band. What better way to apologize than with Swedish death metal?

After taking a moment, it's time to get back to the task at hand. It's natural that after you've spent time working things out with your friend, you might only briefly describe how you tackle the scene's task.

IN PLAY

TARYN (CHAZ): Both of my relationships are Uncool, so I'd like to heal one of them, if possible. Joshua, would you be up for seeing a moment between Chaz and Amy?

JOSHUA (AMY): Totally!

TARYN: So Chaz kind of sidles up and is like, "Hey Amy. Can we talk? I feel really bad about what happened."

JOSHUA: "I don't know, Chaz. My dad thinks I'm a total stoner now because of you."

TARYN: “Well...aren’t you?”

JOSHUA: “No! Pot makes me sneeze, man. But that doesn’t matter. You know how my dad is.”

TARYN: “Strict?”

JOSHUA: “No! He’s a total pothead! Now he’s gonna think it’s okay to like...talk about weed in front of my friends and stuff. It’s embarrassing!”

TARYN: “Aw man. I’m really sorry, Amy. I’ll talk to your dad. I’ll tell him you’re a total square. I think he’ll believe me.”

JOSHUA: Amy kind of sniffles. “Really, Chaz? You’d do that for me? I really appreciate that.” I give you a big hug.

TARYN: I think we hug for a long time. It fills Chaz with all sorts of confusing emotions. I’m marking this relationship as Cool.

JOSHUA: Me too!

TARYN: Okay! After that, I’ll call up the pizza shop and place our order, since the Boss still wants that pie. Should we roll to see if I get the toppings right?



SHOOTING FOR YOUR GOAL

Shooting for your goal is that sliver of time when you try to make your dream come true: confess your crush, start your band, or finally find that cat. Achieving your goal will give you special options in the epilogue, so even though it's totally optional, it's also pretty cool.

With this game plan, you'll strive to accomplish your personal goal while dealing with the scene's task at the same time! If your task is to hang posters advertising the big event, why not try to find the lost cat while you're out and about?

Use this scene to describe how your character juggles their goal and their task, and get ready for a dramatic resolution to the scene where you'll see how it all turns out!

IN PLAY

MAX (DAWN): I know that I should put out the fire, but Deb's standing just a few feet away from me. I feel like I should finally try to ask for a promotion.

ALANNA: I won't stop you.

MAX: Okay, so I approach Deb a little cautiously.

ALANNA (AS DEB, THE BOSS): "Dawn, you look like you want a favor."

MAX: "Ha...ha. What makes you think that, Deb? I just wanted to talk about..."

ALANNA: "Dawn, the store is literally on fire."

MAX: “You know, I’ve put out a lot of fires in my time here, Deb. Potential fires, at least. The only reason there haven’t been more fires here is because of my hard work and dedication.”

ALANNA: “What do you want, Dawn?”

MAX: “Deb, I’ve been working here for ages now. Don’t you think I’m assistant manager material? I want a promotion.”

ALANNA: Do you want to keep roleplaying, or do you want to go to resolution and continue after we know whether you were able to accomplish your goal *and* put out the break-room fire?

MAX: Let’s jump to resolution. I’d like to see how badly things are going to go for me before the scene goes on.

ROLEPLAYING TO A CONCLUSION

How long should a scene last? As the spotlight player, you have a lot of freedom to direct the scene’s action, and the facilitator and other players will generally support whatever direction you take the narrative in. Roleplay your scene, have conversations, and play out your game plan until you arrive at the question: **Are you going to succeed at your task?**

If you doubled down, you embodied your character’s main traits to jump in and *get it done*. If you took a moment, you’re hopefully feeling a little better about one of your relationships. And if you shot for your goal, you’re just an inch away from your heart’s desire.

Regardless of your game plan, your scene will end with rolling the dice to see if you succeeded at the task at hand. As soon as you're ready to see the scene's outcome, you can say, **“Let's go to resolution,”** and you'll pause the roleplay to roll some dice. There's no need for a dramatic conflict before calling for resolution—you can jump to it anytime you feel ready to see how your efforts pay off.

WHEN SHOULD I TO TURN TO THE DICE?

During your scene, how do you determine when to turn to the dice for answers? Is it when the shoplifter takes out a gun and you're trying to talk them down? When you get bored chatting up the barista during your coffee run? Or when you're not sure what to say next after confessing your love to your crush?

The answer is...all of the above!

When you're in the spotlight, you can turn to the dice when:

- ♪ You've reached a moment of conflict with an undecided outcome.
- ♪ You're not sure what to do next, and learning how things shook out will help guide the narrative.
- ♪ You've enjoyed a nice, conversation-heavy moment and you'd like to learn if you succeeded at your task as well.

You don't have to stop roleplaying once you roll, either! You can use the dice results to either narrate or roleplay your scene's resolution.

IN PLAY

MAX (DAWN): So I'm basically just shouting incoherently into the drive-thru window. It's getting into really abstract philosophical territory, like, "How can nuggets be real if our eyes aren't real?!"

ALANNA: Okay, let's see how that goes for you. Take an extra die for doubling down in this scene.

Max rolls 2 dice, and the Man rolls 2—one for each trouble at 3 or greater. Max rolls well!

ALANNA: Whoa. Looks like you really blew their minds. The drive-thru employee, Gus, is really impressed. "Man...I've been wrong about nuggets all this time. They're nothing. Nothing but a *concept*."

MAX: "Exactly! Just like money. Just like good grades. Just like GPA points and achievement awards. It's all a lie!"

ALANNA: "I look back at my life and it's a sea of meaningless nuggets. That's it. I quit. Take the nuggets. I'm gonna go be a filmmaker."

MAX: I take the nuggets. "Show them the truth, Gus."

RESOLVING SCENES

At some point in your scene, the roleplay will have reached a clear standoff, and you'll turn to the dice to see whether the spotlight player succeeded or failed at their task.



Grab a white die and get ready to roll! You'll be rolling against **the Man**, who represents everything that could shut down an indie record store or make an upstanding punk kid turn corporate.

Often, the facilitator rolls the black dice for the Man. However, if another character acted in an antagonistic way in the scene, the facilitator may grant their player the honor.

FACILITATOR

- If a player hasn't appeared in a recent scene, it might be nice to hand them the dice for the Man
- so they can contribute. Even better, feel free to ask for their input before narrating the scene's
- outcome!

ROLLING THE DICE

Here's a quick overview of what rolling the dice looks like in *DAMN THE MAN*.

As the spotlight player, when you're ready to resolve your scene, you'll roll **1 white die**. The Man will roll **1 black die for each store trouble at 3 or more**. Then, you'll compare the highest white die to the highest black die.

If your die is higher, you **succeed** at your task! But if the Man's die is higher, you **fail** at your task and a new trouble befalls the store. On a tie, the task becomes a **riding task** (pg 71)—you'll find out in a future scene if you succeeded or failed.

After learning the results of the dice, you'll briefly narrate or roleplay that outcome.

That's the basic way that a scene resolves, but different things can happen depending on which **game plan** the spotlight player chose (pg 74), if they got **help from friends** (pg 69), and if they resolved any **riding tasks** from previous scenes (pg 71).

Read on to see what the three possible results of rolling the dice look like.

IF YOU'D DIE IS HIGHER

Awesome! Your successful coffee mission tamed the Boss's undercaffeinated wrath. That rousing speech about the power of music calmed the GASM (Gentlemen Against Satanic Music) picketers outside. Way to dodge that bullet!

The spotlight player narrates how their success looks. If they're struggling, the facilitator can feel free to jump in with ideas or ask other players for input.

IN PLAY

TARYN (CHAZ): My 5 roll beat out the Man's 4, so my poetry is a hit!

ALANNA: Nice! I think even Deb is impressed. She's not an easily impressed Boss, you know.

TARYN: Yeah! Deb has about had it with my poetry. She's lectured me like six times this week about scaring the customers away with my impromptu readings. But the people here today are the spontaneous poetry kind of people. They're digging it, and Deb is just kind of sitting back and watching in awe.

ALANNA: Totally. It's hard for her to be mad when the customers are captivated by your rhymes. Deb was feeling really stressed about the signing going downhill, but your poetry is scoring more sales than it's losing today.

Taryn and Alanna decide to briefly roleplay a scene where customer after customer compliments Chaz's poetic abilities, and Deb finally admits she was wrong.

IF YOUR DIE IS LOWER

Sometimes the dice just don't roll in your favor.

Despite Alicia's fabled industry connections, it looks like the Bigshot's VIP list is locked down tight. Alicia gives her name to the bouncer, but he laughs and says, "What? You think any high-school kid with a leather jacket can just waltz up here and get what they want? Get outta here. You're not on the list."

If you end the scene with a losing die, draw a trouble card to see what trouble escalated as a result of this scene. You and the facilitator can work together to narrate the failure. Feel free to ask other players for input as well. It's fun to roleplay everything falling apart.

FACILITATOR

- Store troubles will escalate throughout the game.
- Sometimes a character will dodge a trouble at the end of a scene, while other times they'll end up responsible for the latest disaster.
- You can think of a new escalation either as increasing the severity of the existing trouble, or as heaping a new trouble on top of it.
- *Example: When the Boss trouble escalated to 2, we started to suspect that the Boss, Dave, was in trouble with the law. When it escalated to 3 and the cops came looking for him, we knew he was in deep shit. That's when the trouble really started impacting the store.*

- *Later, while Dave was hiding from the cops in his office, we flipped over yet another Boss trouble.*
- *Rather than escalating the situation with the law again, we decided that Dave accidentally locked himself in his office. Nobody could get in, he couldn't get out, and the record signing hadn't even started yet.*
- Don't forget to add a black die to the Man's roll
- for each trouble that's escalated to 3 or beyond!
- When a trouble escalates to 5 (or 6 in a four-player game), it represents a store-destroying trouble. But not all hope is lost! You'll have a chance to reduce store troubles in the epilogue if you've healed your relationships or accomplished your goal. Don't give up on the music!

HELP FROM FRIENDS

All that said, there's one way to prevent disaster! If you roll a lower die than the Man's, but you have a one Cool relationship, you can ask that friend if they're willing to offer help on your roll.

If they agree, your friend will narrate how they're trying to help and then re-roll your losing die.

- ♪ If it's higher than the Man's die, you succeed at your task!
- ♪ If it's a tie, then it becomes a riding task (pg 71).
- ♪ If it's lower than the Man's die, even their help wasn't enough! You fail at your task, and a new trouble hits the store.

IN PLAY

TARYN (CHAZ): Ack! I rolled a 3 and a 4. I don't have anything that can beat the Man's 5. Max, would Dawn be willing to help me out here?

MAX (DAWN): Yeah. Our relationship is Cool right now. I'll see what I can do.

TARYN: "Dawn. You see that shoplifter over there? That kid's got like ten Fringle CDs hidden in her army jacket. I tried to talk to her, but she...she bit me."

MAX: "She...bit you?"

TARYN: "Yeah man. She bit me."

MAX: "Listen. I know we've had our differences, Chaz. But I won't stand for some teenybopper gnawing on my friend." So I go over and I tap her on the shoulder and I'm like, "Hey. Is there something you want to say to my friend?"

ALANNA: She doesn't even acknowledge you. She's got her hands in her pockets and she's listening to a Discman. You can hear the music coming through the headphones. Let's roll for this...

Max re-rolls Taryn's 3 die. It comes up a 6.

TARYN: Yes! Thank you!

MAX: "I said...is there something you want to say to my friend?" I take the kid by the shoulders and turn her around.

ALANNA: Now that she's facing you, you immediately recognize her. The kid is about thirteen years old. Her name's Crystal. You were her babysitter for years.

MAX: “Crystal?!”

ALANNA (CRYSTAL): “Oh man. Dawn. Don’t tell my mom, Dawn. I’m really sorry. It was a dare from my friends. I promise. Please don’t tell my mom.”

TARYN: “Your friends dared you to bite me?”

ALANNA: “No. Um. That was just a panic response.”

Chaz, Dawn, and Crystal hash it out. Crystal returns the CDs and delivers an apology to Chaz. They let her go on the condition that she tells all her friends about the record signing today...and promises to make it sound really cool.

If you’re getting help from friends and both relationships are Cool (pg 69), one friend can try to help first and the other friend can jump in and re-roll **again** if your first friend doesn’t succeed.

IF YOUR DICE ARE TIED

Finally, what happens if your dice and the Man’s dice are tied? The scene’s task will become a **riding task**.

You don’t succeed, but you don’t fail. Instead, the problem is delayed. You’ll find out the result of the riding task in a future scene—most likely the very next scene!

Narrate or roleplay out how you delay or stall your task. Maybe you get bored waiting in line at the café, so you give the cash to someone else in line and tell them to deliver the coffee to the store. How will that work out? You’ll see later!

Then, write a question related to the riding task on an index card, and put it in the center of the table. You might write: “Will that dude actually deliver us the coffee?”

Once you've finished describing the stalling, your spotlight scene ends, and the next spotlight scene begins. The new spotlight player goes through their scene normally, but when it's time for them to roll, you'll probably find out the result of your riding task.

If they **succeed** at their task, they'll also choose any one riding task to succeed. They'll collaborate with the facilitator to describe the success of the riding task.

"As I'm just putting out the last bit of fire, the door swings open. It's coffee dude! He says, 'Geez, your store's really hard to find.'"

If they **fail** at their task, they'll also choose any one riding task to fail. The facilitator will describe both failures and draw two trouble cards. When it rains, it pours.

"As the fire spreads from the break room to the stage, the door swings open. It's coffee dude! He opens his mouth to speak but gets a mouthful of smoke. He breaks into a coughing fit, flinging four coffee cups across the room."

If they **tie**, the result of their task also becomes a riding task, just like the previous one. Write out the new question and add it to the table.

"I close the door to the flaming break room and tape an 'Out of Order' sign to it." We write a new question on an index card: "Will the fire go out on its own?"

Ties can accumulate and riding tasks can ride along for the whole game. That's fine! You'll have a final chance to address riding tasks in the epilogue (pg 79).

WHO'S IN NARRATIVE CONTROL HERE?

The players will often look to you, the facilitator, to narrate the results of their scene! But you don't have to do it alone.

When a player succeeds at a task, there's no need to jump in and narrate the awesome stuff that happened as a result. Let the player describe how their character succeeded and how it made them feel. If a player is struggling to narrate their victory, feel free to jump in and offer guidance, but generally let players own their successes.

As the facilitator, you may want to maintain narrative control over failing rolls, but this really depends on the roleplay style of your group! Some players are awesome at dishing out gnarly justice, and other players have trouble narrating their own losses. Expect to do some heavier hauling in narrating losses, but if the table is doing a great job narrating their own failures, let them do their thing!

REAL TALK

CO-FACILITATION

When I facilitate games of *DAMN THE MAN*, I often use a pretty light hand. When we draw a new trouble, I like to ask the whole table for input:

"This is our first escalation of the Boss trouble. What do you think has gone wrong?"

If someone is stepping on your toes as the facilitator, it's okay to remind them who's (literally) the Boss.

HOW YOUR GAME PLAN CHANGES THINGS

Whatever game plan you chose going into your scene, it'll shake up how things go as you resolve your scene!

IF YOU DOUBLED DOWN

You jumped right into the task at hand with no distractions! When you're ready to roll, you'll get to roll **one extra white die** for your efforts. This represents your focus, energy, and can-do attitude.

The results of your roll will determine whether you helped your store or doubled down in vain!

IF YOU TOOK A MOMENT

You put some time into healing a relationship before diving into your assigned task. As long as everyone agreed on changing that relationship from Uncool to Cool, you'll be able to solicit help from that friend in future scenes.

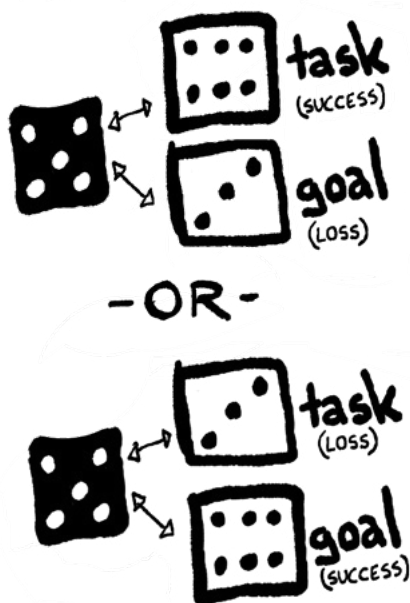
Even if you took a moment, you'll still end your scene by rolling to see if you succeeded at your task. Did you manage to help the store, or did taking a moment cause new troubles? Roll to find out!

IF YOU SHOT FOR YOUR GOAL

You spent the scene juggling your responsibilities to the store and your hopes of achieving your personal goal. Now, to get everything you want, you'll have to beat the Man's die **twice**—once for your task, and once for your goal!

As normal, the Man only puts forward his highest die. With other game plans, you'd put forward only your highest die to match the Man's die. But shooting for your goal is a little special, because you're trying to pull off two feats in the same scene: accomplishing your goal and succeeding at your task.

So, you'll have to put forward 1 die for your task and another for your goal. Your friends can still offer help on losing rolls if your relationship with them is Cool.



The first time you shoot for your goal, though, you'll only roll one die. You'll have to decide whether to put forward your die for your task or your goal, if it's even high enough to beat the Man's roll at all.

If you shoot for your goal and fail, or you decide you'd rather put your die toward your task, you still get to check off a Progress box—either “I’m determined” or “I have a plan,” whichever feels appropriate.

GOAL PROGRESS

I'M DETERMINED

I HAVE A PLAN

Each checked Progress will give you one extra die to roll whenever you shoot for your goal again. These extra dice will give you a chance to both accomplish your goal *and* succeed at your task in a future scene, so don't be shy about taking an intentional loss early to get a better roll later!

Even if you don't manage to accomplish your goal during the three acts, you'll have a final chance to shoot for your goal in the epilogue.

What if you roll and get a tie? When it comes to your goal, ties aren't good enough—they'll count as a failure, though you will get to check off a Progress box. Unlike tasks, your goal can never be a riding task (pg 71). Only *you* can accomplish your goal.

IN PLAY

Brian is determined but doesn't have a plan, so he rolls one extra die as he shoots for his goal in this scene. He wants to succeed both in comforting the Bigshot and finding the lost cat.



Brian rolls his 2 white dice, and the Man rolls 3 black dice. The results are:

BRIAN:  and 

THE MAN:   and 

The Man puts forward his highest die, the 5. Brian now must choose which die he'd like to put forward for his goal, and which he'd like to put forward for his task.

Brian decides to put forward the 6 to accomplish his goal, as it beats out the Man's 5. The 4 die for his task is currently losing against the Man's 5 die.

BRIAN:  (for goal) and  (for task)

THE MAN: 

Brian has found the lost cat, succeeding at his goal, but if he also wants to succeed in comforting the Bigshot, he'll have to call in the help of a friend.

LET'S RECAP

Need a quick recap? You'll get three scenes in *DAMN THE MAN*—one during the Opening, the other during the Big Event, and the final scene during Closing.

During each of your scenes, you'll work to succeed at a task, usually assigned by the facilitator, while trying to improve your relationships or go for your goal, like this:

1. Choose to double down, take a moment, or shoot for your goal.
2. Roleplay through the scene.
3. Roll dice to learn how you did on your task and perhaps your goal.
4. If you fail, flip a card to escalate a trouble.

WRAPPING UP THE ACT

After every player has had a scene in an act, the act ends.

At the end of act 1 and 2, no matter how well you've avoided troubles in the spotlight scenes, another trouble always hits the store. Draw a trouble card, collaboratively narrate how this newest trouble hits the store, and mark the escalation on your character sheets.

Then, choose a player to take the first spotlight scene and proceed as in act 1, using the **Scene List** (pg 84) for the new act as a guide.

At the end of act 3, you won't draw a new trouble card. Instead, you'll move straight into the epilogue!

EPILOGUE

After every player has had a scene in all three acts, it's time for the epilogue.

Some characters may have accomplished their goals; others may not have. The epilogue provides an opportunity to tie up any loose ends in relationships and goals, and to narrate an outcome for the store.

The epilogue is played out as a final montage, during which each player will frame two brief scenes.

To begin, the facilitator puts on music, or describes it, and sets the opening shot. Maybe the employees are all gathered in the burnt but still-serviceable staff room, maybe they're partying on the roof, maybe they're all piled in a dejected heap on the store's couch, or maybe they're cruising down the highway in the Bigshot's tour bus.



Then, each player will have a chance to frame a short scene. Depending on how things went in the game, they can choose from several options for their scene.

FRAMING A SCENE:

You can always frame a scene where:

- ♪ You take a moment with another character, setting your relationship to Cool.
- ♪ You succeed at a final task of your choosing.
- ♪ You resolve a riding task in any way you want.

If both relationships are totally Cool, or if you've accomplished your goal, you can additionally frame a scene from this **Special List**:

- ♪ Your character reduces a store trouble by one.
- ♪ You share a consensual kiss.
- ♪ You shoot for your goal one last time (roll for it!).

These scenes should be brief, around 30 seconds each.

Chad shares his last stick of gum with Jared—and despite everything, now they're Cool.

Raven learns that the crappy CD they bought in act 1 was a signed collector's edition—maybe we can make rent after all!

Beans finally shows up with the coffee.

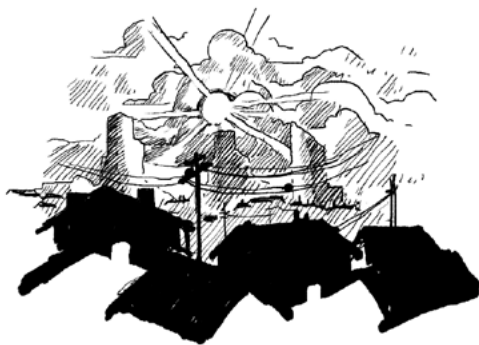
Act out these scenes one by one, going around the table. Once each player has finished their first scene, go around the table once more. Imagine the credits rolling as you see these last brief shots of your characters.

If you got both relationships to Cool by taking a moment in the first part of the epilogue, you can now choose your second scene from the Special List.

Maybe you're drinking, maybe you're dancing, maybe you're watching your friends and thinking only about now. Whatever happens in your epilogue—whether you saved the store or watched it burn, whether you followed the music or caved to the Man—tonight is for celebrating a moment in time you'll never see again.

After everyone has had their two scenes, if any riding tasks remain, the facilitator draws a trouble card for each and describes the final disasters.

Finally, the facilitator will center on the final moment. If any trouble is at 5 or higher (or 6 or higher in a four-player game), the store will close its doors for the last time. Otherwise, against the odds, Revolution Records will remain open for another season. The facilitator might describe the sun just coming up in the distance, as you all stand beside the remnants of a collapsed store, or how you're all lying on the grass in a park after dark. However you choose to spend this moment, tomorrow is a million miles away.





REFERENCES

SCENE LIST
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE
GLOSSARY
PRINTOUTS
ABOUT MAKE BIG THINGS

Printer-friendly versions of all printouts, including character sheets, can be found at makebigthings.com.

SCENE LIST

The *DAMN THE MAN* **Scene List** is here as a guide. In act 1 you may want to play it close to the list, but as your story takes on a life of its own, feel free to make up plot-relevant tasks in acts 2 and 3. Make sure those tasks start with a verb (find, make, buy, clean) to give a clear course of action to the spotlight player.

OPENING MONTAGE

Who shows up first? Turns on the lights? Sweeps the floor? Dusts? Picks the tunes? Is anything out of place? What's broken? Who's sleeping on the floor? Who picks the music? Who's in a bad mood?

ACT 1: OPENING SCENES

GET THE COFFEE

Are you at war with the coffee shop next door? Is there even a coffee shop next door? Does your crush work there? Did the Boss give you enough money to pay for everyone's orders? Do you know what a double-shot-with-whip really stands for? Getting the coffee is never as simple as it seems.

DEAL WITH THE PICKETERS OUTSIDE

Who did you piss off this time? Why are they picketing? Are they blocking the entrance? Have they threatened to call the police? Dealing with picketers is fragile business, and the wrong move could cost the store dearly.

ADVERTISE THE BIG EVENT

Have you hung up posters yet? Have you passed out flyers on the street? Will you lie to meet your quota? Are you banned from the local copy shop after the unfortunate buttcheek incident? Your store could really do with a PR person, but for now they've got to settle for you.

ADDRESS THE FIRST ESCALATED TROUBLE

Did the Boss spend the night in jail? Is there a group of doomsayers camped out by the front door? Has morale been down after losing the Battle of the Bands to the coffee shop next door? Is money tight after a good-natured employee donated the tip jar to Greenpeace?

FIND THE MISSING MONEY

Do you know who took it? Do you know where it went? Who're you gonna have to shake down? Can you get it back, or has it gone into recirculation at a casino in Atlantic City? Hasn't this happened before?

FIX THE BOSS'S COMPUTER

Is this our first-ever store computer? How'd it get a virus? Was it sabotaged? Is the Boss a techie or a technophobe? Do you wanna call the hot repair guy, even though he's a total know-it-all? A working computer is essential for getting ahead in this fast-paced, net-surfing world.

FULFILL THE BIGSHOT'S FIRST DEMAND

Have they ordered a life-size re-creation of the scene from their first album cover? An exotic food item legal only in Belize? A drug you've never heard of that maybe doesn't exist? The Bigshot hasn't even arrived yet, and they're already calling the shots.

ACT 2: THE BIG EVENT SCENES

MAKE THE BIGSHOT FEEL AT HOME

Now that they're here, who's tending to their needs? Are they bored? Are they flirting with customers and need a distraction? Why did the inflatable furniture they ordered never arrive? The Bigshot has a lot of needs.

GET MORE PEOPLE THROUGH THE DOOR

Is the crowd looking thin and the Boss starting to panic? Did your "free weed" signs only work for so long? It's time to get more people through the door, even if you have to pay them.

HIDE THE POT BROWNIES

No one will question your methods. Just make them disappear.

DEAL WITH THE LOCAL PAPER

Do you answer their questions? What do you tell them about the store? Are they here for a smear piece, or are they genuinely excited about the event? Time to put your best face forward...or not.

CATCH THE SHOPLIFTER

Will you approach sneakily? Will you go in for a tackle? What about a hug? Are they armed and dangerous? Are they only twelve? Dealing with a shoplifter the wrong way could cost you your job, at best.

EXTINGUISH LITERAL FIRES

Rome is burning. Quit fiddling.

ACT 3: CLOSING SCENES

CHEER UP THE BOSS

Has the Boss given up? Are they ready to throw in the towel and close the store down? This scene is especially appropriate for a store suffering from big Boss troubles.

FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE STORAGE CLOSET

How long has the door been locked for? What are those noises? Could it be the lost cat? Who's going in there? Do we actually want to know what's going on?

BABYSIT THE BIGSHOT

Why's the Bigshot still here? How do we make them go away? At the end of the day, somebody's responsible for the Bigshot, and right now that person is you.

COPE WITH AN ESCALATED TROUBLE

Which trouble has reached a fever pitch? How has shit really hit the fan? If there isn't already a fire burning somewhere, there will be soon!

DEAL WITH SOMEONE'S PARENTS

What plight could be crueler? What fate more unfair? Raise the alarms and put the weird stuff away...someone's parents have arrived.

CONCOCT A BRILLIANT LAST-MINUTE MONEY-MAKING SCHEME

Did the tip jar come up short? Did someone steal more than we managed to raise? A brilliant last-minute scheme is the Hail Mary we need.

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

WELCOME

- ♪ Welcome the players and say what the game is about.
- ♪ Discuss content and veto.
- ♪ Read the intro: The Big Day.

CREATE CHARACTERS

- ♪ Pass out character sheets. Players choose characters.
 - Fill in NAME, AGE, TIME EMPLOYED, DRESS, TUNES.
 - Circle one goal on GOAL list.
- ♪ Players introduces characters.

CREATE RELATIONSHIPS

- ♪ Create relationships with person to your left and right.
- ♪ If needed, ask questions to strengthen connections.
- ♪ Facilitator, tell players that both relationships start off Uncool.
 - Relationships can be healed during the game.

CREATE THE BOSS AND THE BIGSHOT

- ♪ Collaboratively build the Boss and the Bigshot from the list of questions. Write details on the The Boss, the Bigshot sheet.

DRAW FIRST STORE TROUBLE

- ♪ Shuffle deck and draw a trouble card. This represents a trouble that escalated yesterday, and badly!
- ♪ Players mark the matching trouble at “3” on their character sheets. Narratively expand on what that trouble looks like.
- ♪ Mark all other troubles at “1”.

OFFER 5-MINUTE BREAK

ACT 1 (OPENING)

- ♪ Run the opening montage.
- ♪ Assign first task and choose a spotlight player, who decides on their game plan:
 - **Double down** (to get an extra die on their roll)
 - **Take a moment** (to heal a relationship, making it Cool)
 - **Shoot for their goal** (to accomplish or mark Progress boxes)
- ♪ Roleplay up to a good dice-rolling moment.

RESOLVE THE SCENE

- ♪ **The player rolls** 1 white die + 1 white die if they doubled down.
- ♪ **The Man rolls** 1 black die for every trouble at 3+.
- ♪ **Shooting for goal:** Player rolls 1 white die + 1 for each checked Progress box on their goal. If they roll multiple dice, they'll put forward their two highest dice—one for their task, one for their goal.

♪ **Succeed** if any white die is higher than the highest black die.

♪ **Fail** if any black die is higher than highest white die.

You can ask for help from a friend if you have a Cool relationship with them. They'll re-roll one of your dice.

On a tie, the task becomes a riding task. You'll deal with it later.

- ♪ Narrate or roleplay the outcome of the roll. On a loss, draw a trouble card and escalate that trouble by one.
- ♪ Act 1 ends after each player has played a spotlight scene. Draw a trouble card, escalate that trouble by one, and collaboratively narrate it—even if every player succeeded at their task during the spotlight scenes.

ACT 2 (THE BIG EVENT)

- ♪ Follow the same structure as act 1.
- ♪ Play out spotlight scenes, preventing or escalating troubles, and draw a trouble card at the end of the act.

ACT 3 (CLOSING)

- ♪ Follow the same structure as in acts 1 and 2.
- ♪ Remind players who haven't already tried that they can shoot for their goal.
- ♪ Play out scenes, preventing or escalating troubles.
- ♪ Do not draw a trouble card at the end of act 3.
- ♪ At the end of act 3, move to the epilogue.

EPILOGUE

- ♪ Each player describes two brief scenes including their character.
- ♪ If any riding tasks remain, the facilitator draws a trouble card for each and describes how they impact the store.
- ♪ The facilitator describes the closing moment.

GLOSSARY

ACT (PG 12)

Gameplay takes place over three acts: Opening, the Big Event, and Closing. In each act, each player will have one scene where their character is in the spotlight. At the end of acts 1 and 2, we'll draw a trouble card for the store.

THE BIGSHOT (PG 34)

The has-been rockstar who is gracing Revolution Records with their presence today.

THE BOSS (PG 34)

The Boss gives employees their tasks and tries to bring some level of professionalism to the store. A tragic figure.

COOL

See the “**Relationships**” entry.

DOUBLE DOWN (PG 57)

A game plan where the spotlight character completely focuses on the task at hand. If you double down, you'll roll an extra die when you resolve your task, meaning you're much more likely to succeed and thus avoid new troubles for the store.

EPILOGUE (PG 79)

The final montage, after act 3 is done. Each player has two very brief scenes during this montage, in which they can try to heal relationships, resolve riding tasks, or do a few special things.

FACILITATOR (PG 13)

You, most likely. The player who reads through the book and helps the players get familiar with the rules. You'll describe how things go wrong, roleplay the various NPCs, and assign tasks to the spotlight players. You do a lot, but you're always free to distribute the work and have other players suggest outcomes and roleplay as NPCs.

GOAL (PG 28)

An urgent and consuming desire that *must* be resolved *today*. Each player starts the game with a goal, and they can accomplish it by shooting for their goal. The epilogue gives players one last chance to shoot for their goal if they haven't yet accomplished it. If they do accomplish their goal, they can use the epilogue to help the store or score some action.

THE MAN

The oppressive force of cultural homogeny that wants to see Revolution Records shut down and its ratty employees straightened out and buttoned up. Damn the Man.

MONTAGE (PG 48)

A brief scene set to real or imagined music. You'll open the game with a montage of employees arriving at the store, and end with an epilogue montage.

NPC

Non-player character. The Boss, the Bigshot, the shoplifting teen, the protester picketing the store, or your mother, for example.

PC

Player character. The miscreant employees of Revolution Records.

RELATIONSHIPS (PG 31)

How the store employees are getting on. Everyone has a relationship of some sort with two of their coworkers. At the start of the game, all of these relationships are Uncool. After taking a moment with another player, your relationship with them becomes Cool, and you can receive help from them when you roll badly.

RIDING TASK (PG 71)

When a roll to resolve a task ends in a tie, the scene's task becomes a riding task. Write the central question of the task—*Will the coffee orders be correct?*—on an index card and place it in the center of the table. The next time someone succeeds or fails at a task, they also choose one riding task to succeed or fail, matching their result. During the epilogue, any remaining riding tasks will fail.

SHOOT FOR YOUR GOAL (PG 61)

A game plan where the spotlight character pursues their own goal, usually at the expense of giving their task the attention it deserves. When you roll, you'll see both whether you succeeded at your task and whether you accomplished your goal. If you don't accomplish your goal, you'll mark a Progress box toward it, giving you an extra die the next time you shoot for your goal.

SPOTLIGHT PLAYER (PG 51)

In every spotlight scene, one player is the spotlight player. The spotlight player chooses a game plan and is responsible for a task. Other players are welcome to play characters in the scene, but only to support the spotlight player.

SPOTLIGHT SCENE (PG 51)

A scene in which the spotlight player attempts a task assigned to them. The spotlight player chooses a game plan. The scene ends with rolling the dice to see whether the spotlight player succeed or fails at their task.

TAKE A MOMENT (PG 59)

A game plan where the spotlight character has a heart-to-heart with another employee, changing their relationship to Cool.

TASK (PG 52)

The given purpose of any spotlight scene. It might be picking up the coffee, finding weed for the Bigshot, or putting out a literal fire. The dice roll at the end of the scene will decide whether the spotlight player succeeds or fails at their task.

TROUBLE (PG 37)

The bad stuff that happens to the store. Trouble can impact morale, community standing, the finances, or the Boss. For each trouble at 3 or higher, the Man rolls one black die during every dice roll. If the game ends with any trouble at 5 or higher (6 in a four-player game), Revolution Records closes forever.

UNCOOL

See the “**Relationships**” entry.

VETO (PG 15)

The power of any player at the table to refuse any element of the game’s setting or any character’s behavior. No explanation is required; everyone else is required to propose an alternative. Use veto to avoid topics and behaviors you find upsetting or that make you feel disconnected from the story’s themes.

THE BOSS

NAME:

- WHAT DOES EVERYONE CALL THEM?
- WHAT'S THEIR MANAGEMENT STYLE?
- HOW DO THEY DRESS?
- WHAT ARE THEY REALLY LIKE, BELOW THE SURFACE?

NOTES:

THE BIGSHOT

NAME:

- WHAT WENT WRONG IN THEIR CAREER?
- WHAT'S THEIR STAGE NAME?
- WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?
- WHAT DO THEY WANT OUT OF THIS DAY?

NOTES:

PLAYER'S GUIDE

IN YOUR SCENE, CHOOSE TO:

DOUBLE DOWN

- ! Dive right in to complete the task at hand.
- ! Roll an extra die.

TAKE A MOMENT

- ! Set aside some time to make it right.
- ! Mark a relationship as Cool.

SHOOT FOR YOUR GOAL

- ! Achieve your heart's desire! If you fail, you'll still mark a Progress box!

WHEN RESOLVING THE SCENE:

ROLL SOME DICE

You roll one white die, or two dice if you doubled down!

The Man rolls one black die for every store trouble at 3 or greater!

DETERMINE THE OUTCOME

COMPARE THE MAN'S HIGHEST BLACK DIE TO YOUR HIGHEST WHITE DIE:

- If your die is higher, you succeed at the task! Narrate your success.
- If the Man's die is higher, you fail at the task! Draw a new trouble to befall the store.
- If the dice are tied, the task becomes a riding task. Write it on an index card to be answered in future scenes.

REMEMBER, IF YOU FAIL OR TIE BUT HAVE A COOL RELATIONSHIP, YOU CAN ASK YOUR FRIEND TO ROLL A DIE AND USE THAT ONE INSTEAD!

IF YOU SHOT FOR YOUR GOAL

- Roll 1 die, plus 1 extra die for each marked Progress box.
- Your scene will have two outcomes: one for your task, and one for your goal. Put forward a separate die for each, both against the highest black die.
- If you're only rolling one die, choose whether it counts for your task or your goal. The other fails automatically.
- If you fail at your goal, mark a Progress box—"I have a plan" or "I'm determined"—so you'll have better odds next time!

THE LOCAL ROCKSTAR

TOO COOL FOR SCHOOL.

AT THEIR BEST WHEN PUTTING SOMEONE ELSE IN THE SPOTLIGHT.

CAN MAKE ANYTHING SEEM INTENTIONAL.

GOAL

CHOOSE A GOAL:

- CONFESS MY LOVE
- GET A PROMOTION
- FIND A BAND
- PAY BACK A DEBT
- SCORE A GIG
- FIND THE LOST CAT

GOAL PROGRESS

- I'M DETERMINED
- I HAVE A PLAN



EMPLOYEE INFO

NAME: _____
AGE: _____
TIME EMPLOYED: _____

STYLE

DRESS: _____
TUNES: _____





RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIP 1: _____ WE COOL?

RELATIONSHIP 2: _____

NOTES AND DOODLES

REVOLUTION RECORDS MAY BE CLOSED DUE TO:

 COMMUNITY	 MONEY
 MOTZALE	 THE BOSS

THE ASPIRING POET

PERHAPS TOO NAIVE FOR THEIR OWN GOOD.

HELPS OTHERS FEEL BEAUTIFUL.

FINDS HIDDEN POETRY IN THEIR WORK.

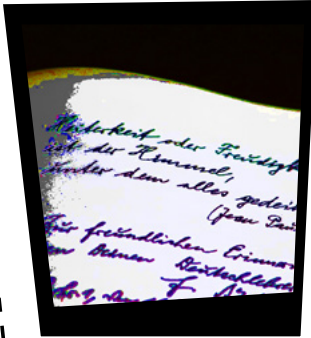
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THE TROUBLED ARTIST

ALWAYS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO GET IT.

CONNECTS WITH PEOPLE THROUGH ART.

CUTS THROUGH THE BULLSHIT TO THE TRUTH.

GOAL

CHOOSE A GOAL:

- CONFESS MY LOVE
- GET A PROMOTION
- FIND A BAND
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NOTES AND DOODLES

REVOLUTION RECORDS MAY BE CLOSED DUE TO:



COMMUNITY



MONEY



MORALE



THE BOSS

THE BRAIN

TOO IN THEIR OWN HEAD TO FREAK OUT, EVEN WHEN EVERYONE ELSE DOES.

LOVES GEEKING OUT OVER A COMMON INTEREST.

MAKES SIMPLE TASKS OVERLY COMPLICATED.

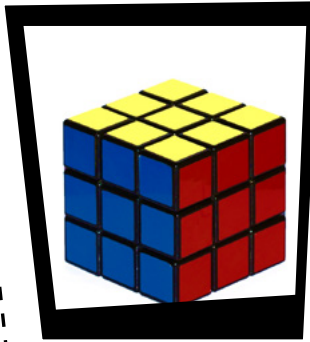
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NOTES AND DOODLES

REVOLUTION RECORDS MAY BE CLOSED DUE TO:



COMMUNITY



MONEY



MORALE



THE BOSS

THE OVERACHIEVER

IT'S A MYSTERY
HOW THE
OVERACHIEVER GETS IT
ALL DONE.

HAS TROUBLE
TRUSTING OTHER
PEOPLE'S ABILITIES.

ALWAYS TAKING
ON WAY TOO
MANY THINGS AT
ONCE.

GOAL

CHOOSE A GOAL:

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 MORALE	 THE BOSS

THE SPACE CASE

OFTEN GRAPPLES WITH SIMPLE CONCEPTS.

ALWAYS TRYING TO BRING PEOPLE INTO THEIR WORLDVIEW.

OCCASIONALLY AND SUDDENLY DECIDES TO SEIZE THE MOMENT.

GOAL

CHOOSE A GOAL:

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NOTES AND DOODLES

REVOLUTION RECORDS MAY BE CLOSED DUE TO:



COMMUNITY



MONEY



MOTZALE



THE BOSS

THE FLIRT

CLOSE WITH EVERYONE,
BUT HOW DO THEY
REALLY FEEL?

VIEWS OTHERS
AS BOXES TO
UNLOCK

SAYS THE THING
EVERYONE ELSE
IS AFRAID TO.

GOAL

CHOOSE A GOAL:

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COMMUNITY



MONEY



MORALE



THE BOSS

ABOUT MAKE BIG THINGS



Hannah



Brian



Evan

Make Big Things is a three-person game design cooperative based out of western Massachusetts and Chicago, Illinois. We care about accessible games that ask challenging questions about the world.

We began published in 2013 as a design duo, with Hannah Shaffer and Evan Rowland. In 2015 Brian Van Slyke joined the team and we've been producing games collaboratively ever since.

Our games include RPGs *Questlandia*, *14 Days*, *Noirlandia*, *Damn the Man*, *Save the Music!* and the upcoming board game *Good Dog, Bad Zombie*.

Visit makebigthings.com for *Damn the Man*, *Save the Music!* printouts and to follow our upcoming games.