



Wordplay™ The Big Five

SYSTEM BY GRAHAM SPEARING

Themes

The Cold Crusade by Mark Galeotti

Empire of Gatan by Newt Newport with Graham Spearing

Infinite War by Newt Newport

Keep Portland Weird by Charles Green

Sample file

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WELCOME TO A SIX SIDED PARADISE

Welcome to Wordplay - a complete and absorbing game to play with your friends. This game uses descriptive phrases and applies them directly into play by giving the phrase a value, which is converted into a number of six sided dice that you throw. Wordplay is a type of game known as 'table top' or 'pen and paper' roleplaying. This introduction explains what roleplaying games are all about.

Wordplay is very easy to play and has been designed to be played with any created setting or genre that you wish to explore.

The game features the following:

- Free flowing character creation, allowing a player to describe their alterego in the game and use those descriptions as Traits (which are then split between Body, Mind and Soul categories) – see page 13.
- A dice building game. Describe what your character is doing and make use of as many advantages as you can to build as large a hand or pool of dice as possible.
- Roll your dice and count up your successes and the highest total wins, only the dice that land on the table count!
- Create goals for your character and drive them forward to succeed.
- Pre-designed Themes - ready-made settings to inspire you and play straight away.



Instead of numerous complicated rules, Wordplay provides story telling opportunities that are translated into dice for your characters. The game is meant to be rules light, open and encourages players to give vivid descriptions that build a shared, character focussed, story. Wordplay requires traditional six sided dice to play and many of them!

You won't find this book to be a dry set of instructions, instead consider this book as your best friend - sitting you down on a comfy sofa, plying you with hot tea and, with great excitement, telling you all about the fun you can have with games of Wordplay. Sometimes you may find the book florid and whimsical, but hopefully it will never confuse you. Most of all, the book wants you to gather as many six sided dice as you can find and start to play!

Speaking of which, can you hear something...?

Sounds in the forest

Lorth had not travelled far from the icy forest road where the Aurnic trade caravan waited pensively for his return. The crisp still air carried every sound and he concentrated to pick up the echo of the movement that he thought he had heard just moments earlier. He was alone in the forest clearing but within shouting distance of his mercenary companions, who watchfully guarded the long trail of brightly adorned wagons.

Then, all at once, there were two sets of noises. To his left many footsteps could be heard receding deeper into the forest and there a cowed figure momentarily appeared running at great speed. The second sound was heavier, a crashing noise to his right. Someone or something just out of view was heading towards him.

Lorth hefted his axe and in a split second made his decision...

What did Lorth decide to do? In Wordplay you get to decide. Lorth is a player character, a player's persona in the game. His actions will be dependant on the

decisions of the player and that player alone. This game gives you a structure to help you design and document a character like Lorth and to help you find out what happens to him when you decide how he will react to situations such as the one described above.

Roleplaying games are different from more conventional games such as charades, board games or computer games that you may be familiar with, however they share many common features. This introduction will outline how roleplaying games differ.

Perhaps the first, most noticeable, difference is that roleplaying games are usually open-ended in terms of duration. When you all sit down to play it could be a self-contained entertainment that has a beginning, middle and an end. Typically, however, a game session will form a part of an ongoing adventure story that will continue when you meet again for a follow up game. Sometimes these multi-game adventures can build upon each other, creating a huge epic that will take many game sessions to complete.

Roleplaying games are not explicitly about winning and losing. Rather than having a specific end objective, such as having the most money or being the first to complete a race to the finish on a game board layout, this game's main expectation is only to provide some structure to an enjoyable experience, immersing players in the lives and worlds of your collective imaginary creations. That doesn't mean that Wordplay is aimless. The players' characters will become the main protagonists in your collective stories. These characters will also have their own particular goals that, through play, the players will work towards completing. A game of Wordplay may be about one specific story with a constructed range of defined objectives, or it may turn out to be a number of stories that weave together into a great saga drawing in the aspirations of all the players' characters and, by extension, the players themselves.

Tabletop roleplaying games have provided



a structured approach to the creation of imaginary worlds and adventures for players around the globe from the mid 1970s onwards. Since that time there have been many games produced specialising in different periods and genres; from medieval fantasy to science fiction space opera, and all points in between! Though these games have developed new rules and emphasis in their design, some fundamentals seem to have survived over the decades. As they are all at root social games, they work best with a group of players who meet together regularly. Most have a game co-ordinator who creates the back-story and guides the players through the shared imaginary world; Wordplay calls this special player a Navigator. Players will record their characters on paper, providing them with pointers on how to bring their characters to life using the rules and how their character may respond to the challenges that the shared story confronts them with.

What is meant by the 'tabletop' in tabletop roleplaying games? It doesn't mean that everyone takes it in turns to climb on a table and act out the role of their game character, but don't let me stifle any enthusiasm out there! The name comes from the convention that players sit around a table to play, providing a surface on which to roll dice and place notes, pencils, drinks and snacks. The



shared table space and close proximity of fellow players also provides a focus for play and a convenient place for the Navigator to provide any props, such as pictures or maps or the playing of atmospheric music.

In Wordplay, players will be rolling large numbers of six sided dice, so it's also useful to have a level surface on which to roll them. You might choose to sit round in comfy chairs, on cushions or on the croquet lawn. Where you play can influence the nature of the experience - feel free to experiment to

see what fits for you and the space that is most comfortable for your group.

What do players actually do in this game?

The Navigator has a central role, providing and describing the setting for the game. The setting is usually planned and developed before the actual game

commences. She will also draft out a back story and plot with hooks for the players to explore using their characters, which are created using the guidance in this book.

During a game players will move in and out of 'character'. When describing actions, asking rule questions or going off on a tangent, the player will speak with their own voice. When 'being' their character during play and speaking to other characters, the player will speak in the 'first person' as if he or she were that character. Some players find that using colourful

accents and amateur dramatics helps to 'show-off' their game character – these techniques are entirely optional!

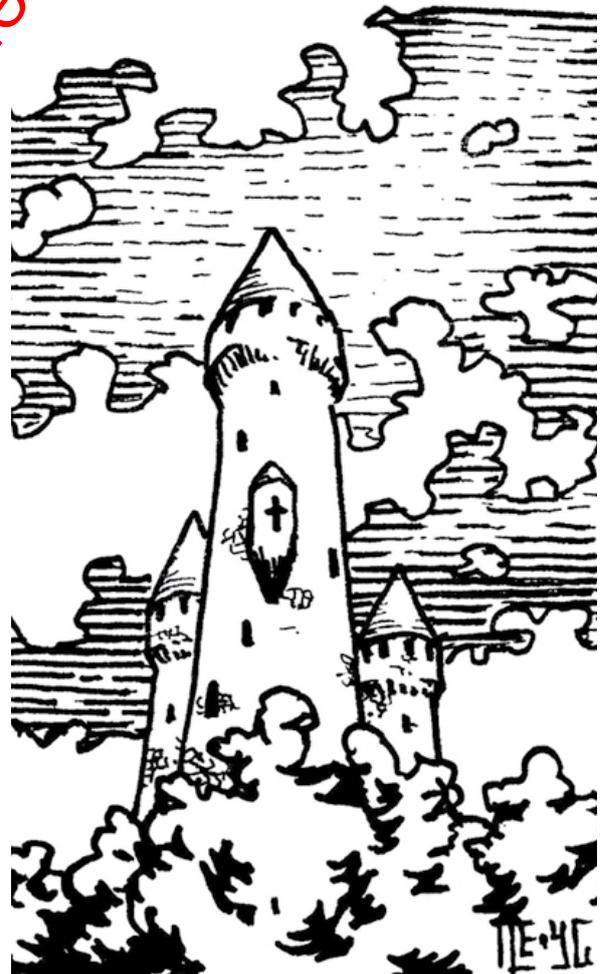
Players will not only enjoy the setting and story conceived by their Navigator but also create their own stories and objectives, which they will play out to further develop their characters and the shared game world. Although player created characters are two-dimensional written descriptions on paper, with enthusiastic play they can become very three-dimensional. A great deal of the fun of this game is to be found when players create and sustain believable and enjoyable characters that will live long in the memory after the biscuit crumbs have been swept away and the game itself has finished.

As a point of reassurance it is worth stating that you don't need to be a great actor to enjoy playing these games or be particularly good at different voice tone or accents. There's a lot of fun to be had with roleplaying games - the satisfaction of solving mysteries, seeing your character develop and progress, or perhaps die nobly on some meaningful endeavour. It's also a social experience, often supplemented with drinks and tasty snacks.

Wordplay games can be set in any shared universe that you and your fellow players wish to develop. It could be our world and time, perhaps our world but at another time, or a completely different and fantastical world and setting. The setting or theme is usually created by the Navigator and inspired from any number of sources including novels, films and computer games. Settings can be separate and unconnected, or joined together by time travel, wormholes, inter-dimensional travel or even dreams. Settings may be huge sprawling star systems, planets and kingdoms, or claustrophobic and choking cities, sinister suburbia and shambolic ancient castles. This book has four example prepared starter themes to help you develop characters in a specific genre and setting. Other ready to

use themes will be available in subsequent books in the Wordplay family of games. As a Navigator or player you may use these as the basis for your own setting, adapting them, or writing completely new ones as you see fit.

Throughout this book we will mostly be staying with Lorth, a northern barbarian mercenary from a fantastical alternative world, to serve as an example; illustrating how to create characters and use the Wordplay game to resolve the situations they get themselves into.



Sample file

