

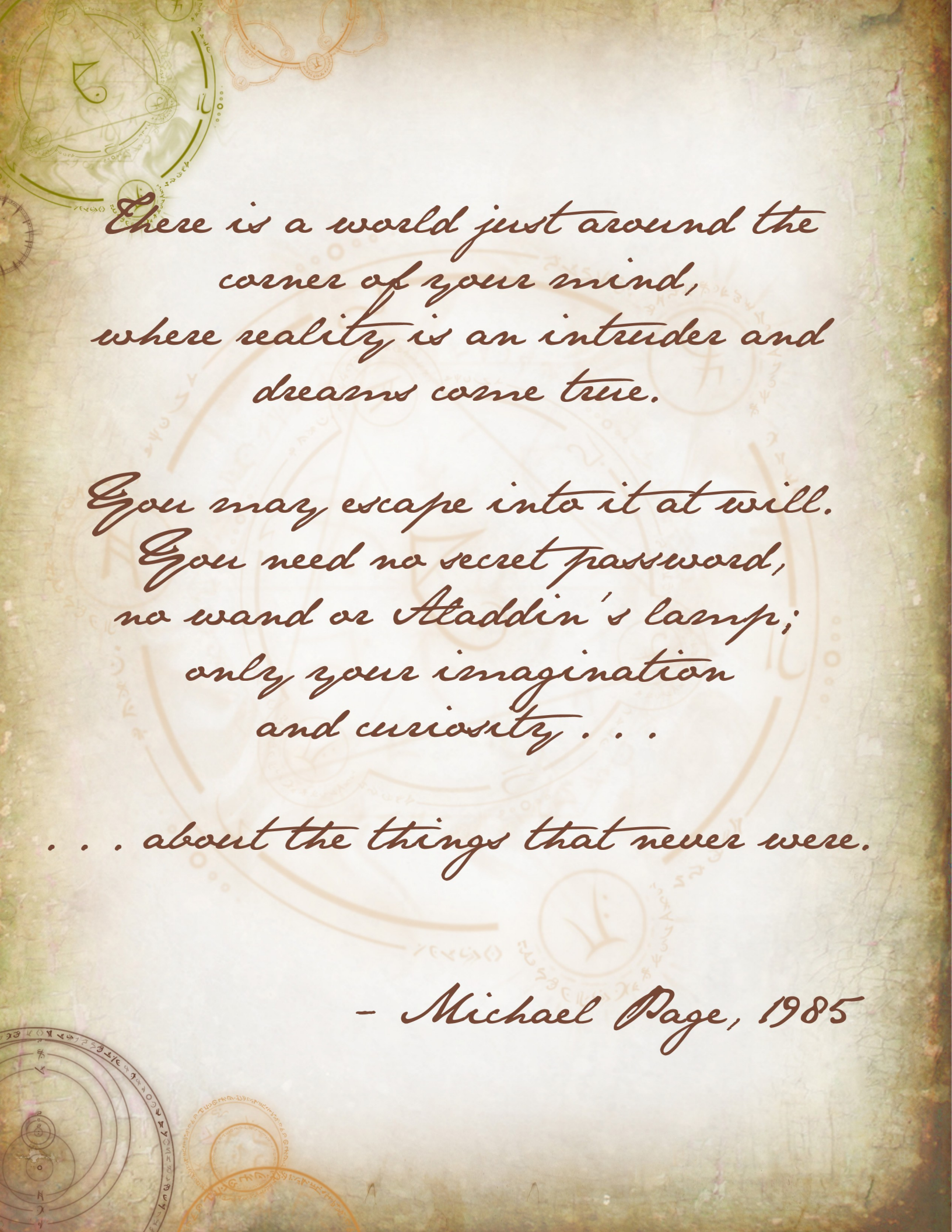
Aspyrias



FUNDAMENTALS

Joshua Raznick





*There is a world just around the
corner of your mind,
where reality is an intruder and
dreams come true.*

*You may escape into it at will.
You need no secret password,
no wand or Aladdin's lamp;
only your imagination
and curiosity . . .*

. . . about the things that never were.

- Michael Page, 1985

Aspyrias

Adventuring System™

THE FUNDAMENTALS

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Fundamentals

The rules for the *Aspyrias Adventuring System* provide an effortless environment for innovative gameplay, yet possesses depth in its subtle mechanics. This guide explores the core concepts of the system and provides a brief explanation of how to play the game. The forthcoming Quick Start Rules and Core Rulebook offers greater detail.

CARDS The *Aspyrias System* uses cards instead of dice. A majority of these cards form your character deck and aid you in task resolution. There are nine types of cards in the basic set:

- Ability
- Challenge
- Experience
- Fate
- Feat
- Monster
- Quest
- Spell
- Wound

CHARACTER DECK In the *Aspyrias Adventuring System* you have a character deck, unique to you, that only you draw from. A character deck serves as your potential to overcome foes and obstacles during an adventure.

All players begin with a starting basic deck developed during character creation. You customize your character deck as you adventure and complete quests. The discard pile of your character deck is called the *fatigue pile*.

DRAWING CARDS

When the Game Master or situation requires you to draw cards from your character deck, unless stated otherwise, do the following:

- Draw a number of cards from your character deck until you have enough cards in hand equal to your hand limit.
- If there are not enough cards in the character deck, draw as many as possible, shuffle the fatigue pile to form a new character deck, then draw the remainder to satisfy the action or effect.

TASK RESOLUTION Ability scores, accompanied by **ability cards**, determine the outcome of most tasks while **feat** and **experience cards** allow you and other players to further modify the result.

The Game Master either establishes a target number that measures the difficulty of a task or consults the *fate deck* by drawing one or more **fate cards**. The higher the target number, the more difficult the task. There are six standard degrees of difficulty, each associated with a target number. To succeed at a task, you must achieve a result equal to the target number or higher.

TASK	DIFFICULTY
Easy	0 + the number of players
Routine	3 + the number of players
Moderate	6 + the number of players
Difficult	9 + the number of players
Challenging	12 + the number of players
Hard	15 + the number of players

PLAYING CARDS When you play a card, take the card from your hand and place it face up into your immediate play area. Further game mechanics may instruct you to perform one of the following:

- **Discard:** Unless an action is specific, you discard from your hand, the top of your character deck, or play area. When you discard a card, place it face up onto the fatigue pile of your own character deck, unless an action dictates a different destination.
- **Exhaust:** You temporarily lose the use of a card or resource. Remove the card from your hand, fatigue pile, or play area as instructed. You regain the card after you meet certain conditions or at the discretion of the Game Master.
- **Forsake:** You permanently lose the use of a card or resource. Remove the card from your hand, discard pile, or play area as instructed.
- **Prepare:** Place a card face up in your immediate play area for use at a later time.
- **Replenish:** Place the card face down at the bottom of your character deck.
- **Reveal:** When you reveal a card, you show the Game Master and other players the card and return it to its proper place, unless an effect instructs you to place it elsewhere.

ABILITY CARDS When you initiate an undertaking, whether it is a single endeavor or a series of actions performed for a greater purpose, you play one or more **ability cards**. Each represents an effort toward achieving a goal or task.

PLAYING ABILITY CARDS

Whenever you play one or more *ability cards*, perform the following:

- Describe the actions of your character and how it relates to the situation.
- If the actions and *ability cards* are appropriate, add your corresponding ability scores.
- If the result is equal or greater than the difficulty revealed by the Game Master, the task is a success.

EXPERIENCE CARDS In the *Aspyrias Adventuring System*, characters adapt and learn by overcoming challenges, defeating monsters, and roleplay. In essence, **experience cards** act as wild cards.

PLAYING EXPERIENCE CARDS

Play an *experience card* as follows:

- When you play an *experience card*, name an *ability card*. The *experience card* becomes a duplicate of the named *ability card*. Afterward, forsake the *experience card*.

FEAT CARDS When you use a **feat card**, you perform a notable or remarkable act of achievement, displaying an assured boldness or expertise in a skill. Your character usually begins with three **feat cards** and can earn more through advancement.

FURTHER RESOURCES In addition to a character deck and **feat cards**, players possess several other resources:

- **Resolve:** The foundation of any adventuring company is mutual respect, ambition, companionship, determination, and morale. Resolve encompasses all these aspects.
- **Stamina:** Stamina is a measure of physical constitution, the power to overcome disease, endure hardship, as well as the ability to exert beyond bodily limitations.
- **Fortune:** Fortune favors the bold! Fortune is more than just luck and happen-

PREPARING AND PLAYING FEAT CARDS

Prepare a *feat card* as follows:

- Whenever you draw a *feat card* into your hand, immediately prepare the card.
- You can use as many prepared *feat cards* as you have available.

You can take advantage of a prepared *feat card* to perform the following general feats:

- **Ability Surge:** Discard a *feat card* to play one or more *ability cards* for a fate or ability action of another character. For each appropriate *ability card* played, add your corresponding ability score to the result.
- **Skill Surge:** Discard a *feat card* to add the appropriate skill rank to the result of an ability or fate action.

Character themes also possess a number of talents that require a *feat card* as well as normal feats gained through advancement and character creation.

stance. Most adventurers claim they make their own luck and many do with willful consideration, planning, and agile reflexes. Your Fortune score is a combination of all these things — to help you when you need it the most.

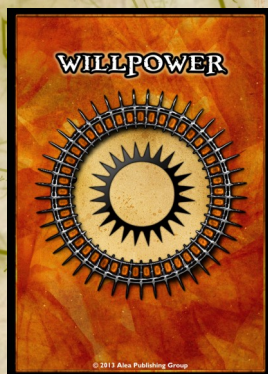
SKILLS A skill reflects an area of expertise and knowledge a character develops over time. In the *Aspyrias Adventuring System*, skills augment actions rather than being actions in and of themselves.

For instance, if a character possesses 5 ranks in stealth and attempts to slip past a guard unnoticed, she may discard a **feat card** to increase her result by 5. If she does not have a **feat card** readily available, she may have to just rely on her ability scores and her companions.

You are proficient in a skill if you possess one or more ranks. Further training in a skill allows you to instead replenish a **feat card** rather than discard it. If you are neither proficient or trained, or wish to exert a bit of effort, you can spend resolve to temporarily increase skill ranks.

COMBAT Attacking a foul beast or defending against a vile underworld denizen behaves like any other task. Although, the Game Master determines the difficulty by drawing one or more **fate cards** rather than assigning a target number.





The difficulty of your attack, counterattack, or defense depends on the attributes of the adversary you face. In the same manner as characters, creatures possess a set of ability scores.

Each **fate card** has a number of icons, each associated with a specific ability score. For each fate icon present on a **fate card**, add the corresponding ability score of the creature to establish a target number.

ARMS AND ARMOR Weapons have a reaction and power rating, each based on an ability score of the wielder. Along with armor, the result provides a character with a combat rank (or CR). The combat rank determines whether you gain advantage over a foe when you attack, counterattack, or defend.

If you have an advantage, you draw an extra card from your character deck. If you are at a disadvantage, you lose fatigue equivalent to the difference.

ATTACKS, COUNTERATTACKS, AND DEFENSE

When a player attacks, for the most part he or she also defends against a counterattack. When a creature attacks, a player has two choices: counterattack or defend.

With an attack or counterattack, a player places themselves at risk for an opportunity to inflict damage upon a foe. Should an attack or counterattack fail, the table turns and the player instead suffers a wound. Whereas, a player choosing to defend themselves is better protected against injury.

Regardless of who initiates the attack, the player performs the fate action to determine the outcome. Therefore, the player performs all the actions during combat.

EXPLOITS You also know a number of basic martial talents, known as exploits. These maneuvers allow you to increase your combat rank (CR) to help gain advantage over a foe, but you first must replenish a **feat card** or spend a resolve. Furthermore, should an exploit indicate it requires movement, you also lose fatigue equal to your armor rank.

DAMAGE For the most part, damage dealt by an attack or counterattack inflicts one wound. While an adventurer can tolerate several wounds before yielding, a monster,

EXAMPLE EXPLOITS

A few basic exploits are listed below. While all characters know each of the basic combat exploits, all character themes has its own unique set.

Exploits marked with an  require you to suffer an amount of fatigue loss equal to your armor rank. This is in addition to any fatigue loss the exploit demands. Exploits marked with a  apply to your threshold for the round.

AIM

You take your time to hone in on your target before a ranged assault.

Effect: While wielding a ranged weapon, for each *insight card* revealed from your hand, add your Perception skill rank to your ranged combat rank.

CHARGE

You rush toward a foe to deliver a melee attack.

Effect: While wielding a melee weapon, for each *agility card* revealed from your hand, add your Athletics skill rank to your melee combat rank.

FEINT

Your distraction deceived your foe from your intended attack.

Effect: While wielding a melee weapon, for each *charm card* revealed from your hand, add your Influence skill rank to your melee combat rank.

even a ferocious dragon, recoils or falls to a fatal wound with one triumphant strike.

Nevertheless, do not become a fool to think that slaying such a horrific beast is simple. While wolves, highwaymen, and other lesser creatures may fall to a quick thrust or sting of an arrow, true monstrosities present an endeavor.

To strike a mortal wound against such a creature, you may first need to overcome a challenge or gain the advantage. It may require you to wield a weapon made of extraordinary materials; wear down its resolve or stamina; or combat it over several separate engagements. Regardless, it will be a memorable and enduring task.

FATIGUE In addition to wounds, a character can also suffer fatigue. There are two

types of fatigue: *fatigue loss* and *fatigue damage*. Armor protects against fatigue damage by reducing it an amount equal to its armor rank, while fatigue loss is unavoidable.

When you suffer fatigue, discard a number of cards from the top of your character deck equivalent to the fatigue loss or damage. Should the fatigue deplete your character deck, reshuffle your fatigue pile to form a new character deck, then discard the remainder to satisfy the action or effect. If fatigue forces you to form a new character deck, you also lose 1 stamina and if it is your turn, it ends immediately.

DEATH If your hand consists of an amount of **wound cards** equivalent to your hand limit and your current stamina is 0 or the amount of **wound cards** in hand is greater than your hand limit, you are dead.

MOVEMENT AND DISTANCE The *Aspyrias Adventuring System* does not rely on terrain tiles for tactical movement while resolving combat. Instead, general terms for distance, range, and position aid in keeping the focus on the drama and action.

The following six categories define distance: visual, extreme, long, medium, close, and skirmish.

Adventures accomplish movement from one range increment to another by performing a fatigue action. The amount required is 6 fatigue loss per range increment + your armor rank. You can break up this movement over several turns.

Once within the desired range, characters can move freely unless the Game Master or situation dictates otherwise.

THRESHOLD Each character also has a threshold, which is the amount of fatigue a character can devote to movement in a round. Generally, the threshold for a character is his or her speed attribute.

Although, this depends on the mode of movement. A character climbing a cliff face or swimming has a threshold equivalent to his or her fitness attribute.

MAGIC AND MIRACLES Priests pray and preach, revering gods or saints. Magicians spout ancient words into the air. Witches homage demonic entities. Druids commune with nature spirits.

Regardless of the method, many try to contain the supernatural and harness such energy to create mystical love potions, divine the future, thwart enemies, bring for-

tune, or consolidate power.

Those dedicated to the devoted character theme evokes magic called *miracles* while savants weave *incantations*. Whether a character conjures an incantation or a miracle, all must evoke energy to cast a spell.

On the whole, evoking mystical trappings to weave a spell requires the expenditure of a prepared **spell card**, similar to performing a feat. When the **spell card** is once again accessible, so too is the ability to cast another spell.

Practitioners of the magical arts can further augment incantations and miracles with their own life force through loss of fatigue.

QUESTS Quests are the foundation of a journey; the elements of the story that drive adventurers toward a solution; the very purpose of an undertaking; the force that leads to adventure.

As adventurers complete a quest, the Game Master rewards them with one or more **quest cards**. Once earned, you can unlock special quest abilities, place them in reserve, or redeem them to advance your character.

EXAMPLE OF GAMEPLAY Two adventurers witness an assassination attempt against a prominent merchant and seek to chase the assassin down to answer for his crimes. The two other adventurers are elsewhere, enjoying the festivities of the Summer Fair. The Game Master decides to make this a cinematic scene and establishes a challenging target number (16; 12 + 4 players).

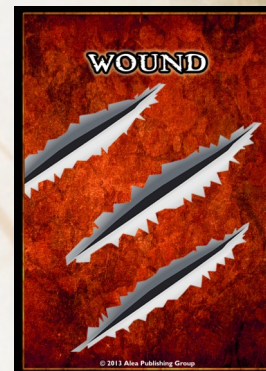
Although two of the characters are not present, they are still included when determining a target number. Furthermore, since this is a group action, players can freely aid one another without the need to first spend a **feat card**.

Game Master: *You see the assassin take to the rooftops.*

The player controlling Elwes draws his hand size of five cards: 1 Agility, 1 Charm, 2 Insight, and 1 Willpower.

Player (Elwes): *Damn! I'm going to have a hard time following him up there with what I just drew.*

Player (Amandis): *Well, we can't let him get away. I begin running down the street parallel to the rooftops. I only stop momentarily to shoot a few arrows as he jumps be-*





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joshua Raynack is a game designer and co-founder of Alea Publishing Group. He and Cameron Guill entered the game design arena with a simple concept: bring innovative rules to the game table by going outside the box. Bring living, breathing worlds for Players to explore and Game Masters to build upon.

His game design credits include a variety of products designed to enhance both OGL and GSL editions of the world's premier role-playing game. His degree in History proved fundamental in developing *Medieval Life and Laws*, *Player Options: Flaws and Merits*, and the *Feudal Lords Campaign Setting*.

Joshua also dabbles in graphic design. He worked with publisher Dias Ex Machina and Goodman Games to develop the layout and cover design for the *Amethyst Campaign Setting* and various other products.

tween the buildings.

The player controlling Amandis places two **agility cards** in her play area to represent her running and shooting a few arrows.

Game Master: *Very well. What is your Agility score?*

Player (Amandis): *Three - so, a total of six.*

Game Master: *Alright, the chase begins. Boisterous drunkards and foreign merchants crowd the cobblestone streets ever since the Summer Fair began early this morning. Now that it is nightfall and the lord lifted the curfew, many seek to spend their hard earned coin.*

Amandis sprints along the street. You manage to keep up as the assassin leaps across from one building to another. You let loose a few arrows and believe one stung his left shoulder as he ducks from sight.

Player (Elwes): *I take to the streets as well, running parallel to his perceived path. I try to anticipate his route.*

Player (Elwes) plays his only **agility card** (agility score of 2) followed by an **insight card** (insight score of 3) for a total result of 5. The Game Master tallies this result with the previous 6 scored by Amandis for a sum of 11. He subtly informs the players that their effort is not enough:

Game Master: *You manage to keep up for a few blocks until you lose sight of him against the black backdrop of a cloudy night.*

Player (Elwes): *Although I slow down, I move through the streets and alleyways quickly keeping constant vigil on the rooftops.*

Player (Elwes) plays an additional **insight card**...

Player (Elwes): *I also start asking bystanders if they saw anyone leaping from rooftop to rooftop.*

... followed by a **charm card**.

The Game Master accepts the second **insight card** and briefly considers the use of the **charm card**. The Game Master finally settles that the **charm card** does not fit the mood of the chase and will instead devise a minor setback.

Game Master: *You try to talk to a few people in the streets, but most are drunk and find your insistent questioning a bit overbearing. A few brutish dockhands, looking for any reason to rumble, begin pushing you around.*

Player (Elwes): *I don't have time for this. How many are there?*

Game Master: *Three.*

Player (Elwes): *Wonderful. I have an Athletics skill rank of two. I discard a feat card to kick one in the groin, then I grab the mug from his hand as he falls and I break it across the face of the other. I look at the third and spend a resolve to use my presence attribute to intimidate him, telling the thug to "back away."*

The Game Master feels the loss of a **feat card** is enough since the reasoning behind playing the **charm card** was almost palatable.

Game Master: *No need to spend the resolve. Your quick reaction sobers the remaining dockhand and cowers as he slowly backs away with his hands raised.*

The Game Master, remembering the extra **insight card**, increases the total to 14, and continues:

Game Master: *As you glare down the drunkard, a quick shadow darts overhead from the edge of one building to the other before leaping from the rooftop and safely into a pile of hay.*

Player (Silas): *The chase continues - I call out to Amandis, "I see him. Over there."*

Player (Amandis): *Alright! Let's finish this. I rush to the haystack and as he emerges, I crack my bow across his skull. Since I don't have a strength card in hand, I will discard a feat card to add my Athletics skill rank of three to the result.*

With the final tally of 17, the Game Master informs the players of their success.

Game Master: *The assassin is caught, but unconscious. With an arrow in his arm, faint from a lack of blood, along with the wallop across the back of his head, it may be a while before you can question him.*

PLAY DIAGRAM



PREPARED CARDS



FATE DECK & DISCARD PILE

PLAYER'S PLAY AREA



PLAYER'S HAND

CHARACTER DECK & FATIGUE PILE