

YOU ARE YOUR OWN GM

This is the one page summary document of the You are Your own GM (YaYoG) system. YaYoG empowers players to make decisions and ruling without needing to find a GM or interrupt the flow of the game. However, you are still beholden to the rules of the game, to the rules of drama, and to being fair. It becomes your job to make the game more enjoyable for everyone; luckily, you are empowered to do just that.

A NOTE ON GM THEORY

In a LARP, GMs are called upon to make rules decisions, to clarify information, and to act as “the rest of the world.” Essentially, they are called upon as independent moderators when the players cannot resolve the issue themselves.

YaYoG endows that ability to the players. You are the judge of whether your character may or may not do something. You are allowed to expand the game world as needed, as long as it is reasonable. The trick here is knowing what is reasonable. If you aren’t sure, find someone who is uninvolved in your situation. We call that person the O3P, the **Objective Third Party**.

The O3P acts as a GM for your situation. The O3P must be agreed upon by all parties and the ruling of the O3P is final. If you cannot find an O3P from among the player base, all GMs can act as O3Ps in all situations.

LET’S GET SPECIFIC: GAME MECHANICS

Every Skill (basic thing you could do) has five levels: Horrible, Below Average, Average, Above Average, and Excellent. If you are trying to do something, say pick a lock, you compare your level to the target level (which will either be explicitly stated or decided by an O3P). If you are better, then you do it. If you are worse, you fail. If you tie, you need to find an O3P and have them make a decision. We’ll get into how to make a good decision as an O3P in a bit.

There may come a time when you want to try something for which you don’t have a skill. At that point, you must decide if it is reasonable that you could do it (see Making Decisions) based on your character history and your abilities. If you cannot decide, find an O3P to decide for you.

If you are attempting to do something to someone else, like say, defeat them in combat, you first have an announcement phase, something to the effect of, “I’m a-gonna whump you because I’m above average in combat.” “Oh yeah? I may only be average in combat, but I’ll get my licks in.” Try to keep it in character, but get the idea across.

In this particular example, the character who is above average will win. But the character who is average is saying that the other won’t leave the fight unscathed. That’s fine and follows the rules; see below.

Once all parties know how they will do, then you act out the resolution safely and dramatically. Afterwards, resolve the combat. You may end up Healthy, Slightly Wounded, Severely Wounded, and Dead (see Damage below). The winner gets to decide how the loser is. If the loser is the same or one rank lower, they can “*get their licks in*” and leave the winner Slightly Wounded.

If both parties have the same skill level and they cannot come up with a mutually satisfying resolution, then they must find an O3P to decide. The decision of the O3P is final and could result in any resolution, up to and including all participants being killed.

Teaming Up

Two or more people may team up to defeat someone who has one higher skill level. For example, two people who are Below Average in combat, may work together to beat up someone who is Average in combat. The person who is higher may get his licks in to up to two others in the combat of his or her choice.

For combats more complex than that, find an O3P agreeable to all involved and have that person decide the results.

The O3P decides the results but does *not* describe the action of the combat. After hearing or deciding on the results, you must act out the combat or actions, roleplay them in slow motion.

Damage

There are four levels of damage. If you are *Healthy*, you have no damage and there is no game effect.

If you are *Slightly Wounded*, all of the levels of what you can do are one less. You need to announce this in the declarative phase, “I wish to win the dance competition, and am normally an excellent dancer, but due to this leg wound, I am only above average today.” You may be *Slightly Wounded* for as long as you want, but not less than 15 minutes. After that, you go back to Healthy.

If you are *Severely Wounded*, you need immediate medical attention. Until you receive medical attention, you may not use any of your skills, nor may you move faster than a slow limp.

Dead is dead.

Two additional notes. First, note that damage does not stack. If you are Slightly Wounded and become Slightly Wounded again, you do not gain more wounds. It just resets the 15 minute wound clock.

Also, it is possible that you may want to knock someone out but leave them unharmed. If you win a combat, you may choose to declare that your opponent is *Unconscious*. They stay unconscious for as long as is dramatically appropriate. The combat winner gets to decide how long is dramatically appropriate, although an appeal may be made to an O3P if it seems excessive.

Skill Levels

Excellent

Above Average

Average

Below Average

Horrible

Damage Levels

Healthy

Slightly Wounded

Severely Wounded

Dead

Breaking the Rules

In general, you cannot break the rules, such as they are, of YaYoG. But you may have a certain number of Special Abilities that let you break the rules. An example might be, “Always Excellent” which allows you to be Excellent in a skill even though you are wounded. Another special ability might raise your level in a skill in certain situations.

Special abilities are just that, special. You will only have a certain number of uses of each ability per game. Once it’s used, it’s gone.

Also, some special abilities can be used while you are wounded, unconscious or dead. The ability will say if it can be used at those times.

MAKING DECISIONS

When deciding if you should be able to do something, or if you are an O3P, you should decide based on the following factors:

Is it reasonable? Does it follow the rules? Could the character do it based on his or her abilities and character history? For example, if someone is playing a super spy but doesn’t explicitly have an ability to pick locks, can they try to pick the lock? You might say that they have an Average ability to pick locks. They then want to perform brain surgery. You would probably say that there is nothing in their background to support such an activity, so you would rule they cannot do it.

Is it fair? When making a decision, you need to decide not only if it is fair to the player, but to the game as a whole. Would allowing the player to do this keep someone else from joining in on the fun? Would not allowing the player to do this damage his or her fun? Which would be better for the game as a whole?

Are there extenuating circumstances? A couple of players might come to you to decide on a combat, for example, and one player might say, “hey, I know he would normally win, but I’m attacking him from behind, and I have a bazooka, and he’s tied to a chair. Can I get a bonus?” It is fine to give a bonus

to one side for extenuating circumstances, but be careful that this doesn’t lead to an arms race.

Is it dramatically appropriate? This is a touchy, gut-feeling, sort of thing. John is playing an expert detective. Five minutes into the game, he thinks he knows whodunit. Allowing him to unmask the culprit so soon is not only unfair to the other player, it is not very dramatically appropriate. Ask John to get some more proof, or interview more people. Likewise, having the villain leave the game as soon as he hears that you declined John’s request isn’t fair or appropriate either. Instead encourage the villain to have a dramatic denouement when it is appropriate for the game. Think of the handcuffs scene in *W/ho Framed Roger Rabbit*. He could only escape the cuffs when it was funny. In the best of all possible worlds, things should happen in the LARP when dramatically appropriate.

Respect Decisions

As an O3P, you should feel comfortable making decisions. As a player, you should understand that different O3Ps will make different decisions in similar circumstance. Because of this, you need to respect the decisions made by previous O3Ps even if you don’t agree with them. Please do not *retcon*, or change history. This way lies madness. If you really disagree with a previous decision, please recuse yourself instead.

Recusing Yourself

There may come a time when you are called to be an O3P and you cannot decide. Maybe you are too close to the situation and cannot be an arbitrator. Maybe you simply cannot decide what is fair, reasonable, or dramatically appropriate. Maybe you have no interest in acting like a GM. In any case, you may simply recuse yourself.

Explain to the people involved that you cannot make a decision. You don’t have to say why. Simply bow out, but if you can, please make some suggestions for a different O3P so the players aren’t left completely hanging.

Some players have agreed to be O3Ps for nearly any situation and can be found by looking for the O3P symbol on their badge.

SLASH SPECIFIC NOTES

In Slash, you will have levels in the following Skills.

/ **Combat** is used for fighting, either with each other or with the monsters escaping the Hellmouth.

/ **Research** is used to find information out in the Library. The actual mechanic for the library will be posted on the wall of the game

/ **Magic** is your ability to cast spells. In general, we won’t police which spells you cast. Try to stay true to your ability level.

/ **Engineering** is your ability to work on electronic equipment. Again, this will be simulated with specialized mechanics that will be explained when needed.

/ **Sex** is your ability between the sheets. It is possible to raise your level of this ability in game, if your partner thinks you’re doing a good enough job.

Sex in Slash will be simulated by the level of roleplaying the participants are most comfortable with. Players ***must all verbally agree with what level they are comfortable with before starting the act. If there is a disagreement, lower levels win!*** These levels are:

/ **Talk only.** Those involved describe what you are doing, ideally in the style of bad fanfic.

/ **First Base.** Some touching/physical roleplaying. No touching of genitals or breasts. No kissing.

/ **Second Base.** Kissing and fondling is ok. Clothes stay on though.

/ **Third Base.** Dry humping is fine.

/ **Home Run.** Anything goes. Please practice safe baseball and do not break any laws.

SLASH MECHANICS

Slash has a number of special mechanics just for this game. In general, these have to do with the five stats. These mechanics are designed to be fun and amusing, not complex and game destroying.

COMBAT

Combat between players will be simulated using base YaYoG.

However, The Hellmouth has opened and it's spewing out all sorts of demons and monsters. These foul creatures cannot be reasoned with; they can only be attacked and defeated.

Demons and monsters will have special name badges with a number on them. That number is the number of characters with Excellent Combat skills who need to work together to defeat the creature. Defeating the creature is done in slow motion and is roleplayed. Tactical advice and unrealistic soliloquies are encouraged but not required. It is up to the players involved afterwards if they feel they have been injured in the combat.

Characters who do not have Excellent Combat skills may take part in the combat, and may even help defeat the monster, but they will inevitably end up Severely Wounded after the combat. It is *fine* to be Severely Wounded in this game; we have advanced medical technology and magic. You'll be back on your feet in no time.

A special note: Some monster badges will be in red with an explosion symbol around them. They are "boss" monsters and will require teaming up and a longer, drawn out, combat sequence to deal with.

RESEARCH

The Mount Laurel Library is very close by and is full of surprisingly old and informative tomes. It will be represented by a wall of the room to which a number of scraps of paper have been taped.

You may make research attempts per game according to your research level on the following chart. A research attempt takes 5 LARP minutes*. First you grab an unclaimed paper from the wall, then you spend 5 minutes reading it or studying it or whatever. You may then do whatever you want with the paper, but we'd suggest pooling your research results for best results.

Your Level of Research	Attempts per Game
Horrible	0
Below Average	1
Average	2
Above Average	3
Excellent	4

MAGIC

Magic is really really difficult to quantify in this game. So we won't even bother. Instead, we just ask you not to be a jerk about your magical powers and play reasonably within the game. Use them, sure, but don't unbalance the game with them, ok?

One subset of magic we do have rules for is the creation of potions. Potions can be created if you have the special ability to do so. They will require certain ingredients. You can get a list of ingredients by doing research. See research above.

ENGINEERING

Engineering puzzles are simulated by Sudoku. Technically anyone who wants to work on them may, but you should roleplay being better than them if you have a higher Skill level.

There are two Sudoku puzzles in game. The one to fix the futuristic devices must be solved first. The tricorders/εc are not broken but are being interfered with. To set up a way around the interference pattern, you must take readings from around game space.

You will know where a reading is because there will be a scrap of paper there, different from the library scraps. It takes 5 LARP minutes* to make a reading – roleplay it – and then the readings need to be collected for analysis. There is a limit to the number of readings you may make based on the chart below.

Your Level of Engineering	Attempts per Game
Horrible	0
Below Average	0
Average	1
Above Average	1
Excellent	2

Note that you might not need to make all the readings to fill out the chart, but the more you have, the easier it will be.

SEX

Slash takes place in the world of bad slash fiction. For those of you who have not explored the world of bad slash fiction, this means that your character will have sex, often perverted and weird sex, frequently with other characters.

There is a valid in-game reason why your characters have suddenly started to behave this way, so you can artificially orchestrate reasons to have sex without worrying that it is too out of character. It is perfectly in genre for your character to start the act thinking "wait, why am I doing this?" then to be unable to stop because it feels so good.

*5 LARP Minutes is a nebulous amount of time that is about 2-3 minutes at the start of the game, and slowly dwindles to like 15 seconds by the end of the game.

Like research and engineering, sex requires a 5 LARP minutes waiting period between encounters. You need to, ahem, recharge your batteries.

To repeat what was said above:

Sex in Slash will be simulated by the level of roleplaying the participants are most comfortable with. Players ***must all verbally agree with what level they are comfortable with before starting the act. If there is a disagreement, lower levels win!*** These levels are:

- / **Talk only.** Those involved describe what you are doing, ideally in the style of bad fanfic.
- / **First Base.** Some touching/physical roleplaying. No touching of genitals or breasts. No kissing.
- / **Second Base.** Kissing and fondling is ok. Clothes stay on though.
- / **Third Base.** Dry humping is fine.
- / **Home Run.** Anything goes. Please practice safe baseball and do not break any laws.

In addition, unlike other skills, you may improve your level of Sex during the game. In order to raise your level of Sex, you must have sex with as many different characters as listed on the chart below. You may improve your level several times during the game, but you need to have sex with a different character each time. There are 16 characters in the game; the player who has sex with the most characters will receive a prize at the end of the game.

To Advance	You Must Fuck
Horrible to Below Average	1 Character
Below Average to Average	2 Characters
Average to Above Average	3 Characters
Above Average to Excellent	4 Characters
Excellent to ???????	5 Characters
To Infinity and Beyond	?????

Note that while the GMs encourage 3-or more-somes, they give an unfortunate numerical advantage to the participants. So, if your sex involves more than 1 other player, you only get to count one of them toward your conquests. You can have sex with the rest later.