Powered by the Apocalypse

*Using Apocalypse World to Outline
and Draft Your Own RPG*

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Here's What

Apocalypse World offers a powerful, flexible framework you can use to outline, draft, and potentially finish your own role playing games. Dozens of creators, both experienced designers and first-timers, have used it with great success, and you can too. It's not a game system, it's an easy approach to game system design, a reliable way to get your creative vision quickly into a playable form. I'll lay out Apocalypse World's philosophy and foundation, describe the fit and purpose of each of its systems, and point out fruitful ways to build on them, contradict them, repurpose them, subvert them, and go far beyond them. The other panelists will share their experiences of using Apocalypse World to create their games: what to do, what to watch out for, what to avoid.

Goal: Create a Playable Outline

Outline

Play & Revise

Full Draft

- Game design means iteration.
- The first step is to create something you can try.
- Is PbtA your final goal? Could be, could be not.

"An Approach to System Design"?

Apocalypse World's Philosophy

- For example:
  - "Dremmer throws you off a building!"
  - "Want to make out?" "Absolutely!"
  - "Some kind of unpleasant cough is wracking your population, and Mice has joined Tum Tum's water cult."
  - "I go find Burroughs."
  - "Is she lying?" "Absolutely!"

- For example:
  - Roll dice, add a stat.
  - 6 or less, 7-9, 10+.
  - 3-harm minus 1-armor = 2 harm.
  - Mark experience & improve.
  - At the beginning of the session, at the end of the session.

Apocalypse World's Structure

Custom Moves,
LE Playbooks

Playbooks,
Character Moves,
Character Crap

Threats

Stats, Dice, Core
Moves, Harm,
Improvement

MC Moves

The
Conversation

*MC Agenda &
Principles*
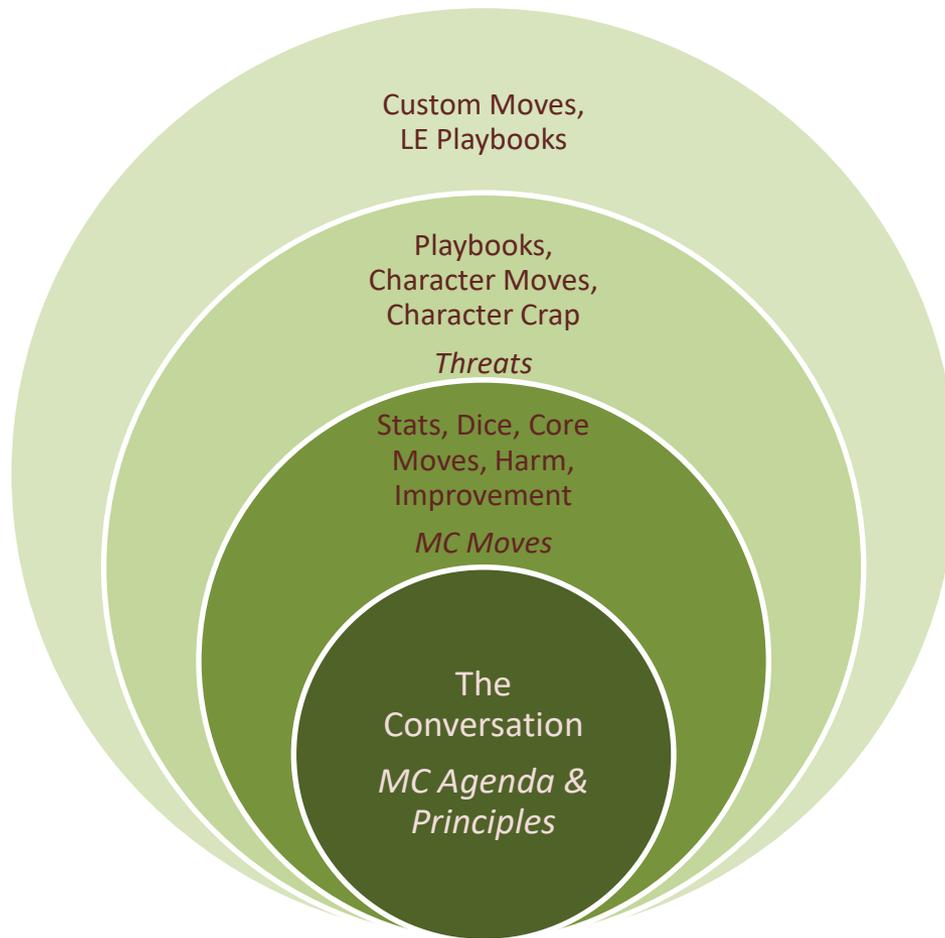
- Each system elaborates upon the systems underlying it.
- Play collapses toward, not away from, the conversation.
- "Deep hacks."

Apocalypse World's Systems

The Conversation

- Harm & Healing
- Moves
- Threats
- Playbooks
- Gear & Crap
- Improve-ment
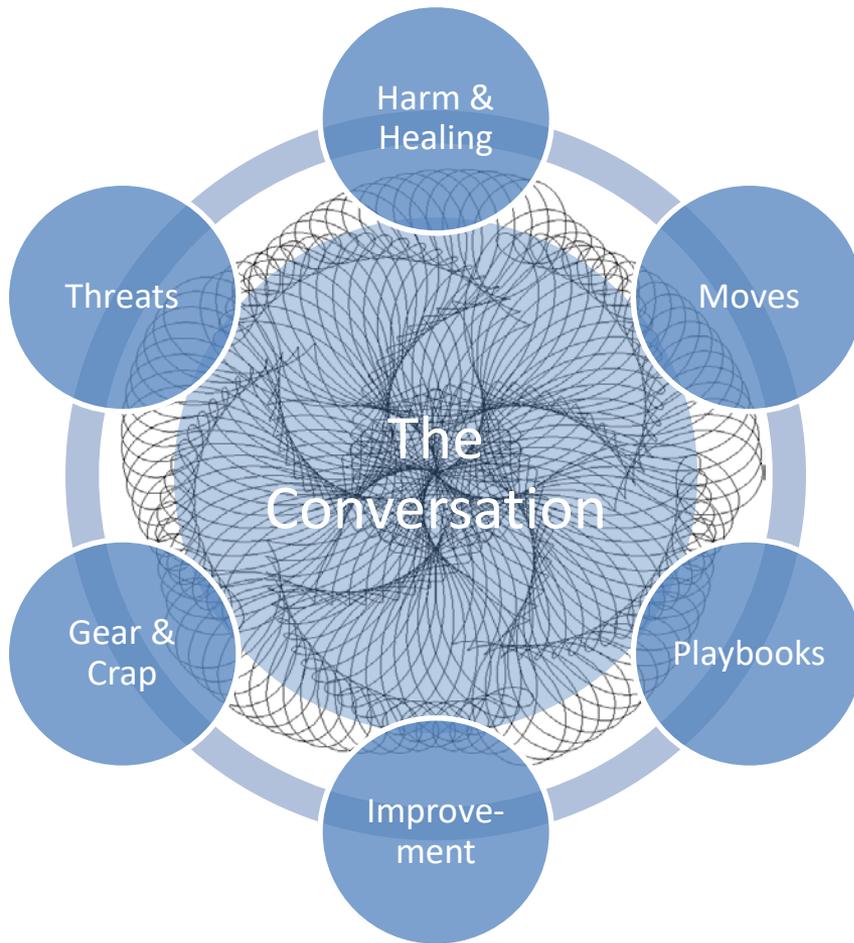
- Timeframe: Right now. This evening. Over the course of the game.
- Structure: Fictional causes have real effects. Real causes have fictional effects. What and what?
- Handoffs: Calling upon. Backing up. Disclaiming. Drawing in.
- Consequences: Scope & scale. Limitations. Effectiveness. Options.
- Permissions and expectations.

"Accidents" of the System

Hx

There's a GM

Stat High-lights

2d6 +Stat

Play-books

"Special" Moves

GM never rolls

Marking XP

GM Doesn't Name Moves

Threats & Types

Harm Count-down

Character Moves
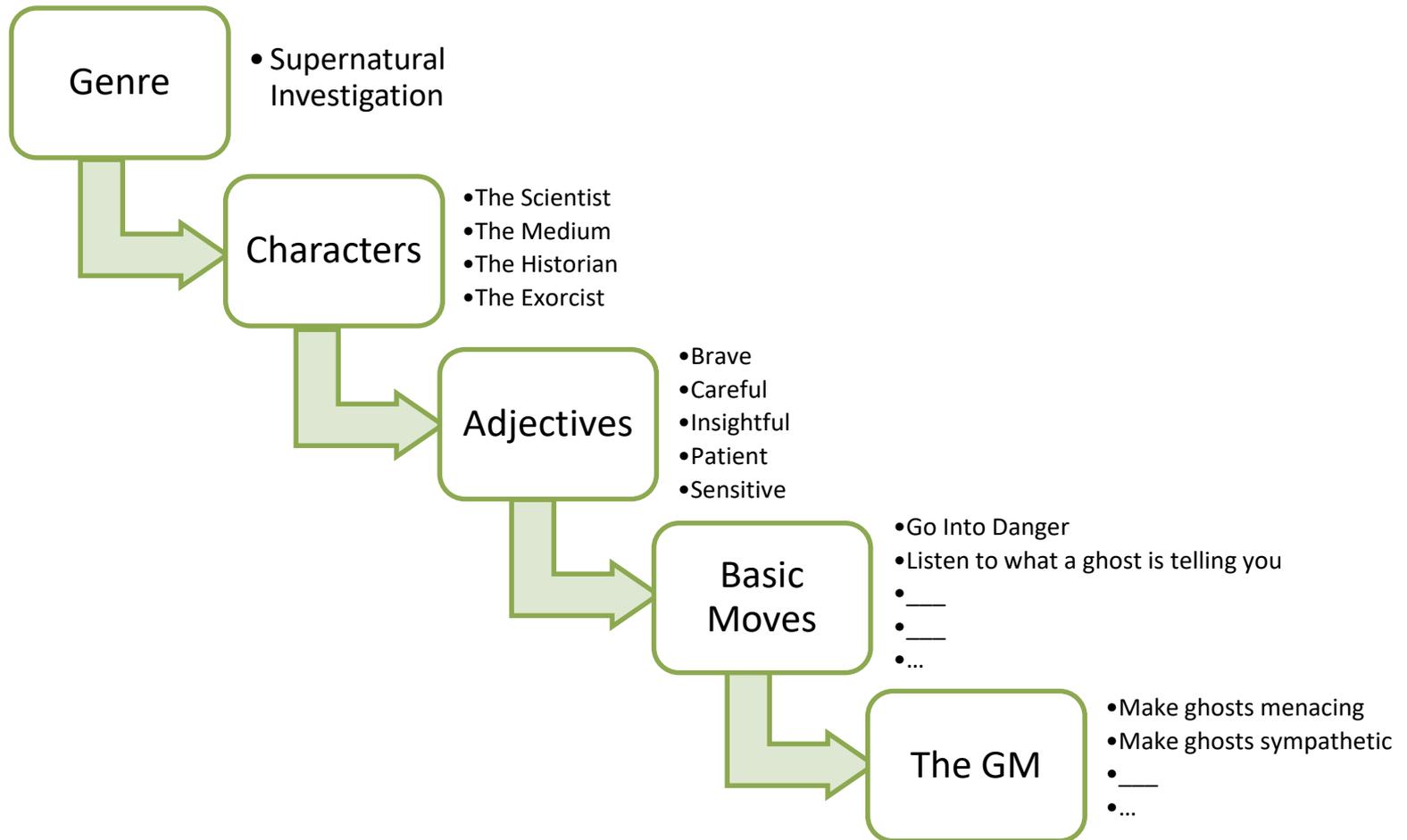
Etc.

Some Games to Consider

apocalypse-world.com/pbta

Getting Started

Genre
- Supernatural Investigation

Characters
- The Scientist
- The Medium
- The Historian
- The Exorcist

Adjectives
- Brave
- Careful
- Insightful
- Patient
- Sensitive

Basic Moves
- Go Into Danger
- Listen to what a ghost is telling you
- ___
- ___
- …

The GM
- Make ghosts menacing
- Make ghosts sympathetic
- ___
- …

Drafting a Move

- When you **listen to what a ghost is trying to tell you**, roll your Sensitive. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7-9, ask 2:
    - *What letter does your name start with?*
    - *What emotion do you still carry?*
    - *What would you do to me if you could?*
    - *Who would you have here if you could?*

    On a miss, ask 1 anyway, and be prepared for the worst.

- When you **listen to what a ghost is trying to tell you**, roll your Sensitive. On a 10+, you hear the ghost; ask the GM what it whispers to you. On a 7-9, choose 1:
    - *You provoke the ghost to an extreme reaction.*
    - *You feel the emotion the ghost still carries.*
    - *You can't hear the ghost, but see it.*
    - *The ghost directs you to examine something.*

    … And ask the GM what it is.

    On a miss, be prepared for the worst.

- When you **listen to what a ghost is trying to tell you**, roll your Sensitive. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, the GM chooses 1:
    - *The ghost whispers to you about its life.*
    - *The ghost whispers to you about its death.*
    - *The ghost whispers to you about its sorrow.*
    - *The ghost whispers to you about its hate.*
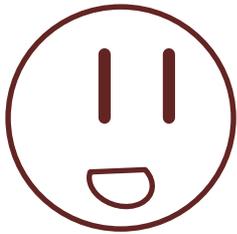
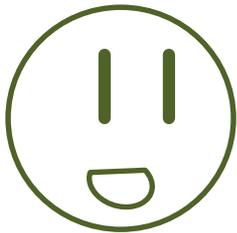   On a miss, be prepared for the worst.

Which? Why?

Power, Decision & Consent
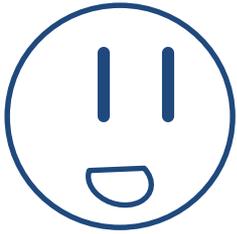
Poison'd: *"I'm winning. You have to choose: I draw first blood and you cede the matter, or else we ignore first blood and fight on to a deadly wound. Which do you choose?"*

Apocalypse World: *"I've got the drop on you. You have to choose: cave and do what I want, or force my hand and suck it up. Which do you choose?"*

A Doomed Pilgrim: *"I might be able to overpower it. I catch it by its horns and throw my whole weight over it, trying to drag it down onto its side. Does it fall?"*

Amazons: *"I strike you; your peril stands at 2. Which bad experience do you choose?" "I choose: I'm pressed into desperate retreat."*

The King is Dead: *"I overreach and you have the opportunity for a dirty little blow, a kick to the knee or an elbow to the ear. Do you take it?"*

Publishing, Super Briefly:

- "Powered by the Apocalypse" doesn't have a technical definition.

- If you use somebody's *words or work*, you need their permission.

- If you use somebody's *ideas*, you should credit them.

- If you want to publish your game, you should!

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And, To Reiterate…

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Thanks!

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