I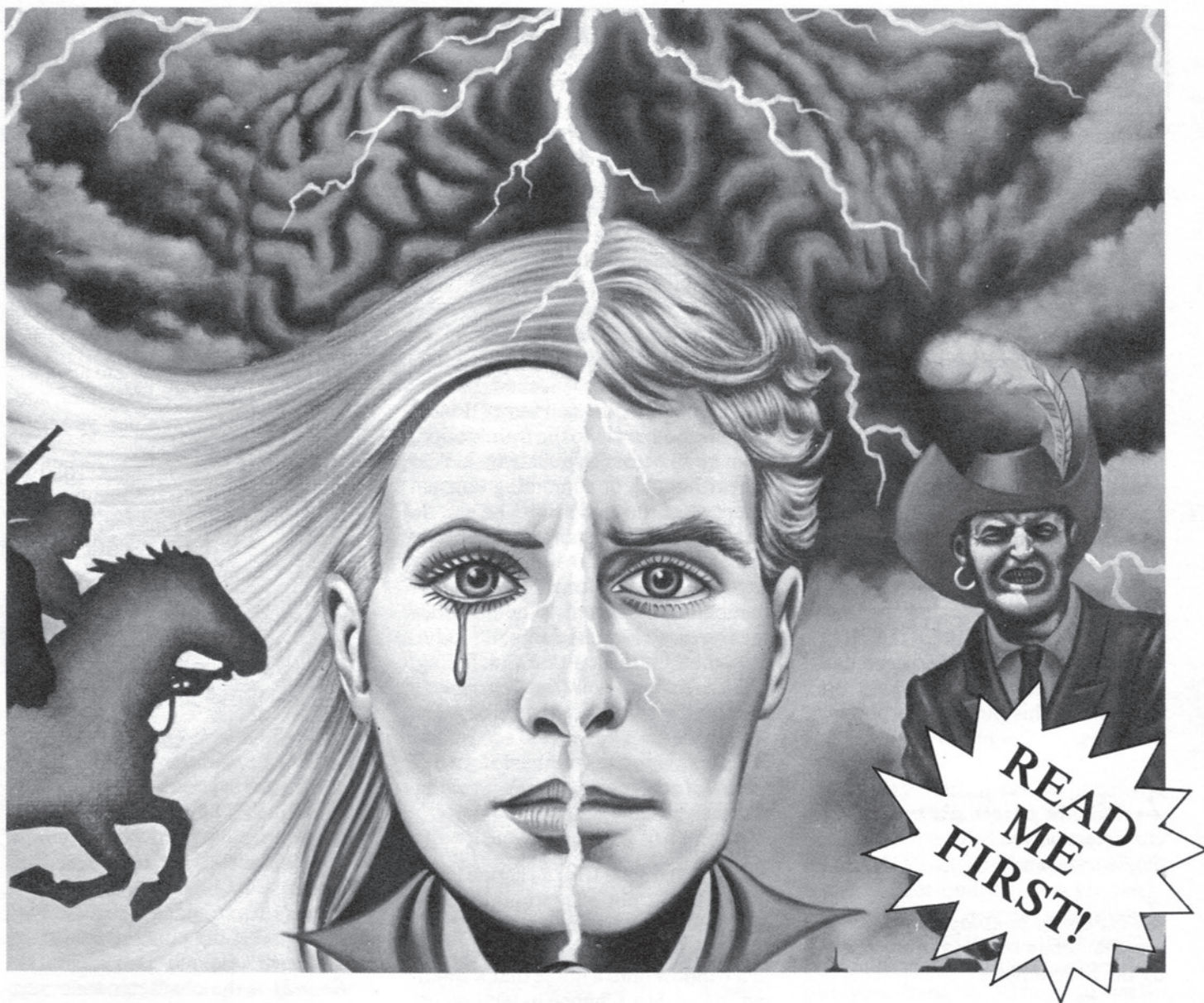f you've ever played role-playing games before, you'll soon discover this one is very different. It's quick and easy to learn. It has more story and fewer "statistics." And it's set in a world more wondrous and bizarre than any you've known before...

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

- 1 introductory folder
- 48 cards
- 1 Storyteller's Screen
- 2 ten-sided dice
- 1 Prop Book
- 1 *Adventure Book*

WARNING: Do not look at the *Adventure Book*, Prop Book, or cards unless you plan to "run" or referee this game.

LEARNING TO PLAY

Step One: If you've never played a role-playing game before, read page 7. Then come back to this section.

Step Two: Pick a "Storyteller." The Storyteller leads the game, much as the "Game Master" or "referee" leads traditional role-playing games.

Who should be the Storyteller? The owner of the game is a good choice. But as the name implies, the best Storyteller is someone who can read fiction well out loud, improvise stories, and be an "on the spot" actor or actress.

From now on, when the word "players" is used, it refers to every player *except* the Storyteller.

Step Three: If you're the Storyteller, read the Storyteller's Guide. If players need something to do while you read, give them the section for new role-players (page 7), or read the Story-teller's Guide out loud.

Step Four: Get out the *Adventure Book* and get ready to play.

THE STORYTELLER'S GUIDE

In the real world, physics usually determine what a person can do, or what happens to him. In this game, the adventures determine what happens, supported by the rules below. Anything the players might try during the game is covered by the *Adventure Book* or one of these rules.

Take out the Storyteller's Screen and look it over; you'll need it to learn the rules. Don't try to memorize everything you see and read; just gain a basic understanding for now.

During the game, use the screen and this rules booklet as reference tools. If you can't remember something, look it up. Don't be afraid to "bend" the rules a little, either. Only one rule is carved in stone: have fun.

THE BASICS

1. The Storyteller should never let a rule get in the way of the players' fun. The point of this game is role-playing, not rules.

2. PCs, or *player characters,* are characters played by everyone except the Storyteller.

3. NPCs, or *nonplayer characters*, are characters (or creatures) played by the Storyteller.

4. All characters may have...

SKILLS, which represent something a character does better than the average person—or something few other people can do at all.

WOUNDS, which represent any kind of physical injury—punctures, bruises, breaks...whatever.

Both wounds and skills are described more fully below.

5. PCs begin each adventure without knowing who or where they are. They do have as much general knowledge as most people in 1985 do, however. (NPCs, it seems, don't always suffer from this "amnesia.")

ACTIONS—THEIR CHANCE OF SUCCESS

6. When a character tries to do something, he or she is performing an "action."

Example: John, a character, may decide to chase a villain, look for a hideout, or shoot a tin can. All of these things are actions.

7. When a character attempts an action that's fairly easy, that character automatically succeeds.

Example: John can order lunch, ride his motorcyle to the train station, even swim across a small lake. Unless an earthquake or something unusual happens at the same time, he can do any of these things automatically.

8. Not every action succeeds automatically, however. The *Chance* measures a character's likelihood to do something difficult without failing. (*"Chance" is short for "chance of success."*)

9. This game uses two basic forms of Chance (others exist, but don't worry about them now):

a) 40% = the *standard Chance.* When a character tries an action that's difficult, but not exceptionally difficult, his or her Chance is 40%.

Example: Ichabod tries to leap out of a window onto a horse that's standing below. His Chance to land on the horse is 40%.

b) 20% = the *reduced Chance.* When a character tries an action that's exceptionally difficult, his or her Chance is *reduced* to 20%.

Example: Ichabod tries to leap out of a window onto a horse that's *cantering* below. His Chance to land on the horse is 20%.

10. A very *specific* action (hitting a particular body part, grabbing hold of something, or breaking an attacker's grip on you, etc.) is a *called shot.* If a called shot seems very difficult to the Storyteller, always use the reduced Chance.

Characters may make called shots to inflict less than normal injury—purposely grazing a victim with a bullet, for example, instead of shooting to wound or kill. Called shots *never* inflict extra injury, however.

MAKING CHECKS

11. You can use a Chance in two ways, when determining the result of some action:

a) The *success check* answers the question, "Does the character succeed or fail?" Use it when you need simple, yes-or-no answers.

To make a success check, roll two dice (see sidebar): if the result is less than or equal to the Chance, the character succeeds. If the result is higher than the Chance, the character fails.

Example: Lara's character tries to untie a knot with her teeth. Her Chance is 40% (the standard Chance). Lara rolls a "23". The character succeeds; she unties the knot.

b) The *Q-check (Quantity or Quality check)* answers the question, "Does the character succeed—and if so, then how well does he or she do?" Use it when you need to know exactly how well a character's action succeeds.

To make a Q-check...

Step 1) First, make a regular success check. If the character fails, go no further.

Step 2) If the character succeeds, subtract the result of the dice roll from the Chance. The difference is called the "Success Margin." (See the Q Table on the Storyteller's Screen.)

** Success Margin = Chance ** minus Dice Roll

Step 3) Read the headings above the Q Table from left to right, and use the first column that fits the situation at hand.

Step 4) Follow the row containing the Success Margin across, until you reach the appropriate column ("cross-index").

Step 5) Interpret the code using the key below the table (or the special key for that skill, if appropriate).

Step 6) Apply the results.

Example: Your character, Rutgar, is boxing with a killer orangutan. Both Rutgar and the beast are wearing brass knuckles; it's a tough fight. Rutgar tries to land a punch; his Chance is 40%. You roll "23"; that's less than or equal to 40, so the punch strikes home. But how much harm does the blow inflict?

Step 1) Make a success check. You did that— "23" was successful.

Step 2) Find the Success Margin: 40 (the Chance) - 23 (the dice roll) = 17. The number 17 lies in the row marked "10-29."

Step 3) Which column? A punch is a hand-to-hand attack: use column E on the Q Table.

Step 4) Cross Index: follow the "E" column down until you reach the row for "10-29."

Steps 5) and 6): Decode and apply results. Rutgar wears brass knuckes— that's an armed attack, so use the letter in the circle: M. The orangutan suffers a medium wound. Furthermore, there's a "burst" in the results square. That means the orangutan is knocked down by the punch.

12. Make Q-checks whenever—

a) wounds (injuries) are the possible result of an action;

b) a skill is used (unless the skill card says otherwise);

c) you wish to determine the degree of success for some action.

SKILLS

13. Player characters discover which skills they have *during* an adventure, not before.

Before an adventure begins, the Storyteller selects skill cards for the PCs, according to instructions in the *Adventure Book*. Then, if PCs try to do things relating to their skills, the Storyteller gives them the appropriate skill cards.

Example: The Storyteller knows Rutgar has Medical skill, but Rutgar's player does not. During an adventure, Rutgar attempts to bandage a wound. The Storyteller gives Rutgar's player the Medical skill card; Rutgar has discovered he's a doctor!

14. There are three levels of skill:
★ one star (lowest)
★★ two stars (mid-level)
★★★ three stars (highest)
Characters start with skills at one-star level, and advance as they progress from one adventure to another.

15. Skills raise a character's standard Chance to perform a given action. The increased standard Chance varies according to skill level:

★ 60%   ★★ 70%   ★★★ 95%

Example: Average, unskilled Joe has a 40% Chance to hit a nearby target with a handgun. But Tex has one-star Handgun skill; his Chance to hit a nearby target is 60%.

16. Skills also raise a character's reduced Chance for some action. A character's reduced Chance when using a skill is always 20% less than his or her standard Chance.

★ 40%   ★★ 50%   ★★★ 75%

FIGHTS AND CHASES

17. During fights and chases, use *rounds* to measure time. A round lasts about 5 seconds. (Note: Time is measured in the characters' lives, not yours. So 5 seconds is a fictional amount; it bears no relationship to the time you actually spend playing.)

18. During a round, a character can do the following: move and/or perform one action. Usually, that action is an attack or use of a skill.

Use the Movement Guide on the screen to determine how far a character can move in a round.

Example: In one round, a character could make an attack and then run about 75 feet. Or the character could move to a new location and then use a skill.

19. To see which side goes first— the PCs or NPCs—roll dice at the start of *each* round.

The Storyteller rolls one die for the NPCs or creatures involved. The players choose a delegate to roll one die for the PCs. Whichever side rolls highest gets to go first in the round. (In case of a tie, roll again.)

20. The Storyteller decides in which order the NPCs act. The players decide the same for PCs (they can roll dice to resolve disputes).

21. A character must complete everything he or she wishes to do in a round before another character acts.

Example: Rutgar cannot get up from the floor, wait until a "straggler" joins him, and then throw the smoke-bomb. He must get up and throw the bomb before the second character moves.

WOUNDS (CHARACTER INJURY)

22. Wounds result from fights and dangerous actions. The Storyteller should mark wound boxes on the character roster (located in the Prop Book) as called for by a Q-check.

HOW TO USE THE DICE

A ten-sided die produces numbers from 1-10. (Read "0" as "10".) Two ten-sided dice create numbers from 1-100; roll both dice. Use the light die for tens, and the dark die for ones.

roll = 4   roll = 4   roll = 32

Sample character roster:

☐	☐	Critical wounds
☐	☐	Heavy wounds
☐	☐	Medium Wounds
☐	☐	Light wounds
☐	☐	Scratch wounds

23. If you must mark a wound box, and that level is already filled, then mark the next higher wound box, instead.

Example: If Amy suffers two scratch wounds, a third scratch wound counts as a light wound.

24. If one critical wound box is marked, the character has a 40% Chance of *passing out* at the beginning of each round.

The Storyteller rolls the dice; if he or she rolls 40 or less, the character passes out for 1 to 100 minutes, or until another character revives him. (If you'd like, roll dice to find out how long a character is unconscious.)

25. If both critical wound boxes are marked, the character *dies.* *

The character is out of the adventure. (In some adventures, however, death is not final.)

26. * Player characters are special; they have a 40% Chance to cheat death—and be unconscious, instead.

If a PC receives 2 critical wounds, ask the player of that character to roll dice. A result of 40 or less means the PC appears dead but is merely unconscious for 1-100 minutes. The Storyteller erases one critical wound mark.

27. To heal one wound (the most severe), a character must rest for 8 consecutive hours.

To rest, the character must cease all travel or fighting for the entire 8-hour period. Afterward, the Storyteller erases the wound mark.

28. Characters suffer *catastrophic injury* from crashes, explosions, and other such "catastrophes." The Chance of receiving catastrophic injury always ranges from 100% to 200%, as specified in the adventure.

Sometimes, a character does something unwise or unexpected, resulting in a "catastophe." The Storyteller should assign a Chance between 100% and 200%.

Example: Howard sticks dynamite in the tailpipe of a car, and then waits to see what happens. Well, naturally, the car explodes. The Storyteller assigns 150% catastrophic injury. That means the explosion has a 150% Chance to hurt our poor Howard. Howard's player rolls both dice, and the Storyteller subtracts the number rolled from 150 to find the Success Margin.

29. Characters have a 40% Chance of being wounded by fire if nothing protects them from the flames. (In other words, the fire has a 40% Chance to harm the unprotected characters.)

If "successful," fire inflicts 1 medium wound per round until extinguished. It takes at least 1 round to extinguish flames on a burning character.

STORYTELLER'S TIPS

☐ *Have fun.* Relax. This *is* only a game. If you're having fun, you're not doing anything wrong, even if you forget some rules or completely botch a situation.

☐ *Ham it up.* You really are a sort of actor or actress. No, you don't need special training; just do your best to bring the characters to life. Give them accents and personalities if you can. And don't forget the PCs have five senses—not just sight. Tell them what they smell and feel. Use simple sound effects, too. A knock at the door? Wrap on the table. A howl in the night? Go ahead and howl. Your players will enjoy the story and have more fun if you help them see, hear—really sense what their characters experience. In fact, they'll start "hamming it up," too.

☐ *Improvise.* The adventure text is a foundation, not an anchor. Go ahead and make up things the NPCs say and do. For instance, during a fight, the text may describe *how* an NPC attacks PCs, but not *which* PC he attacks. You must decide who the NPC would logically attack.

☐ *Try not to restrict the players.* A PC is free to try whatever action appeals to him or her; that's part of "make believe." But while the adventures cover a character's most likely choice of action, they can't cover every contingency. So just use common sense and a bit of imagination to handle a "straying" PC's adventure. Ask yourself, "What would *probably* happen if someone did this?" Then improvise a solution that's compatible with the adventure's story line.

For example, what if one PC decides to search for a cure for his amnesia while his friends continue the main story? You might handle the main story for a while, putting the stray PC on "hold" until you think of what to do. Then you could make up a minor NPC—a psychiatrist, perhaps—who tries to cure the stray PC's amnesia. Of course, the psychiatrist fails; creating a past for the PC would be incompatible with the adventure *and* the game. After letting the stray player try this "goose chase," you should encourage him to join the others.

☐ *Don't worry too much about rules.* For the most part, the SANDMAN game is just a lively, free-form conversation, enhanced by a little "make believe" and mystery solving. It's not an "it's my turn," or "what's that rule?" kind of game. The only time you need to keep some order is during a fight or chase, when you use rounds—or when players are so animated you can't tell what anyone is saying anymore.

STARTING TO PLAY

If you're the Storyteller, separate the cards now and set them aside (in order). Then open the *Adventure Book* and follow the instructions there.

After you have finished the first adventure, read the rest of this booklet at your leisure.

AFTER THE ADVENTURE...

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

As your PCs move from one adventure to the next, they find their knowledge and powers increased:

1. Characters who survive an adventure can remember everything about it in their subsequent SANDMAN adventures. (For instance, if the same NPC appears in two or more adventures, the PCs can remember having met him before.)

2. Memory is not the only thing PCs retain after an adventure: sometimes, they may keep an item they have acquired in one adventure, and use it in the next.

3. Characters also retain skill cards throughout the SANDMAN series. Of course, a new setting may make use of an existing skill impossible—or at best, worthless. (Handgun skill, for instance, would be of no use in a world without gunpowder.)

4. After each adventure, characters have a chance to select new skills or improve existing ones. (See below.)

AWARDING AND SPENDING POINTS

At the end of each adventure, the Storyteller should award points to each player as follows:

1. One point if the player's character survived the adventure (is still living at the end).

2. Two additional points if the PC helped obtain the Poem card for that adventure.

Players must "spend" these points immediately, before the next adventure starts. Here's what they can "buy":

1. *New skills for their PCs.* Players can "buy" any skill if 1) it originates from an adventure they've already played, and 2) there's a card available.

New skills cost one point each. Players who buy new skills for their characters should receive the appropriate skill cards.

2. *An upgrade of existing skills—ones they had* before *or during the*

adventure. The standard Chance for skills is 60%—the percentage listed by a "★" on the skill card. Players can improve their characters' Chances by spending points. Two points raise a skill to "two star" level (★★). Three additional points raise a skill from level two to level three (★★★). (To show the level your character has in a skill, just circle the correct number of stars on the card—lightly with a pencil.)

CHARACTER DEATH

When a PC dies, that character is usually out of the game. The player must start "fresh" in the next adventure, with a character who has no skills or memories from other sessions. Of course, other PCs could tell the newcomer about previous adventures, and diminish some of the loss. When a character dies, his skill cards become available for purchase.

At times, the SANDMAN takes place in a setting where magic works and the impossible can happen. In such worlds, a dead character may "come back to life"; the adventure will describe this possibility.

IMPROVISING A STORY LINE

Players are never completely predictable; with a few poor decisions or strange moves, they can stray from an adventure's story line completely. That's okay—players should be free to make decisions for their characters, even if they're not the best decisions, are a little unconventional.

So what do you do when players stray? The best thing is not to break the flow of the adventure, but use common sense and a bit of imagination to gently steer them back on track.

For example, in the first adventure, the PCs are in Casablanca during World War II. What would you do if they decided to ride through the streets shooting every Nazi in sight? The adventure text makes no provision for this action, but it could happen. As the Storyteller, you don't have to

interrupt the flow of the game. Just improvise, using your own knowledge of the world, and a dose of common sense. Play along with the PCs for a while, buying time to create a solution that's compatible with the adventure. For instance...

What would happen in real life if someone began to kill victim after victim? The police would start a manhunt. To handle this in the game, you might make up a few police characters. Two outcomes would be likely: One, the PCs would escape Casablanca alive. (The adventure would end, but they could start another.) Or two, the PCs would die (this is WWII, remember). Don't be afraid to let characters arrange their own funerals, if players make unwise decisions.

Of course, you can often prevent players from straying too far by dropping a few verbal hints. You might say, "Okay. Plenty of Nazis roam the streets of Casablanca, and if you want to go Nazi-hunting you can. It will be a challenge to get them all, however. Police forces in these kinds of states are usually very efficient and equally brutal..."

CREATING YOUR OWN ADVENTURES

The INSTANT ADVENTURE game system is designed especially for use with the SANDMAN series; several elements of the rules are actually embedded in the adventures themselves. However, experienced role-players can easily adapt the basic rules for use in adventures they design themselves. And because the rules are simple, you could devise an adventure with just about any setting.

We strongly recommend, however, that characters who participate in the SANDMAN adventures *not* take part in adventures you create. This would destroy both continuity and balance in The SANDMAN adventure series.

Creating your own characters requires nothing more than imagination. As Storyteller, start with an idea of the setting you wish to use, and the

general plot of your adventure. Then, create characters and give them to your players, following the style of the SANDMAN series. Or, you could tell players a bit about the setting, and let them create characters themselves.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

An INSTANT ADVENTURE game is unlike any other role-playing game currently on the market. In fact, we at Pacesetter have debated whether this system really qualifies as a role-playing game—as the hobby defines it—or whether it's a close relative, totally new. (That's one reason we tagged it "dramatic entertainment.")

Traditional role-playing games, or RPGs, have their roots in miniatures wargames (games played with miniature figures). In wargaming, the rules attempt to create a very realistic model of battle conditions. They cover as many contingencies as possible, giving a precise, realistic structure to any possible event. Consequently, wargame rules tend to be long, complex, and very detailed.

Most role-playing games share this emphasis on detail. Like wargames, they include rules to cover "all the angles." Their rule books are 60 pages or more, filled with scores of charts and tables that help to regulate and create most every situation (e.g., does it rain today, or merely drizzle?).

Such detailed rule systems have much to their advantage. But they have obvious drawbacks as well:

1. Newcomers must spend hours (or even days) learning a new game system. Some systems are so filled with charts, tables, and numbers that people who might enjoy role-playing are often "turned off" before they begin.

2. Players must wade through rules to resolve conflicts and tricky situations. Before long, players are concentrating on the game mechanics, not on the story or the feelings of their characters.

3. Preparing to play the traditional RPG can take as much time as play-ing it does—even more. Of course, some people really enjoy detailed, regulated creation of characters and settings. But most people, if honest, would rather just play—or at least spend more time imagining, and less time looking up rules.

The INSTANT ADVENTURE system offers a different approach to role-playing, an approach that stems from years of collective hobby exerience shared by the folks here at Pacesetter. Our goals were to create a game that held true to these ideas:

1. The *adventure* is all important. Nothing should interfere with the enjoyment it brings to the players. The story, created by the scenes in the adventure and the actions the PCs take, must be "full-bodied"—filled with enough wonder, excitement, and intellectual challenge to merit the time that players invest.

2. The game mechanics—the rules, charts, tables, and so on—should never dominate or control the game. They should only further the adventure created by the players' interaction, providing a reasonable way to handle surprises and conflicts that arise. Viewed in this light, the mechanics don't have to create a detailed model of a world, like those in many traditional RPGs.

3. The game should be easy to play. The Storyteller should be able to start a game with minimal preparation, and the players should be able to start with none.

Experienced players may be shocked at the relative lack of rules in this game; we hope they will feel equally surprised and rewarded by the quality and depth of the story experience the game attempts to provide.

ABOUT THE SANDMAN SERIES

SANDMAN adventures are really a series of interconnected stories. Like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle, the adventures fit together to create a larger picture—one that answers the question, "Who are the player characters?"

This boxed set contains four adventures. The complete SANDMAN series will consist of several more boxed sets (up to six), plus one final edition. Even though the boxed sets are related, *they can be played in any order.* (In fact, you can even mix and match adventures from set to set) The final edition, however, is just that—final. You should play it only as an "end" to the entire series.

FOR INEXPERIENCED ROLE-PLAYERS

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

As children, most of us played "make believe." We played cowboys and Indians, soldiers and doctors, Tarzans and Janes—whatever we wanted to be. Together with friends, we took on the roles of these characters, creating their stories as we played. Occasionally, a disagreement broke out: you'd shoot the Bad Guy, but the Bad Guy would refuse to fall down. But aside from the occasional spat, "make believe" was a lot of fun.

Role-playing games are an adult version of "make believe." You still pretend to be someone else. But the result is more like improvisational theater or an interactive story. You start with a setting and a situation; part of the "drama" is already complete. Then you add a referee to describe the setting and guide play. Last, you use rules and dice to resolve conflicts—such as who shot whom, and how much injury was inflicted. (In a role-playing game, the Bad Guy falls when he's shot; the rules make sure of it.)

THE STORYTELLER

In a role-playing game, one player acts as a sort of leader or referee. In the SANDMAN™ game, that person is called the "Storyteller."

Unlike other players, the Storyteller doesn't take on just one character role. Instead, the Storyteller plays everyone the other players' characters meet: villains, creatures, and the entire "supporting cast."

The Storyteller also reads the "story" text to the players, describing what their characters see, hear, and sense. The story text is really only a foundation, however; it is by no means a complete script. When the players describe their characters' actions, the Storyteller may have to improvise a reaction in turn.

Lastly, the Storyteller applies the rules of the game. He or she tells players when something is impossible or doesn't fit the rules, or how it should be done. In this game, how-ever, "rules referee" is the Storyteller's least important role.

ADVENTURES

An adventure is one story in the life of the characters. It has a beginning, an end, and a cohesive story line in between.

This game has four adventures, all contained in the *Adventure Book.* Remember—the text in the book serves only as a foundation; you complete the story as you play.

It usually takes one evening to play a SANDMAN adventure.

ACTIONS AND DICE

During an adventure, characters try to perform "actions." For instance, you might decide that your character, Harry, should track a villain into the wilderness. At first, that might be easy: Harry just follows the villain's trail. (The player describes what Harry is doing.) But what if Harry comes to a ravine, and the villain has cut the rope bridge at the other end, so Harry has to jump across? Now *that's* a difficult action.

When characters attempt difficult actions, players roll dice to determine success. Let's finish the example above. Harry's player decides Harry should risk the jump. The player tries to roll 20 or less on the dice; a successful roll means Harry makes it across. The player rolls 21. Tough break. Harry now lies at the bottom of the ravine. (The game rules explain which numbers you must try to roll, and how to do so.)

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Here's what you might hear during an INSTANT ADVENTURE game. In an actual adventure, the Storyteller would be reading some things from an adventure text, and using the adventure's guidelines to improvise the rest. Furthermore, the dialogue would probably overlap at times. The players are *not* "taking turns"; they're speaking as their characters would naturally, if they were real.

It's an ink-black night, and the players' characters stand before an old, two-story frame house. No lights are on inside.

TIM: I go up to the house, and slowly creep onto the porch.

STORYTELLER: The porch is old, and its planks creak a little...(*makes creaking sound*).

TIM: Anything happen in the house?

STORYTELLER: Doesn't seem to.

SAM: I'm about ten feet behind him, in the yard.

AMY: I'm sure the guy is hiding in there. I move behind Sam, taking out my pistol—just to be ready in case the killer's inside.

SAM: Me too.

TIM: Not me. If he jumps me, I don't want him to get my gun. You two stay back and cover me; I'll take the front door. (*to Storyteller*) I'm trying to turn the doorknob now, gently and quietly.

STORYTELLER: Fine. Nothing happens. The door is locked.

TIM: Oh, great. Anyone have any ideas?

AMY: Try a window.

SAM: Yeah.

TIM: Okay, walking slowly, as quietly as possible, I'll go up to a window and peek in.

STORYTELLER: The porch creaks again, but not loudly. Just as you peek in—BAM!— a powerful arm crashes though the glass right in front of your face and... (*rolling the dice*) the fist hits you, *hard*, knocking you backward and down! Glass flies everywhere, and you hear this strange noise (*Storyteller groans weirdly, in the role of the killer in the house*).

AMY: Can I see and hear this happening?

STORYTELLER: Yes.

AMY: I'm firing my pistol right at the guy in that window!

SAM: Me too!

STORYTELLER: Okay, it's dark. You can't tell where the figure is—or even if it's really a man. You each have a 20% chance to hit the "target." Roll the dice and let's see if you succeed.

TIM: I'm staying down and hoping they're good shots....

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