

RPGaDay 2021

RPGaDay 2021 Day 1 Scenario.

A scenario is meant to be a framework for fun™. Not a fixed script but something to get things started, something to build on or throw out all together if need be. I'm currently running a new RPG called ACE!* which uses D6 pools to recapture the fun of 80s RPGs like Ghostbusters. It's multi-genre and can handle pretty much anything as long as it's fun and fast moving.

When I offered it to my players there were a number of pre-generated options for a setting:

- Space Opera-ish Star Trek spoof,
- kids with bikes setting,
- Ghostbusters spoof
- Indiana Jones, Doc Savage sort of setting.

They all voted on the space spoof as their first choice. When I had first offered to run ACE! one of the players had submitted a Dog as a character so I decided that instead of humans they were a Canine species of humanoids created by the amoral but fun loving Dr. Kristofferson who had created an entire planet of dog-like humanoids. The Federated League of Planets wasn't quite sure what to do with this planet when they found it but decided they'd provide training and a starship and give a crew of feisty canids a chance.

The crew is made up of:

- Jim, the bold border collie captain.
- Q , the beautiful first officer/scientist
- Bones, a Bluetick Coonhound doctor
- Woof, the Neapolitan Mastiff chief of security
- Gethimthere, the Irish setter engineer\$
- Heinz 61, the ensign who no one can quite remember
- Marvin (ver. 3.2B), the robotic dog pilot
- Balldo, Class 5 ship bound entertainment Hologram (in the form of a red rubber ball)

There's a few NPCs for added colour (Flipsy the toy diplomat, Scottie 1 & 2 junior engineers, and the mysterious Nabila Chowdhury the Canid Resources consultant).

So for the first scenario we followed pretty much note for note, with the addition of Dr, Kristofferson's first creation a planet full of cat humanoid who also have a star ship. Though there's has a cloaking device.

For the second scenario I introduced Chief Pierre, the Shi-poo cross who was rumoured to serve canids, if you know what I mean. So I had nothing prepared and had decided that the set scenario wasn't to my taste. So at the captain's instigation we spent the entire scenario performing a shipboard inquest into whether the cook was a cannibal or not. The highlight was the discovery that all the mass used by the transfiguration units was stored in a large trash compactor ala Star Wars in which the ensign and Woof got stuck fighting a tentacle monster (which turned out to be an endangered, so protected species in FLOP). Anyway the captain finally decided, against the crew choice that Chef Pierre was a cannibal cook and had him exiled from the ship. Scenario is always a good starting point but don't get stuck, that way does not lie fun.

*Awfully Cheerful Engine.

§ Everyone calls him Scotty anyway.

RPGaDay 2021 Day 2 Map

Map? I love maps! Recently I started using Wonderdraft and Dungeondraft, two excellent products that produce lovely maps and dungeons, towns, etc. In my BONC*game one of the scenarios was set in an allegorical land known as, well The Land.

The Land was created in ages unknown by the being known as The Creator. They calmed the waters and raised the land and made the universe as an adornment to the Land. They crossed the Land from East to West. As they passed the rocks rose beneath their feet to provide level footing. As the Creator walked along they brought forth the beasts of the field, the fish of the water, the birds of the sky, the spirits and the people. They left an Egg at the centre of the Land. Having traveled across the Land and having shaped it to their liking the Creator passed from the Land and was seen no more. The Egg at the centre hatched and brought forth the first Empress of the Universe. She ruled until she ruled no more and was succeeded by one of Her Daughters.

Each Empress lives until life holds no charms for them. They then lay or create from three to seven eggs. These eggs are sent throughout the Land to be raised to young adulthood. It is never known exactly how many eggs are distributed. While most are raised by rulers a few end up in the hands of the unknown. These are just as likely to become Empress as those raised by the famous. When the old Empress passes from the Land the guardians of the heirs bring their charges to the Heart of the World where a designated group waits to determine which one is the proper heir. This process known as The Choosing takes some time and while the people wait a Great Tourney is held. This Tourney helps determine the selection process as the heir's guardians vie for victory.

RPGaDay 2021 Day 3 Image

A good image is worth a thousand words or so they say. Here is an actual cover image from an industry magazine called Pet Food Age (I think). I had come across it while working in a business library a few years back and thought it was the creepiest thing I'd seen in a while. Recently it popped up on my Facebook feed as a memory so of course I had to add Chef Pierre as an NPC to my ACE! campaign where everyone was playing bipedal dog characters known as canids in a Star Trek spoof.

He was rumored to be serving canids if you know what I mean. One of the characters is playing a totally forgettable ensign named Heinz. He started as Heinz 57 and is now up to Heinz 61. Chef Pierre specialties were all named things like Heinz Tartare, or Saddle of Heinz, or the crew favourite Heinz Goulash. Well what did the captain do at the beginning of the session? He ordered a board of enquiry into these allegations and we spent an entire, enjoyable session dealing with the enquiry. Great fun. Eventually much against the wishes of the crew Chef Pierre was found guilty and he was dropped off at Sandals Penal Planet. Of course he's now been replaced with Chef Pietro who claims it's just an unfortunate resemblance.



RPGaDay 2021 Day 4 Figure

For a good long time we played with figures. I had a bunch of poorly painted lead figures we used for old RQ, a friend had a huge collection of cardboard heroes from Steve Jackson Games that we happily used for a long time. I've got vinyl hex maps, still marked with lines from non-eraseable markers used in error, that we used to move the figures around. When I started playing again with friends in Japan and Singapore we moved to Roll20 and started using tokens and maps. But now I've gotten lazy and I've reverted to what a friend of mine recently referred

to as The Theatre of the Mind and all that I've been using for ACE! is the following deck plan so I can keep track of where players are. Included are pictures of two of the crew.

Going to leave the figures for Warhammer where they belong IMLO*.

Deck	Includes	
1	Bridge, captain's ready room, officer's quarters, and two small labs.	
2	Captain's Quarters, VIP Quarters, officer's quarters, Crew Mess and galley, and the Rec Room and translocator (12 persons on two pads).	
3	Two sickbay complexes, the security complex, the main cargo hold, and various science labs.	
4	More crew quarters, boson torpedo tube launchers, two <u>holo</u> suites 1 and 2, the large specialized <u>Goodboy</u> Shuttle, and the Main <u>Shuttlebay</u> . Emergency send only translocators (18 persons).	
5	Hanger Deck/Shuttlecraft Parking Bay, Cargo Bays 2 & 3, and various engineering systems.	
6	Chief Engineer's Cabin, a few crew quarters, upper Main Engineering, and various engineering systems.	
7	Main Engineering (main level), Primary <u>Astrometrics</u> Lab, the Visiting Scientist Lounge, Canid Resources, and various engineering subsystems.	
8	Antimatter Pods, the Warp Core emergency ejection systems, landing pads, the ship's main landing ramp, and matter storage unit	



*In My Lazy Opinion

RPGaDay2021 Day 5 Gamble

Had the best gambling experience in my RuneQuest Glorantha campaign. The party was trying to get Grandfather Sturgeon's help in locating a lost relic. One of the characters is an assistant shaman who is an identical twin (his brother is also an assistant shaman). Grandfather Sturgeon wouldn't help them unless they gambled with him. He wasn't interested in magic points or treasure, no he wanted fingers and toes. The character might have a bit of a gambling problem and ended up getting the knowledge they were looking for but not before losing all his toes. He was game to keep going with his fingers but the party managed to haul him away!

RPGaDay2021 Day 6 Flavor

Flavor huh, I guess my favourite flavor has always been fantasy. I still think Call of Cthulhu is just about the best RPG out there but I'm not a huge horror fan. Actually the flavor I like best is throwing the players into unexpected situations. Two of my favorites recently were a DragonQuest campaign where they started in Hell as lost souls and worked their way up to human bodies. The other one was what was supposed to be a standard Call of Cthulhu campaign but they started off on a train bound for Hell (hmm, sensing a theme here). Right now we taking a break from RuneQuest and playing ACE! It's been fun so far. Nice to not have to prepare anything and make it all up as we go along. Refreshing!

RPGaDay2021 Day 7 Engage

I feel that a lot of my role-playing campaigns have been railroad experiences for the players. Things happen and they go along with the story. I'm trying to get better at riffing off of the players ideas and letting things develop. It's not something I've always been good at so I'm trying to be better at it. When it works it's lots of fun.

RPGaDay2021 Day 8 Stream

Stream? Well my RuneQuest campaign is set in a place called Knucklesdeep which is at the junction of the Nymie and The Stream in Sartar. All the players, except one who joined later grew up in Knucklesdeep which is more water focused than the usual campaign. I've introduced a water based culture which uses wooden long boats and birch bark canoes to trade along the waterways in Sartar roughly based on the Indigenous lifestyle and fur trade of North America. So far the players have:

- Saved Apple Lane (again).
- Participated in the sack of a Lunar manor.
- Fixed the water shortage in Clearwine.
- Rescued someone from being turned into sturgeon food (the new character).

- Solved the mystery of the murdered canoe.
- Saved Knucklesdeep by fixing its wyter.



RPGaDay2021 Day 9 Emotion

I rolled randomly for this one because I was at a loss regarding all four topics. Nothing really sat up and saluted when I read the four options for today: Medium, Role, Emotion or Percentage. I could have done Percentage since most of the games I've run and/or played in have been percentage based systems, (mostly Call of Cthulhu and RuneQuest). Or it could have been Role since, it's in the name right? But that's boring. Or Medium? (Small medium at large anyone?) Well the Medium is all virtual table top in the form of Roll20 these days instead of the combined online and virtual of just a few years ago or the strictly face-to-face gaming my friends and I have spent decades doing. It'll be four decades come September. But I used the old Wizards of the Coast Dungeons & Dragons Dice Roller <https://www.wizards.com/dnd/dice/dice.htm> despite my stated aversion to electronic dice rolling and rolled a 3 so here we are, Emotion.

Emotion, emotion. I've decided that I prefer running to playing games though the recent move of an old friend back to Winnipeg has provided me with a truly enjoyable game master. I still prefer the fun of making shit up rather than role-playing maybe because I'm a bit of an attention hog and that way I'm at the centre. I've been enjoying running the Awfully Cheerful Engine! which is a barebones RPG where the extent of my prep work is thinking about the campaign between sessions and then making stuff up on the fly. It's been working pretty well and I think the players are enjoying themselves. Anyways it's making me happy and them happy (I think) and that's an emotion.

RPGaDay2021 Day 10 Light

Been keeping it light for the summer at least as far as the roleplaying goes. Don't have the energy or time to prepare anything substantial or deeply meaningful. So dogs in what amounts to Star Fleet with a good dose of bizarro bureaucracy to make things even more interesting and the odd grittier Star Wars like reference to spice things up. In last Saturday's episode they re-encountered their arch-nemeses the Felines, who had been created by the same mad scientist who created them. They'd gotten off to a rough start when the Felines in their space ship Scamper (originally the Pampered Puss) dropped their cloak and fired upon the canid's ship the FSS Brazen (originally named the Brazen Bitch) killing a sizable component of the crew.

Most of the biological crew members had gone down to the surface of Sandals Penal Planet to enjoy the amenities (mostly recreations of famous historical prison set-ups). While the captain was planet side trying to herd convicts wearing sheep costumes the felines showed up and launched a slow shuttle craft at them. The ever so expendable Ensign Heinz was beamed aboard and found the shuttle to contain a large wooden crate and a crowbar.

Managing to point his quadcorder at himself he was horrified to find the box was full of canid! Deciding to err of the side of caution acting captain Marvin blew the shuttle craft up (after retrieving Heinz). Somehow the McGuffin, err crate survived and Heinz did an EV maneuver in the ship's Waldo suit* . The wooden crate was filled with valuable treasures (a Scooby doo lunchbox with the original thermos inside, a match box with actual matches, a novelty pen and a lot of excelsior and all the cat fur and dander anyone could ever want). Inside the thermos was a memory device which explained the feline's story and explained that they and the canids had been created without the ability to reproduce. Now the cats want to ally with them so they can both track down Dr. Kristofferson their joint creator and force him to give them working reproductive parts.

Agreeing to this alliance the ship went to the coordinates the cats had provided. The coordinates led them to the library planet Archivia bibliotheca where only two of the crew

managed to apply for library cards (granted with an angelic chorus and flourish of trumpets) so they can search the records for clues regarding the bad doctor's whereabouts.

Okay so it's light-ish.

*Striped red and white for some reason.

RPGaDay2021 Days 11-21

(More catching up as life and the call of the couch intrudes). Here are some quick snappers:

Day 11 Wilderness – that's the bits in between the places scenarios happen. Travel through usually abstracted to get to the good stuff but occasionally enjoyed as part of the meat.

Day 12 Think – Why?

Day 13 Improvise – doing a lot of improvisation with my new campaign using ACE! It seems to be going surprisingly well all things considered.

Day 14 Fun – I'm all for it.

Day 15 Supplement – I take B12 every day. Oh not that kind of supplement. Err, I got nothing.

Day 16 Move – Again, lots of abstraction of this sort of thing these days.

Day 17 Trap – My favourite trap is still the shotgun trap in Call of Cthulhu that killed one of the players. Another player was rather quick to loot the body. I took a second look at the map and realized I'd gotten the location of the two players reversed so it was the would be looter who had actually triggered the trap. Karma, baby.

Day 18 Write – I like writing but often find it very hard to do. So, so many distractions. I've started many creations and finished so few of them. Oh well maybe one of these days.

Day 19 Theme – I guess the themes I like the most are fantasy and dropping characters into odd situations.

Day 20 Foundation – A solid, well laid foundation is key to... Nope, I got nothing.

Day 21 Simplicity – Yes please and thank you. Despite my former fondness for simulationist games like RuneQuest I'm enjoying the simplicity of ACE! with its 30 page rulebook. (Though now that I think about it there are a few tweaks I could make....No!!!!)

RPGaDay2021 Day 22 Substitute

Let's try and make this one meatier than the previous 11 day's worth of posts. Substitute? Hmm. Well I had started with the intentions of running one of four existing ACE! campaigns, the one set up as a Star Trek spoof (though I'm positive that the animated series Star Trek: Lower Decks has the market cornered on that).

Well that lasted for part of the first session. Well actually I'd already substituted intelligent dogs for human based on one of the players submitting a dog as their character. Throw in a mad scientist to create the dogs and a ship full of cat people, also created by the same mad scientist and pretty much the entire scenario as presented has been substituted, with honestly something more fun.

Last night's session included:

- The captain and science officer Q experiencing the life of Dr. Kristofferson at Archivia Bilioteka through the medium of some helmets like old beauty salon hair dryers and the assistance of an AI that resembled Microsoft's Clippy. They learnt that Dr. K. had gotten 17 doctorates by age 17 created his first artificial species (a Furby like creature) and an army of illegal super soldiers for the Federated League of Planets (FLOP) and had been sentenced to life imprisonment. He had escaped imprisonment with the aid of his second artificial species, a parrot/octopus/gorilla hybrid. In the last 20 years he had created a mouse people, a canary people, a cat people and the dog people. They also learned that both the mouse and canary people had been recently destroyed by a FLOP ship.
- Meanwhile the rest of the crew were hailed by the cat people who offered to help them sneak into the library. They refused and the cat people did so themselves. The captain and Q returned to the ship just as the cat people disappeared under their cloaking device.
- Plotting a confusing course the Brazen headed back to their planet hoping to save it from the genocidal cat people. They managed to damage the cloaked cat ship tracking them with the assist of an Immelmann turn.
- Trying to contact FLOP for an assist to thwart the cats they discovered their antenna was damaged and the engineer and Ensign Heinz did some risky extravehicular maneuvering to adjust the rabbit ear antenna.

Just substitute silly for sense and fun is had by all!

RPGaDay2021 Day 23 Memory

Let's take the old memory out for a test drive shall we? It's been almost 40 years of roleplaying, sometime in September or October I guess. Let's see if I can remember campaigns I've played in, campaigns I've run and perhaps a potpourri of games I've played and run. I will attempt to list them in chronological order but the accuracy will be questionable.

Campaigns I've played in

- Universe
- DragonQuest
- AD&D
- Champions
- Rolemaster
- Ringworld
- Call of Cthulhu
- RuneQuest
- Castles and Crusades
- GURPS
- Campaigns I've run
- Call of Cthulhu (pretty much every edition except the one with the hit locations (shudder))
- Runequest (2nd edition, 3rd edition, Mongoose 1, RQG)
- Stormbringer/Elric
- ElfQuest
- Powers and Perils
- Lords of Creation
- TORG
- The Laundry (Call of Cthulhu variant)
- DragonQuest
- BONC (Bureau of Necessary Corrections) – using 7th edition Call of Cthulhu, thinking of converting it to ACE!
- ACE! (Awfully Cheerful Engine!)

Games I've played one offs in or really short campaigns

- Tunnels and Trolls
- Chivalry & Sorcery
- Cabinet (variety of homebrew games)

- Warhammer 40K
- AD&D

Games I've run one offs or short campaigns

- Toon
- Twilight 2000
- AD&D
- Drelbs (mix of everything from stripped down Call of Cthulhu, some basic homebrew to Fate-like)
- D&D 3.5E
- D6 Space

That's a lot of RPGing both behind the screen and out front. I'm sure I've forgotten games. During my intensive gaming days at university it was three different games a weekend for a few years anyway. It's a wonder that I ever got any school work done! The games I've run the most is almost certainly Runequest with Call of Cthulhu being a close second. I've run games more than I've played them. One of my favorite GMs has moved back to Winnipeg so I get to play in games he's running again.

RPGaDay2021 Day 24 Share

Sharing. This is something I'm trying to work on. I have the tendency to try and run things my way and sometimes this results in player's efforts to introduce stuff being rebuffed. Not a great quality in a GM, very old school. I'm trying to open up and embrace other people's input. Much easier to do in simple fun systems like ACE! But a worthy ambition in all my campaigns.

RPGaDay2021 Days 25-27 ???

RPGaDay2021 Day 28 Open

To keep up my theme from my last post (yes I missed days 25-27. I was busy or something. Definitely something I think). I am endeavouring to be more open in my GMing style. I want my players to feel that they can initiate and suggest aspects of the worlds their characters are in. I said trying because I find this hard. I'm very old school as a GM goes in my regular campaigns. My ideas or my interpretation of something and you're more than welcome to come along for the ride.

A week Saturday we're going to try something totally different and completely open as our next gaming session. I've asked all the players to create a character using the ACE! rules. The interesting aspect is that they're not supposed to discuss their characters with each other or

even show them to me before the session. I've told them any sort of character from any sort of genre is ok. Go nuts I said. Here's a list of options I came up with as suggestions:

- A single celled organism.
- A flying monkey.
- A sentient toaster.
- Prime Minister of Canada.
- A non-binary brick.
- A dragon.
- School janitor.
- Etc.

(So much "borrowing" from existing ideas!)

There really aren't any restrictions. All I'm asking is that they know the answers to the following questions:

- Who are you? A simple backstory.

- What are you? Your stats and what species you are.
- When do you live?
- Where are you from?
- Why are you doing what you're doing?

I'm going to get them to roll randomly for order they're introduced and then we're gonna wing the whole damn thing. I call it ACE! Improv. Can't get much more open than that.

RPGaDay2021 Day 29 ???

RPGaDay2021 Day 30 Mention

I'm going to take this opportunity to mention the past, present and future people I have gamed/am gaming with over the years. (Just first names and last initials to protect the innocent!). Many of these people I've known for 40 years.

In the order that I think of them.

The Past

- Doug St.
- The late Doug Sh.
- The late Ron G.
- Mark M.
- Tim L.

- Jackie St.
- Martin C.
- Neil C.
- Ian E.
- Henry S.
- Gord F.
- Laurence G.

The Present

- Jeff N.
- Darryl A.
- Craig R.
- Owen B.
- Bill C.
- Gary H.
- Grant M.
- Mike H.

Thanks to all of you for the laughs and the games.

RPGaDay2021 Day 31 ???

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