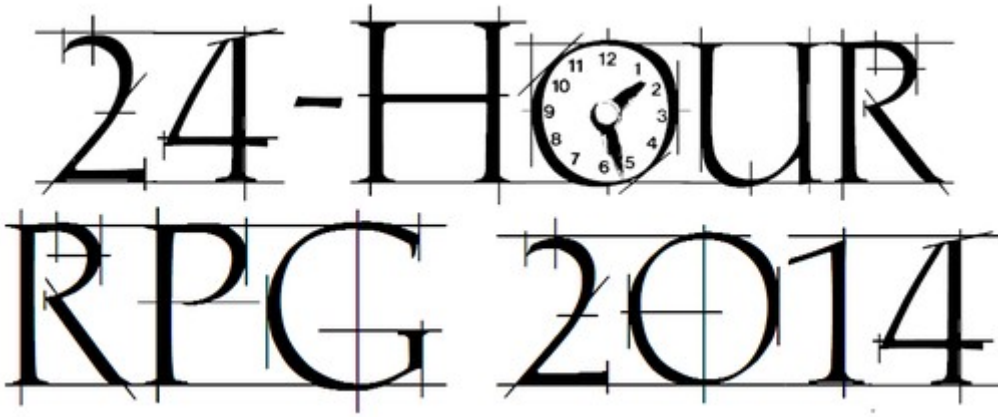
Mixula



The Traveller

The Traveller

A Storytelling Game about a Mysterious Traveller

The King looked out of the window. It was high summer, and the fields expanded as far as the eye could see. The Owl Mountains loomed in the horizon. Some vultures could be seen circling in the sky.

"The bandits took my girl", the King uttered to the people in his throne room. The master of the guards averted his gaze. King's eyes were black and hard, yet full of sorrow.

"Who will save my little princess?" the King shouted to nobody in particular. At the same time a door was pushed open. In came a man, black of skin and in his thirties. He had a long, blue cloak and a matching, wide-brimmed hat. He strode in with a confidence. Everybody fell silent.

"I have come to save the princess", the stranger said, smiling.

The Traveller is a storytelling game of travelling and mystery. The inspiration comes from various sources, most important ones being *Sapphire and Steel*, various westerns and *Adventures of Tintin.*

The Traveller in short

A mysterious figure, the Traveller, appears in places of conflict and trouble. He solves a mystery or clears trouble, then disappears again. Nobody knows where he comes from or where he is going to. Sometimes he appears as a woman, sometimes as a man. He may or may not have psychic powers. There are speculations about his origin, but so far his allegiance remains a mystery. There seems to be no bigger agenda behind his actions. He helps both those considered good and those considered bad.

The Traveller is a storytelling games in which no dice or a game master is needed during the play. In the setup phase a single 1d10 is used if desired. Every players needs 3-10 tokens depending on a desired length of the game.

The Game System

The Traveller is a storytelling game in which each player weaves a common story of The Traveller. The story is advanced in turns using tokens. When the last token is used, the game ends. The actual number of tokens depend on the number of players and desired length of game, but a recommended amount is five.

The Setup

First, every player takes a same amount of tokens from a common pool. The tokens can be anything: dice, glass beads, candy, stones – anything at hand. The more tokens, the longer the game. Any leftover tokens are removed from the game.

Next the Traveller himself is determined. Players may either roll him from the tables provided in the tables section, or decide the matter without consulting random elements. Following things must be decided before the game starts:

1. The era
2. The setting
3. The appearance and sex of the Traveller
4. The reason (the mystery) of the Traveller's visit
5. Possible psychic powers of the Traveller

If the details are determined by random elements, any inappropriate roll may be rerolled (such as being in a Flying Vehicle at Stone Age). This is not required, though, as long as the result can be described plausibly (such as a Flying Saucer at Stone Age).

First the players decide who starts the creation process. He or she then either picks up an option or rolls dice. After determining the option, it must be elaborated. The chooser gives a detail. Maybe the trenches are on the German side in the Verdun region. Maybe the Traveller has a blue cloak with lots of pockets.

The option picked doesn't have to be from the tables. A football field, 1920s, and observation are all viable options.

Then the creation process continues clockwise around the playing area. The next player once again either chooses or rolls an option and elaborates on it. This continues until all the options have been determined. If someone or someones have had less chance in laying out the scenario, they have an extra round in which they can elaborate on any detail.

The Era

Below are some details of each era. They represent a hugely simplified picture of times. The list of civilizations is by no means exclusive.

1. Stone Age (3.4 million years BC – 3300 BC). The beginning of human civilisation. Stone tools, no wheel. No written language. Several species of *Homo* genus. People are hunter-gatherers.
2. Bronze Age (3300-1200 BC). Cities exist. Bronze (an alloy of tin and copper) tools available. Agriculture. Civilisations: Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Egypt. In Sub-Saharan Africa bronze age never existed.
3. Iron Age (1200-1 BC). Iron used in tools. Large-scale commerce. Civilisations: Greek City-states, the Mahajanapadas (India), Ch'in Dynasty (China)
4. Medieval Times (400-1400). Fall of the Roman Empire, spread of religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam). The Black Death. Civilisations: Imperial China, The Mongol Empire, The Indian civilisations (Maya, Aztec, Inca) in South America, Byzantium. Several European kingdoms.

5. Renaissance. (1300-1600). Great advances in politics, science and arts. Humanism. “Renaissance Man”, a highly educated and skilful person was an aspiration. Leonardo da Vinci and Galileo Galilei. Civilisations: Renaissance Italy, Ottoman Empire.
6. Victorian Era (1837-1901). Great strides in technology, relatively peaceful time. Gas and oil. Civilisations: The British Empire, USA, Russian Empire.
7. World War I (1914-1918). European men die in masses in trenches. Aeroplanes introduced in warfare, along with tanks.
8. World War II (1938-1945). Even bloodier war is fought all around the globe. Actual use of the atomic bomb. Beginning of the cold war.
9. Present Day (1945-). Controversy over climate change. Islamic extremist movements threaten peace all over the World.
10. The Future (?). Anything goes!

The Setting

1. Ruins or trenches. A former habitat or wartime trenches. Dangerous to move in, must be handled carefully. In ruins, crumbling structures and dangerous cave-ins are normal. In trenches, water and dirtiness prevail.
2. A village. A small community of few hundreds or few thousands. No industry or a single industry. Agriculture. Can also be The Village from *The Prisoner.*
3. A City. A habitat of hundreds of thousands or even millions. Lots of industry and commerce.
4. A Castle or a Palace. The home of the ruling family. Court intrigue. May be besieged.
5. A church or a temple. Religious building. May be a place for priests or a lone altar to pray at.
6. A ship. A seagoing vessel. May range from a rowboat to Titanic. Can also be a military vessel.
7. Sewers or Catacombs. Underground man made structures. May contain bodies or at least skeletons.
8. A Flying Vehicle. Anything that can fly: A dragon, World War I triplane, a flying saucer.
9. A Forest. A place of trees. Maybe a small English grove, maybe the Amazonian rainforest.
10. A Desert. A cold desert like Antarctica or a hot desert like Sahara. May be radioactive or made of salt.

The Traveller

This determines the Traveller's apparent ethnic appearance and sex. Can be something more outrageous. Perhaps the Traveller has scales or blue skin? Perhaps he grows tusks or three feet?

The Reason

1. Find something / someone. The Traveller is searching for something. He may have a good idea where it is, or have no clue.
2. Hide something / someone. The Traveller needs to hide something from some authority.
3. Destroy something / kill someone. The Traveller is here to eliminate something for some reason.
4. Create something. The Traveller is devising machinery to do something.
5. Fix something / heal someone. The Traveller is here to fix things.
6. Escort someone. The Traveller's job is to ensure someone gets to where he is going to.
7. Talk to someone. Someone isn't listening, and the Traveller is here to assure him of things.
8. Rescue someone. Someone is in trouble and needs the knight in shining armour.
9. Test something. Something needs to be testing – perhaps a nuclear devise?
10. Combine something / someones. Two or more things need to be in a same place at a same time.

Psychic Powers

1. Telepathic. The Traveller can read and implant thoughts in someone else's mind. The range and the maximum number of simultaneous connections must be decided upon.
2. Telekinetic. The Traveller can move things by his mind alone. The range and the maximum weight and number of things has to be decided.
3. Telempathic. The Traveller can transplant emotions in human mind. Once again, the range and maximum strength of emotion, and the maximum number of targets must be determined in advance.

Starting the game

Now a time, place, appearance, and reason should be established. The person who started the setup process starts the game. He puts one of his tokens in the middle. It is time for the Traveller to appear.

The player starts with: *"It is..."* followed by time of day and the place in which everything starts. It doesn't have to be the place determined earlier as long as the Traveller has an easy access to it. For example, the game could feature desert as a location, and the game might start on board of a ship headed towards Antarctica. The player then tells how the Traveller enters the scenario.

Continuing the game

At any time the next storyteller (going clockwise) can put a token in the middle of the playing area and continue story from that situation. He can also pass, in which case he gets one token from the centre. If there are no tokens in the middle, he gets no token. If everybody passes, the game is over and lost.

At any time any player can introduce a new character or place to the game by expending a token. In that case he continues the story with the player whose turn it is as a dialogue. Another player can create yet another character and enter the dialogue, and so on.

Ending the game

When nobody has any more tokens, it is time to wrap up the story. Each player has one turn. It can not be skipped. If the tale isn't satisfactorily ended after the last player has spoken, the players lose the game. If, however, the end is to everyone's tastes, the game is won.

The Traveller

The Traveller may get powers during the game. He might be bullet proof, be able to fly, or perhaps he is just an empty space inside of a cloak. This is perfectly ok, for the Traveller is a mystery. The only things sure are the fact that he always appears in a moment of need, and does whatever he has come to do very effectively, and then disappears. He may cloth himself as the locals do, or dress anachronistically.

Conflicts Within the Story

There is bound to be conflicts during the telling of the story. They may be of physical or psychical in nature, it doesn't matter. Usually the Traveller gets into trouble. Each player, without looking at other player's tokens, chooses none, some or all of his tokens. Everybody reveals their tokens simultaneously. If the amount of tokens is odd, the conflict is won. If it is even (or zero), the conflict is lost.

The players get their revealed tokens back. If there is no conflict within three narrators, the game is lost. A lost conflict doesn't necessarily mean a lost game. The loss must be put into the narrative, that's all. However, if there are three losses in a row, the game is lost. There is only so much even the Traveller can take.

The Tables

The Era

1d10	The Era
1	Stone Age
2	Bronze Age
3	Iron Age
4	Medieval Times
5	Renaissance
6	Victorian Era
7	World War I
8	World War II
9	Present Day
10	The Future

The Setting

1d10	The Setting
1	Ruins or Trenches
2	A Village
3	A City
4	A Castle or a Palace
5	A Church or a Temple
6	A Ship
7	Sewers or Catacombs
8	A Flying Vehicle
9	A Forest
10	A Desert

The Traveller

1d10	The Traveller
1	Caucasian Male
2	African Male
3	Asian Male
4	Arab/Jewish Male
5	Indeterminate Male
6	Caucasian Female
7	African Female
8	Asian Female
9	Arab/Jewish Female
10	Indeterminate Female

The Reason

1d10	The Traveller Wants To:
1	Find something / someone
2	Hide something / someone
3	Destroy something / kill someone
4	Create something
5	Fix something / heal someone
6	Escort someone
7	Talk to someone
8	Rescue someone
9	Test something
10	Combine something / someones

The Psychic powers

1d10	Psychic power	1d10	Psychic power
1	None	6	Telekinetic
2	None	7	Telekinetic
3	None	8	Telempathic
4	Telepathic	9	Telempathic
5	Telepathic	10	Roll twice, ignore 10