24-Hour RPG 2014

What happens when Fantasy RPGs meet the road trip game I Spy:

A Fantasy Trip

An unique RPG created in less than 24 hours by Maurice "Moe" Tousignant © 2014

Credits

A Fantasy Trip was initially designed, written, and edited (badly) by Maurice (Moe) Tousignant in under 24 hours over September 25th and 26th 2014.

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About A Fantasy Trip

A Fantasy Trip was created as part of the 2014 24 Hour RPG contest at www.rpggeek.com. It is my third entry into the contest. My first entry was The Diminutive RPG, a game about playing little people dealing with big problems. I was my first RPG ever written and placed really well for what it was. Last year my entry was Mob Rules, which people seemed to really dig. It was a game about playing a mob of characters as opposed to a single character. This entry was cool (or lucky) enough to place first.

I wasn't going to enter this year's contest. I've been swamped with reality and other gaming obligations (Extra Life is coming up quick!) and didn't think I could find the time to enter. Added to all of that that, they changed the rules a bit. They added a theme: Travelling. This felt constraining. I had a great idea for an RPG but it didn't fit the theme at all, I wasn't going to bother. Then I had a couple people contact me directly and ask if I was defending my title. I wasn't really considering the fact that I won last year. I also wasn't expecting to have these people asking for a new game from me. I was flattered and felt obligated to try.

So here is this year's attempt. It took me way longer than usual to come up with a concept. The theme this year: Travelling, just wasn't singing to me at first. As usual though, eventually inspiration struck. Maybe it was because my wife left with the kids yesterday on a camping trip. A trip that would involve a few hours of road travel. Maybe it was something else. Whatever it was, the concept of an RPG that you could play in the car while travelling hit me. At pretty much the same time the idea of using 'I spy' as a game mechanic was born. From there I had the idea of the racial wild card and the rest of this game spread out from there. A Fantasy Trip is now the longest RPG I'

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1. INTRODUCTION

What is A Fantasy Trip

A Fantasy Trip is a Role Playing Game (RPG) that takes the tropes of traditional sword and sorcery fantasy RPGs, games like Pathfinder, D&D and Lord of the Rings and applies them to the kinds of games people have been playing for years on long car trips. Like traditional fantasy RPGs, one of the passengers will take on the role of the story teller or Game Master. We call that player the Navigator. The rest of the passengers will be the players. As the Navigators role is more involved than the other roles and may require some record keeping and notes, this person should NOT be the driver. This leads us to an important note:

Rule 0

Many RPGs have a Rule 0. This is usually something like “The GM is always right” or “The first rule is that the rules don’t matter” In A Fantasy Trip, Rule 0 is this:

Safety First!

Remember that the most important part of any trip is arriving at your destination in one piece. A Fantasy Trip is just a game and probably the least important thing you will be doing on your trip. While it can be fun, make sure the focus stays on driving safely and arriving to your destination. You don’t want your fantasy adventure to turn into a real life one

What you need to play

Your imagination. No really, to play the basic game all you need is your imagination. When played this way the game is more of an improvisation exercise than a game and it can be a lot of fun. There are some advanced rules included that shifts the game into more of a traditional RPG. With character sheets, hit points and all that fun stuff. When using these rules players will need something to write on and something to write with. Clip boards or something solid to write on is also suggested. If you are playing with any pen and paper rules remember Rule 0: Safety First. The driver must never be required to keep any notes. The Navigator will take over for the driver and track any paperwork for them.

The play slider

There are a many different ways to play A Fantasy Trip. It can be played like a traditional car game with the Navigator and the players just talking and having a conversation and telling a group story. It can also be played like a traditional pen and paper RPG with each player having a character sheet and the Navigator with a map and prepared adventure.

Play style in A Fantasy Trip is really a slider as opposed to a static choice. Some groups may want to play with a bit of both. One group may stick to a narrative game but like the idea of tracking strikes (A Fantasy Trip version of Hit Points) on paper. Another group may want the full RPG experience but the Navigator didn't have time to prepare an adventure, so she's using the road to make her quest.

Throughout this rulebook you will find many Optional Rules presented, it's up to you and your group which you want to use and which you want to ignore. The choice of options determines where you are along the play slider. Using all of the optional rules moves the game towards the traditional RPG end. Using none of the optional rules keeps the game very narrative based and more like an improve exercise. No combination of optional rules is better than any other. Every group is going to find their own sweet spot.

Whatever rules you decide to use, that decision should be made before you start play and all of the players (including the Navigator) are on the same page as to what is being used and what isn't. You may even want to make a list of what rules you are using and keep it as a handy reminder.

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2. MECHANICS

I spy with my little eye a kobold that is red!

One of the things that make roleplaying games different from just acting or improvisational theater is the mechanics. This is usually random element that determines the eventual outcome of an action. In most RPGs this random element is represented by dice and the mechanics usually involve rolling some dice and comparing it to either more dice or a target number. In A Fantasy Trip we eliminate the dice and replace them with the traditional road trip game "I Spy"

Player centric

A Fantasy Trip is player centric. This means that the Navigator presents the players with situations and they react. It's the players who are the ones who determine if they hit a bad guy, or jump that chasm or dodge an incoming fireball. If this were a more traditional RPG you could say the GM never rolls. In this case the Navigator never guesses. They are the ones presenting the situation and picking items for the players to spy with their little eyes.

Calling for A Spy

When players respond to a situation and the outcome is not predetermined and the potential effect of the action could go multiple interesting ways, the Navigator calls for 'A Spy'

A Spy is a quick game of I Spy.

The navigator picks something they can see out of the vehicle and says "I spy with my little eye something that is ADJECTIVE." Traditionally this adjective is a colour but there's no reason it can't be something else. It could be words like "huge", "slanted", or "shiny". Using more than just colours for your adjectives really opens up the possibilities and makes things more interesting. We call the item that the Navigator picked The Target.

The player who is trying to accomplish the action with the non-predetermined outcome then has three guesses to guess what the Navigator has picked as the target. It's also possible that all players could be involved in a game at once in which case the group as a whole gets three guess. Note: three guesses is the standard this can be modified by some of the optional rules.

The outcome of A Spy

WThe outcome of the action is determined by how many guesses it takes the player or players to guess the Navigator's target. The standard is to allow a player three guesses. If the player guesses correctly within the first three guesses then the outcome is positive for the character. If they fail to guess within three guesses then the outcome is negative for the character.

Basic Outcomes:

Guess correctly in three guesses: Good/Pass

Fail to guess correctly in three guesses: Bad/Fail

Variable Outcome Levels (Optional)

WTo make things much more interesting, instead of a static black and white pass/fail system you can use the variable outcome system. This ads more detail and story direction to the outcome system. The variable outcome system also rewards players for guessing the target on the first try. This systems is also required for some of the additional optional rules like those for Weapons and Monsters.

If the player guesses correctly in One Guess they get a "Yes, and…" result. Not only did the character accomplish what they were trying to do but they get an added benefit. They accomplished what they were trying with style, or in the best way possible, or with a critical result.

If the player guesses correctly in Two Guesses they get a standard "Yes" result. The character succeeded at what they were trying to do. This is the same as the basic outcome.

If the player guesses correctly in Three Guesses they get a "Yes, but…" result. The character succeeded but at a cost. They accomplish what they wanted to but something went wrong, or some new situation has come up as an unexpected negative result.

If the player fails to guess correctly they fail and get a “No, and…” result. The character fails and something happens because of it. Note that: something happens. A fail should never ever be a dead end.

Variable Outcome Levels – the Close Call (Optional)

The close call is an optional rule to the optional rule of Variable Outcome Levels. It’s there to adds a “No, but…” outcome to the mix. This is used when a player has a valid guess but it’s not quite what the Navigator is thinking.

For example: The Navigator says “Eye spy something with my little eye that is Gigantic” and they have chosen the massive factory on their left side as the target. The player goes through their three guesses and never guesses the factory, but they did guess the huge river spanning bridge out the right window. It wasn’t something that the Navigator thought of but they think it fits Gigantic rather well.

In this case the Navigator can declare a “Close Call” and narrate a “No, but..” outcome. A “No, but…” outcome is still a failure, the character still doesn’t accomplish what they were trying to do but something goes there way. They gain some benefit even if they do not get exactly what they wanted.

Optional Variable Outcomes

Guess in one: “Yes, and...”

Guess in two: “Yes”

Guess in Three: “Yes, but...”

Fail to guess in three: “No, and...

Optional: get a close call: “No, but...”

Navigator guidance

THe entire outcome process is an art and not a science. It takes some practice to get used to and there are no hard and fast rules to follow. Not only can trying to pick what to 'Spy' be difficult so can determining appropriate outcomes. This section includes some suggestions, mainly for the Navigator but also for the other players.

If the task the player is trying seems routine or the potential outcomes aren't really interesting, the narrator shouldn't even call for a Spy. They should just let the player get what they want. I'm going to note this again: the Navigator should only call for a spy if all of the potential outcomes are interesting. If there's no cool "No, and…" answers to the situation the Navigator shouldn't call for a Spy.

The Navigator should base their target on how difficult they think the action the player is trying to take would be to do. They should take into account the current game narrative and the fact that it's a fantasy game and not a simulation. If what the player is trying is routine you shouldn't be calling for a spy in the first place, just let the player get what they want. If what they want is easy, go for an easy target. Something that's right in front of everyone, something that is very hard to miss. The truck you are about to pass or a flashing construction sign up ahead make good easy targets. If what the player is trying to accomplish is very difficult you should choose a target that's difficult to guess. This can be something small like a mile marker, an animal in the nearby woods or the bike that just crossed over the overpass ahead.

In all cases the Navigator should pick a target that will be in view long enough for a player to get in three guesses. Again, we are looking at an art here. Not all players are going to guess at the same speed. Young players in particular can take a long time to guess and you often have to pick something in the distance or something in/on a vehicle that will stay in view for a long time.

As for the outcomes, remember that if the players guess right they get what they want. The outcome is favorable for them overall. If they get a "Yes, and…", they not only get what they want or accomplish what they are trying to do but they get something more out of it. This can be extra damage, more information, a shortcut, etc.

A "Yes but…" outcome is similar to a "Yes, and…" The character succeeds and the outcome is positive, but there's a bit more too it: a cost that must be paid for success. This could mean using up extra ammunition, getting where you want to go but taking some damage, succeeding but losing an item to do so, etc.

Negative outcomes are similar to positive ones. No matter what, the character failed. They don't get what they want. Remember though, that this shouldn't stall the story. If

the characters were looking for the entrance to the dungeon, a fail shouldn't mean they don't find it and have to go home. It could mean that they were ambushed while looking for it, that they find it but it takes much longer than expected or they find the main, well-guarded, entrance instead of the back door.

The "No, but…" outcome is similar. In this case the character fails. There's no option there, but with that failure there is a bit of a boon. To use the same examples; The Characters fail to find the entrance to the dungeon but come across a scouting party (not the group isn't ambushed in this case), the characters find the entrance but it takes so long that when they get there, the guards are asleep. They don't find the main entrance but they find a side entrance that, while difficult to navigate will get them inside.

A FINAL NOTE ON NARRATION

Remember to narrate what is happening. Together the players and Navigator are creating a story not playing a board game. If your character is trying to avoid the attack of an Orc, you don't just say "I guessed right: so he misses". Make it more than just mechanics, make it interesting. "I got it right? Awesome! I roll to my left as the Orc's rusty sword just misses me." The same goes for the Navigator: everything should follow the narrative, the group story everyone is creating together.

3. CHARACTERS

Basic characters

Each player, except the Navigator plays a character. This is their fictional persona in the narrative. These characters can be anything from the fantasy genre. In the base game none of this means anything mechanically. Your character is who you want them to be and that character will interact with the narrative in a specific way but nothing else changes. The player can choose to play a grumpy dwarf, or a haughty high elf or even a sneaky goblin. This will all drive the narrative a certain way but doesn't give any mechanical benefit.

At the very least you should give your character a name. Next would be some kind of brief description, one sentence that describes the character you are going to play. For example:

"Gibbly is a Halfling that is wandering away from home for the first time ready for some adventure."

This gives you and the other players something to riff off of while playing. During the game it is highly recommended that you refer to each other by your character names and not your real names, this will increase the sense of immersion and make the game feel more real. Along with only using character names, players may want to talk 'in character' this also helps increase immersion. This just means that you talk as if you were your character. Like this:

M, playing Gibbly: "I walk up to the guard and give him a cold hard stare. As if we were nose to nose despite the fact that I'm at his belt buckle. You there, guard, what's this about not letting us in! We have an invitation."

If you aren't comfortable with that talking in the 3rd person is also cool. To continue the last example:

M, playing Gibbly: "When Gibbly's intimidation attempt fails miserably, and comically, he stomps off in a huff and says "I'm hungry, when are we going to eat"

A name and a brief description is all you need to play A Fantasy Trip. You can write this information down if you want or just remember it. The nice part about a basic character is that there really isn't much to remember.

More advanced characters

The rest of this section includes some optional rules that add more detail to your character, bringing the game more in line with traditional pen and paper RPGs. These include things like having a Race that gives a mechanical benefit in the game or having specific equipment like a huge greatsword.

Race (optional)

Adding the Race mechanic is the simplest optional modification you can make to A Fantasy Trip. It adds a wildcard element to the game that makes it easier for players to spy things. Of all the optional mechanics this is the one that is most recommended to use every game. There are no additional tools or paperwork or record keeping required by adding races to the game. All a player has to do is remember which race they picked which shouldn't be a problem, especially if you have already played using narrative races as noted previously.

When using the Race option, each player picks one of the races listed below. Each of these lists a wildcard. This wildcard is something that the player can use as a guess during a Spy in place of the Navigator's target.

Using a racial wildcard counts as a "Yes" result when using the optional variable outcomes rules. When using those rules, this means that a player is actually better off guessing what the Narrator's target if they think they can get it in one guess. If the player thinks they can't using a wildcard is much better than failing. A wildcard "Yes" is actually better than getting the Narrator's target in three guesses.

Each of these listings also gives a Strike number. For rules for that see the optional combat rules.

Dwarf – stout, sturdy, from the earth. As hard as rock in many ways but, like mountains some have a heart of gold.
Wildcard: Construction Vehicles.
Strikes: 4

Wood Elf – Hunters, caretakers, with the earth. In tune with nature, a creature of the land, the water and the woods.
Wildcard: Wild Animals and Animal Crossing Signs (Birds may be too common depending on the area and season, this should be decided before play).
Strikes: 3

Halfling – Hungry, sneaky, in front of the Hearth. Homey folk who get bored and crave adventure. Always hungry.
Wildcard: Restaurant billboard
Strikes: 2

Gnome – Small, tricky, from the Fae. Magical tricksters who love a good joke and a bad pun.
Wildcard: Very small vehicles. Austin Mini, Moped, E-Bike, Fiat 500, Volkswagen Bug. (an alternative: kids)
Strikes: 2

Half Orc – Big, strong, from the blood. Quick to act, quick to anger but devoted.
Wildcard: Bikers and Muscle cars.
Strikes: 4

Pixie – Flies, magical, of the Fae.
Wildcard: something flying. Blimp, plane, helicopter, kite, etc. (Birds again may be too common, also not much fun if both an Elf and Pixie are in the same group.
Strikes: 2

Human – malleable, impatient, from the heart. Humans act with passion in all things often to the point of obsession
Wildcard: Pick one obsession: a make of car, a specific number, out of state/province license plates.
Strikes: 3

Race – Making your own (optional)

Some groups may find the current list of races limiting. Maybe a player really wants to play their favourite race, that isn't currently included in the game. Maybe the Navigator a favourite RPG setting that includes a unique character race they love. All players should feel welcome to add new races to the game.

Adding a new race is simple: Pick a fantasy race, think of something that defines them and then find something that is fairly uncommon that you see on road trips and set that as a wildcard. Picking a wildcard, ike anything else in A Fantasy Trip this is an Art. You are trying to find something that's going to come up now and then but not every time you try to spy. The wildcard should also somehow tie to the new race.

Race – adjusting wildcards (optional)

Individual groups may decide that they find the standard wildcard rules either too loose and easy or too hard and punishing. The effectiveness of wildcards is very easy to adjust. Like any optional rule, the entire group should agree to modifying wildcards before they are changed in play.

To make wildcards more effective change it so that all wildcards provide a “Yes, and…” outcome.

To make wildcards less effective change it so that all wildcards provide a “Yes, but…” outcome.

4. HOW TO PLAY

The flow

The way A Fantasy Trip is played is through conversation between the Navigator and the players. Together, the group as a whole works together to create a story, a shared narrative.

The Navigator starts by setting up a situation, some type of quest. This is described to the players and sets things in motion. From here the players and Navigator talk back and forth, having a conversation and creating a shared story.

The mechanics come into play whenever there is doubt as to what would happen next. When this happens the Navigator calls for a Spy and the player or players involved play a game of I spy to determine where the story goes next. The outcome of the game becomes part of the story. This narration is the goal and the point of the game. All of the mechanics and everything done should be in honor and in service to the narration and the overall story you are all telling together.

What exactly is the story about? That's up to the group. To stick with the theme of the game it should entail some form of journey with a set destination. The story should be about what the characters face along this journey. What obstacles get in their way, what monsters they fight and/or what discoveries they make? Will the characters arrive at their destination safe and sound?

The group as a whole should strive to tell a complete story. Generally this will start once you get on the road and end when you get to your destination. This doesn't have to be the case. Perhaps the game is dragging on, or one of the players doesn't seem to be having very much fun anymore. In that case it's fine and actually desirable to end the game before reaching your destination. It is suggested though that you finish off the story somehow.

Finishing your story can be done by reaching a good breaking point. Like the end of a chapter in a book or the end of an episode of your favorite show. RPG sessions are always much more satisfying for everyone if they come to a logical end, even if it's a cliff hanger leaving things open for the next game.

The Navigator's role

The Navigator has a few more things to keep track of than the other players. This doesn't make them better than the other players or really even more important. They just have a different role to play in the game. Here are a list of the various jobs of the Navigator:

Record keeping for the driver. The driver has the most important job of everyone, keeping all of the passengers safe. Due to this they need to be able to focus on driving and the road. They can't be distracted by taking notes or tracking hit points. Because of this, that job falls on you, the Navigator. This isn't so bad as you don't have a character yourself.

Steering the story. While it's the group as a whole that is telling the story together, it's up to the Navigator to keep things on track. Now this doesn't mean pre-determining where the story should go (except for the goal at the final destination) but rather to stop things from getting too detoured or worse hitting a dead end. This is mainly done by making sure that the outcomes that are derived from the mechanics are interesting and keep things moving. You should never reach a point in the story where everyone wonders: were stuck, what should we do now.

Playing the bad guys. You get to be all the fun things in the world. The orcs, the deadly dragon, the gnome king. These are your characters, your chance to role play and use a silly voice. Remember though that bad guys never invoke the mechanics. It's the players trying to jump out of the way of the dragon's breath and not the dragon trying to roast the characters.

Playing everyone else. There's a very good chance that at some point in your story the characters are going to run into other people. Not bad guys and monsters but other fantasy folk. The town mayor, the shop keeper, etc. You get to be all those people too! In most cases these are pure roleplaying scenes where you and the group just continue to narrate in whatever direction makes the most sense and is the most fun.

Determining outcomes. This is probably the hardest part about being a navigator. It's not hard though. In most cases the narration, the story at hand, should lead to logical outcomes. Think of what the character is trying to do, how it could go really well for them and how it could go really bad. Think of how things would play out in your favorite fantasy movie or novel and go with that. Also, don't be afraid to ask for help. The players can and should assist you with the narration of outcomes. If you want they can actually do all the narration for you. Remember that a correct guess means that the player succeeds and that this could include the use of a Wildcard if the optional race rules are being used. Conversely if the player doesn't get the spy in three guesses they fail.

The Quest

One of the jobs of the Navigator is to steer the story. To stick to the theme of the game, this steering should be tied to your actual physical trip in some way if possible. If you are travelling to Las Vegas, a desert adventure would fit in well. If heading to Niagara Falls, then perhaps your quest is to dispose of some object into such a natural wonder. Going to Grandma's house? Maybe you have an escort quest on your hands.

Along with the destination, the journey itself and what the characters encounter should be based on the real life travels. The Navigator and players should use what is around them to inspire the narration. If there's a huge cliff to your right, there should be a cliff coming up in the game if there isn't one there already. Perhaps the next underpass is the cave entrance the players have been looking fo?. That group of trucks up ahead that isn't letting you pass, they sure look like Ogres to me.

Landmarks should also tie into your story somehow. These can be famous landmarks or just things you know are along the path you will be taking. That fruit stand along highway 42 that you pass every time on the way out of town. Sure seems like a great place for a Blacksmith. Passing by a statue? Just who is that bald warrior holding a hamster?

On a long enough journey cities can count as landmarks in of themselves. It just fits if you describe the party travelling through wilderness between towns only to come upon the Kingdom the Land of Cleave as you enter the city limits.

Thematic I Spy

Here's one fun way to make things a bit more interesting and potentially more immersive. When the group faces an obstacle or is fighting a monster, the Narrator can make their targets tie to the narration in some way.

When fighting an Orc all of the targets could be things that are green. When trying to climb a mountain all of the Narrator's targets could be things that are up high. When looking for a shortcut the targets could be based on off ramps.

5. COMBAT

Combat Overview

As A Fantasy Trip is based on the tropes of sword and sorcery fantasy, combat is going to be pretty much inventible. Combat in A Fantasy Trip can take a variety of forms. In the basic game combat is completely narrative. There are no strikes, bad guys don't have stats, and it's up to the players to drive the story forward at the pacing they desire.

With the basic rules a combat can be extremely quick with one game of I Spy determining the whole outcome or it could play out as a long blow by blow ordeal. The best part about using narration over mechanics is that it handles any size of battle and any type of foe easily. Having to get past an army of orcs works the exact same was as trying to beat down one goblin when using just narration.

Most fans of RPG games, especially fantasy ones, are going to want more out of combat than this and this is where the optional rules come in. There are more optional rules for combat than any other part of A Fantasy Trip.

The flow of combat

Whether using the base rules or the optional rules combat works better if there is some organization applied to the flow. In general the narration should be set up with the players getting to act against their foes and then defending against whatever adversaries are left.

Combat becomes cyclical this way with a round of 'attacks' and a round of 'defenses' Note it doesn't have to be black and white like this. A round of attacks could be trying to scare off the cowardly goblins while a round of dense could be moving to a better position.

Basic combat

That's all there is to basic combat. Except for a bit more structure, a combat plays out just like the rest of the game. The players and the Navigator have a conversation and then the outcome is uncertain, I Spy is played. In this case a combat is no different than any other obstacle.

Optional Combat rules

The remainder of this chapter has optional combat rules for those players who crave a bit more strategy, tactics and crunch to their fantasy games. Most of these rules and be plugged in and out of the game as desired but some of them do rely on other optional rules to work. Where this is the case it is noted.

Strikes aka Hit Points (Optional)

Anyone who's play any fantasy RPG in the last 30 years is probably familiar with the term Hit Points. If not, I do have to wonder how you found this game? In A Fantasy Trip HP are called Strikes and they represents how many times you can get hit (or be struck) before you are removed from combat. To keep things simple each character can take three hits. This is easy to remember as it's "three strikes and you are out".

Three Strikes and you are out

Every time a character fails to defend themselves (gets a "No" or "No, But…" outcome) they take a strike. It's also possible to take a strike through a "Yes, but…" outcome if it fits the narrative. A character can also take strike due to the narrative without a game of I spy taking place. This can happen if it just makes sense to the story then it happens, in most cases though players should be given a chance to avoid a strike. This should be rare though and in any case where a character would take a strike the player should have the option do something about it first.

For bad guys the Navigator determines their amount of strikes. Weak foes and mooks should only have one strike. An Dragon could have as many as 10.

Strikes – what happens when you are "out" (Optional)

Being "Out:" usually just means that a character is out of the fight. They can't take part anymore. Exactly how they are out should be driven by the narrative. Perhaps they are knocked out. Maybe they fall over from exhaustion and wounds. Perhaps they run away.

Through getting knocked "out" of a combat, it's also possible for a character to die. This should also be determined by the narrative. It also has to be a mutual agreement between the player of the character and the Narrator. A player always gets final say on whether or not their character dies.

Race Based Strikes (Optional)

For groups who want a bit more variety, strikes can be determined by race:

Dwarf 4, Wood Elf 3, Halflings 2, Gnome 2, Half Orc 4, Pixie 2, Humans 3

For a player created race the strikes should start at 3. Then if the race is known to be big, sturdy or hearty add 1. If they are known for being slight, frail or small, subtract 1

Healing and Rest Stops (Optional)

Whenever your group stops at a Rest Stop or stops for the night somewhere that isn't your final destination, your characters get a rest stop as well. Wrap up wherever you are in the narrative and get to a point where the party gets to some type of haven.

This haven can be a city, their favourite inn, or just a roadside shrine. As usual this should be driving by what's happening in real life. A road side rest stop that is nothing more than washrooms and vending machines fits well for a small roadside shrine, or an abandoned camp site. A gas station could be a small coaching inn. A stop over in a major city should spill over into a fantasy city in game.

Automatic healing happens whenever the party rests for the night like this. After a full night's sleep all characters get all their strikes back. Each character also earns one clue if you are using those optional rules.

Healing can also happen as part of the story. The characters could pay for healing, find a healing potion or maybe the pixie character chooses to use her magic to try to heal the Half Orc who just got punched in the mouth. Most of this healing should only be one strike at a time, with a full heal only coming with a rest. This makes trying to survive until the next stop so much more dramatic.

6. EQUIPMENT

Equipment Overview

For some reason many players really dig long equipment lists in their Fantasy RPGs. While these optional rules aren't a long list the should provide some food for those players craving a bit of mechanics behind their equipment.

Without using these rules equipment is all just part of the narration. If a player wants their character to wield a longbow, they wield a long bow. That long bow should be used by the player when they are narrating actions for their character. It doesn't actually do anything mechanical in the rules though, it's just a story object. These rules add a mechanical change due to equipment.

Mechanically these equipment rules modify the number of strikes a monster or character can take, change the number of guesses a character gets or can give or take clues.

Gaining and Losing Guesses (Optional)

Many of the optional rules in this section cause players to gain or lose guesses. To use these rules you must be using the variable outcome rules.

What gaining or losing guesses means is that the list of possible outcomes changes. When players gain a guess, they get a 2nd possible "Yes" outcome. So guessing the target on the 2nd or 3rd guess will result in a "Yes" outcome. When a player loses a guess, the ability to get a "Yes, and…" result vanishes. The best possible outcome becomes a "Yes" for that character. In this case a 1st correct guess is a "Yes", and a 2nd correct guess is a "Yes, but..." You cannot gain or lose more than one guess and if both effects are affecting you then you end up with the regular amount of guesses and outcomes.

Weapons (Optional)

A Fantasy Trip breaks weapons down into four categories. The most basic are Normal Weapons. These are all of your usual fantasy weapons. Longswords, rapiers, maces, war hammers. These weapons have no special rules. Each of the other weapon categories does.

Heavy weapons - These are big heavy weapons. Two handed suckers. Halbards, great swords, mauls, etc. These do two strikes on a hit. The thing is that they are hard to hit with. You only get two guesses when you use a heavy weapon to attack and the best result you can get is a Yes.

Light Weapons – Daggers, short swords, pact blades, etc. These weapons are great at harassing foes. You get four guesses when using a light weapon to attack, having two Yes results on guess 2 and 3. The problem though is that if you don't finish off your target you leave yourself open, you only get two guesses when defending from any counterattack.

Ranged Weapons – Wands, magic missiles, bows and crossbows. If you choose to stay back and attack at range you don't have to narrate a defense after the first round of combat. After the first round of combat you are down to two guesses with all attacks until the fight is over.

Armour (Optional)

Similar to Weapons, Fantasy Trip breaks armour down into four categories. The typical armous is Light Armour. This category includes Leather, chainmail, ring mail, etc. These armours have no special rules. Each of the other armour categories does.

Very light armor – Clothes, robes, padded. You get one less guess on defense rolls verses physical attacks but one extra on defense against ranged or area effect attacks.

Heavy armor – Plate, scale. You get an extra guess vs. physical attacks but loose a guess against ranged or area effects.

Shield – gives you one free clue vs one attack per combat.

Tools (Optional)

The term tools covers a wide variety of items. Everything from a Healing Kit to a portable forge (it's a fantasy game remember!). What tools do is give a character an advantage when doing something in the story that can benefit from the use of their tools.

During character creation each player should come up with one set of tools for their character. Players should discuss their tools with each other and make sure that everyone takes a different set of tools. What this does is makes sure there is niche protection, it sets it up so that each character has something they are specialized in that none of the other characters can do.

Mechanically having the right tool for the job gives the player an extra guess.

Narrator note: Having tools get lost taken or damaged is a great use of a "Yes, but…" outcome.

7. CLUES

Clues overview (optional)

The use of clues ads an in game currency to A Fantasy Trip. Clues are something like Bennies from Savage Worlds or FATE points from the various fate games. The use of clues is optional. They add a whole level of record keeping to the game that means that it's one more thing that all of the players have to track.

You will need some way to track clues. One suggestion is to use whatever snack food you have brought for your trip. When you earn a clue you get to take a snack. When you use it you get to eat it. This method really encourages players to keep the clues flowing which should improve the game. The Navigator gets a bonus here in that they can snack whenever they want. They have a lot to keep track of and the bulk of the work here so that's their reward.

Using Clues (optional)

Clues are spent as you would expect them to, be: a player uses them to get a clue about the Narrator's target in order to make guessing easier. A clue can be used at any point during the game of I Spy. A player can use one right way or after they have already guessed two times. The only time a clue cannot be used is when the player is out of guesses (usually after three guesses)

Clues can come direct from the Navigator with them passing on some more information about their target: "It's close to our car", "It's out my right window", "It's a vehicle of some kind" etc. Clues can also be used in the form of an Ask from the player. In this case the player asks the Navigator a question: "Is it green", "is it to your right", "is it a car"

Earning Clues (optional)

The basic way to earn a clue is to get a "Yes, and…" outcome. When a player guesses the Navigator's target on their 1st guess the Navigator should hand them a clue. The clue in this case represents the advantage the character got from the 'and' part of the narration.

Another way to earn a clue is through **Awesome Narration.** Any time a player is telling the story and gets the entire vehicle to respond with a "wow", "cool", "awesome" or other overwhelmingly positive response the Navigator should give that player a clue.

Earning Clues through Race (optional)

You obviously have to be using the optional Race rules to use this clue option. With this option in play each race is given a disadvantage and players are rewarded, with clues, for playing up those disadvantages.

Dwarf – being stubborn and having to be talked into doing something or down right refusing. Note this isn't an excuse to be a jerk, thus the having to be talked into it part. Think of trying to get B. A. Baracus on a plane.

Wood Elf – Protecting nature. Refusing to fight an animal. Not clearing some woods for shelter. Only eating sustainable food. Insisting on camping outside of the town.

Halfling – forcing the party to stop to eat. Completely misunderstanding something due to your innocence. Remember Halflings are homey folk that normally don't leave home they know nothing of the world besides their home and when meal time is.

Gnome – playing a trick on someone. Telling a joke that gets the whole vehicle to laugh. Using a pun that gets the whole group to groan.

Half Orc – Rushing into things to the detriment of the group. Starting fights that probably could have been avoided. Like the Dwarf, this shouldn't be an excuse to be a jerk.

Pixie – become befuddled by non fey things. Pixies just don't get tools and technology, why not just use magic? Being at a disadvantage due to your very small size.

Human – getting distracted by an obsession, loosing focus on the destination. Remember, don't be a jerk.

Earning Clues through Achievements (optional)

If at some point in the story it feels like the group accomplished something significant, then everyone should earn a clue. This should be driven by the narration and the general feeling the group has.

If the characters have just finished a really hard fight vs. a group of orcs, one that they though they could lose at any moment, that should be an achievement. Getting the all the components for the spell that will open the magically locked door would count as an achievement. Finding the prisoners: achievement. Think of the achievements you earn in all the video games now a day and use that as your guide. If you hear the Xbox "bleep" in your head, that's probably an achievement.

The Narrator may want to come up with some story specific achievements before play or a set of standard ones for their game. Achievements can also be expanded to things outside the narrative. Examples could include: The first Yes, and during a combat (Critical hit?), Getting three guesses in a row correct, Taking a hit for another player, getting half way to your destination, passing through a major city or by a major landmark.

Earning Clues through Character Goals (optional)

Another optional way for players to gain clues are character goals. At the start of each game each player should pick an obtainable goal for their character. The Navigator and the group as a whole should try to weave these goals into the narration as play develops. If a character achieves their goal, they score an Achievement and thus get a clue. Example goals are: “prove my worth by dealing the killing blow to an enemy”, “Find my father’s sword”, “Meet an Elf” or “Strike it rich!”

8. BESTIARY

Here there be monsters

What fantasy RPG is complete without a Bestiary. It was the AD&D 2nd edition Monsterous Manual that is responsible for me getting into fantasy RPGs way back in the 80s. I love Bestiaries and I know I'm not the only one.

In the basic game monsters are just parts of the story. There's no difference between an Orc and a Dragon besides how they are described and how the Navigator and players drive the story. Actually there's no real difference between a monster and any other obstacle the character's face. Trying to get past a group of goblins isn't really any different from trying to get past the chasm that blocks the group's way.

Advanced Monsters (Optional)

These optional rules give specific stats and rules for different monsters. These stats are based on the assumption that you are using the optional combat rules: hit points and weapons as well as the optional clue rules.

Goblins – you know what a goblin is right? Small nasty and sometimes comedic:
Strikes 1
Goblins are weak and easy to defend against, unless they outnumber you. If there are at least as many party members in the group as goblins everyone gets an extra Yes guess to defend against them. If there are at least twice as many goblins the group could be overwhelmed everyone gets one less guess to defend (losing the Yes and)

Striges – nasty flying insect like things with four wings that suck blood.
Strikes 1
When one of these hits a character, in addition to causing a strike, they also steal one clue from the character (the Navigator gets to steal the snack and eat it if using them).

Orcs - are the typical fantasy bad guy. Orcs in my world are green, what colour are yours?
Strikes 2
No special rules and 2 strikes. To change things up you could give them a weapon or armor.

Hobgoblins – A bit bigger and nastier than orcs. Smarter too.
Strikes:3
They have a strong military heritage. Will often have weapons and/or armor.

Owlhulk – Like a cross between an owl and a huge burrowing insect. Nasty in so many ways.
Strikes: 4
Tunneling – it can dig through the ground and surprise a party. Hulkhug – if it gets it's clawed wings around someone they take 1 strike a turn until they escape.

Wyvern – like a small deadly dragon with a poisonous tail.
Strikes: 5
They fly which could make things interesting. If they hit with their tale they steal one clue.

Ogre – big dumb and stupid, but big hurts
Strikes: 5
These guys hurt when they hit, they do two strikes when a player fails to defend. They are dumb though and should be played that way. The group would be smart to try to outwit them.

Dragon – it's a fricking dragon!
Strikes: 10 at least
Dragons have lots of attacks that hit the whole party. Everyone has to defend or take a strike. Wing buffets, tail whips and don't forget that breath weapon that does two strikes but can't be used again until you pass an exit with a road that starts with D