

The Play's the Thing

GAT212 – RPG Final Project Story & Rules

2/21/2014

Alexandra Lucas

Table of Contents

OUR SCENE	3
<i>Motivation</i>	3
<i>Components</i>	4
<i>Setting</i>	4
Map	4
England	5
Italy	6
Denmark.....	7
<i>Elsinore</i>	7
Scotland.....	7
<i>Edinburgh</i>	8
Bohemia	8
Wild Lands.....	8
<i>Faith</i>	9
<i>The Oracle of Delphi</i>	10
<i>Deity Worship</i>	10
<i>SHE</i>	10
OUR PLAYERS	10
<i>Character Creation</i>	10
PROGRESSION	12
<i>Attributes</i>	12
<i>Attribute List</i>	12
<i>Leveling Up</i>	15
<i>Abilities</i>	16
<i>Ability Acquisition</i>	17
<i>Stage Combat and Conflict Resolution</i>	17
<i>Bard Specialization</i>	18
<i>Races</i>	19
<i>Human</i>	20

<i>Fairy</i>	20
<i>Ghost</i>	21
<i>Deity</i>	21
<i>Classes</i>	22
<i>Knight</i>	22
<i>Ranger</i>	22
<i>Sorcerer/Sorceress</i>	23
<i>Priest/Priestess</i>	23
STAGE BLOCKING.....	24
<i>Turns</i>	24
CAST MEMBERS.....	24
<i>Preset Players</i>	24
<i>Hecate</i>	24
<i>Players of Interest</i>	25
<i>The Weird Sisters</i>	25
LOST FOLIO OVERVIEW.....	25
<i>Prelude</i>	25
<i>Selected Play Details</i>	25
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	25
QUEST PROMPT: <i>Directly from an Existing Play</i>	26
<i>Lovers' Quarrel</i>	26
SELF-SCORE.....	27
<i>Bonuses</i>	27
<i>Penalties</i>	28

OUR SCENE

Motivation

Something is rotten in Avon. Someone (or something) has been wreaking havoc on the realm's principalities, large and small. Driven by a lust for power and by unabashed desperation, a greedy generation of sycophants has resurrected long-dead feuds, frantically vying for claim to the most powerful aristocratic titles and their ample land holdings *at any cost*. Tensions fester between the five ruling families and their citizens as the poor languish in the streets, pleading for justice with their dying breaths. Most distressing of all, magic is now being resurrected in Avon by the worshipers of SHE, largely for dark purposes. There are even whispers telling of a mischievous spirit terrorizing the countryside, often in the guise of a soothsayer and answering to the seemingly innocuous moniker, Robin Goodfellow.

Many claim to have seen him, yet no one seems to be able to recall his face.

It is your task to set these troubles aright OR to ensure that the destinies of the inhabitants of Avon successfully unfold as Shakespeare intended. Recruit cast members with different roles to aid you in your quest: priests and priestesses, rangers, knights, and sorcerers and sorceresses. You must make difficult decisions about which tales you will preserve, showing your fellow players exactly where you stand. You may deplete your ink dispensary to change the fates of the people of Avon, but do so wisely; the consequences may be dire.

DIRECTOR NOTE

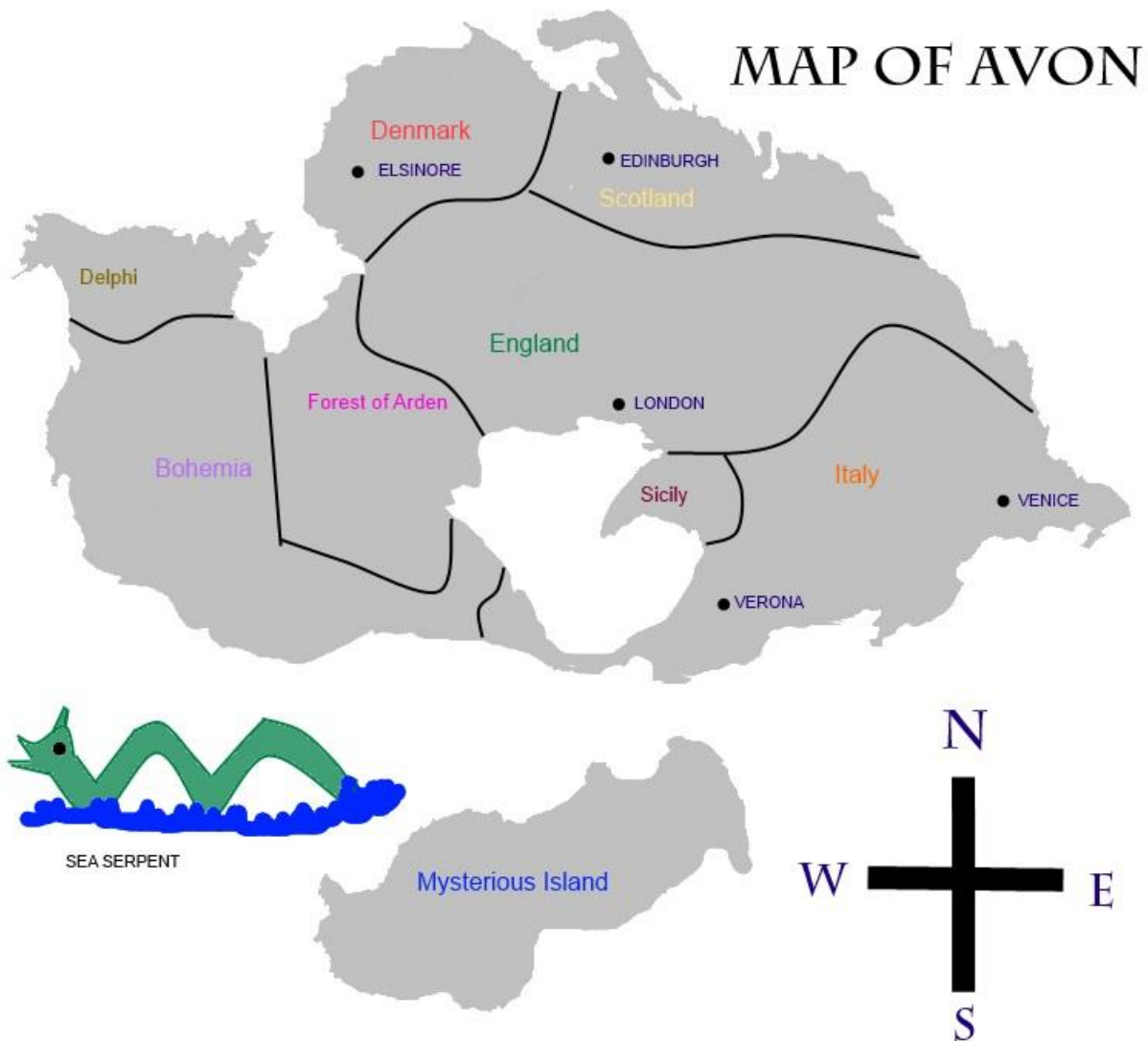
The Director (Game Master) has complete freedom to decide the alignment and involvement of William Shakespeare and Robin Goodfellow (aka Puck) before and during the campaign. A few quest prompts are supplied to assist with starting the game, although the majority of the Director questing materials simply provide information about this alternate version of Shakespeare's literary world and a brief note about the existing outcome of a given work (see QUEST PROMPT section below). While the digital version of this game would be much more linear, in this tabletop version, the Director is free to craft adventures that are only vaguely related to Shakespearean characters, plays, and story elements in order to explore and enrich the experience of the realm of Avon and its curious inhabitants.

Components

The only required components for this game are approximately 100d6 and the map included or an original map to guide the players. Players will also want to keep track of their attribute totals and abilities, but a simple piece of paper will do. Players may also type up these items for each session.

Setting

Map



The realm of Avon consists of five major principalities, largely clustered in a Pangaea-like land mass: England in the center; Denmark and Scotland to the north; Italy to the east; and Bohemia to the temperate west.

However, these countries do not exist in Avon as we know them in our world. A leader selected according to that principality's custom independently rules each region, although not all regions are at peace with one

another or within themselves. Each region also tends to adhere to one faith and harbor different customs, virtues, and vices (see FAITH section below).

In addition to these principalities, Avon contains many unexplored islands and wild lands about which little is known and where few dare tread.

The time period of *The Play's the Thing* is questionable – a blur between the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras (1558 – 1625). Although their eras in our world are many hundreds of years apart, the likes of Julius Caesar and Richard III coexist in this alternate reality in Avon. All of Shakespeare's characters may meet and interact in any location that the Director and players desire. Who knows which mysteries of the universe Falstaff and Shylock will solve when they inevitably meet?

DIRECTOR NOTE

While most of the settings of Shakespeare's plays have been included below, some have been omitted due to either obscurity of the play's subject matter or location. The intent of these omissions is to increase the players' and Director's accessibility to the game by refraining from overwhelming them with too many options. The Director may, however, integrate their own version of those omitted plays and locales, if desired. Additionally, the Director may omit any or all of Shakespeare's plays in a campaign, focusing only on a few well-known plays (*Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*) or focusing on simply exploring Avon.

Omitted Plays: *All's Well that Ends Well*; *The Comedy of Errors*; *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*; *Timon of Athens*; *Troilus and Cressida*

England

No particular race (all of which are detailed below in the RACE section) dominates this principality in terms of population, although the majority of the people in power are human, including the members of the dwindling royal family. Most of England's citizens – including the marginalized fairy caste – consider the monarchy to be an antiquated construct and yearn for some form of elected government.

London

If Avon can be said to have a capitol city, it would be London, located in southern England. Plagued by nearly perpetual poverty and ruled by the self-involved Tudors, the city is also the heart of the burgeoning ink black market. England also houses the largest concentration of fairies in all of Avon, the majority of whom worship

SHE, the great Wolf Mother of ancient legend (see FAITH section below).

Faith: SHE

Government: Monarchy – Tudors

Corresponding plays (suggested): *Richard II; Henry IV, Part I; Henry IV, Part II; Henry V; Richard III; King Lear; Merry Wives of Windsor*

Italy

Italy is perhaps the most war-torn of all of the principalities in Avon. Not only is the country slowly losing control of its colony, Sicily, but its government consists of a puppet prince, Escalus, controlled by organized crime and squabbling aristocrats vying for their share of the government spoils and power. Glitter, a mysterious hallucinogenic narcotic, singlehandedly funds the illicit efforts of The Merchants, the primary Sicilian crime syndicate led by two kingpins known only as Portia and Antonio.

Venice

If it is known for anything, Venice is mired in exploitation, prejudice, and racism, the majority of which is directed at fairies and at those whose faith differs from Deity Worship. Fairies are already marginalized throughout Avon, but their exploitation has increased now that it is common knowledge that fairies know the secrets of harvesting Glitter. There are rumors of large groups of fairies being brought to the city in the wee hours of the morning, only to disappear by the time the cock crows. All fairies would leave the city completely if it wasn't for the allure of the lucrative Glitter-dealing market.

Faith: Deity Worship

Government: Monarchy – Escalus

Corresponding plays (suggested): *The Merchant of Venice; Othello*

Verona

No location in Avon has seen more violence and bloodshed than Verona. Family feuds have spun out of control, to the point that organized crime relies on them to create diversions.

Faith: Deity worship

Government: Monarchy – Escalus

Corresponding plays (suggested): *Romeo and Juliet; The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Sicily (colony)

Italy technically colonized the peninsula of Sicily long ago, but don't let a Sicilian overhear any discussion of the arrangement. As it so happens, that arrangement is currently a sore spot for Italy as well, due to the strong barricades with which the Sicilians have surrounded their home for the explicit purpose of keeping the Italian government out. This peninsula fell prey to Italian colonialism and now only traces remain of its traditions and culture. Now that Italy is torn apart by crime and addiction, the people of Sicily have taken advantage and started to try to reclaim their lost home.

Faith: Oracle of Delphi

Government: Crime Syndicate – The Merchants

Corresponding plays (suggested): *The Winter's Tale; Much Ado About Nothing*

Other plays set in Italy: *Antony and Cleopatra; Julius Caesar; The Taming of the Shrew; Coriolanus; Cymbeline*

Denmark

A morose and dark place, it is here that black magic has begun to claw its angry, gnarled hand back into the realm. The king has taken ill and his son has not been mentally or emotionally well, leaving citizens concerned about the future of their region. Sightings of ghosts and otherworldly creatures abound to the point that citizens are now offering significant rewards to outsiders who would be willing to extricate these terrors. Venture here at your own risk, lest you become one of them.

Elsinore

Elsinore is the seat of Denmark's throne, though the royal family is in such disarray that the ruling Hamlets' chief counsellor, Polonius, is currently serving as steward. Though Polonius is relatively competent, he is still a scheming aristocrat who is trying to lay the groundwork for his daughter Ophelia to become queen, in spite of both the Prince Hamlet's and Ophelia's mental instability.

Faith: The Oracle of Delphi

Government: Stewardship – Polonius

Corresponding plays (suggested): *Hamlet*

Scotland

Scotland is nearly as sorrowful as its neighbor, Denmark, though its gloom stems from years of constantly changing royal families. A coup occurs approximately every five years, and it is not always bloodless. Paranoia

runs rampant and a lack of city soldiers gives the citizens freedom to commit crimes with a low probability of punishment. Scotland's citizens cannot trust each other and consequently are depressed, apathetic, and less productive. There are tales circulating about three outcast Sibyls – now referred to as witches – lurking on the outskirts of the kingdom, ready to take advantage of any mortal foolish enough to trust their council.

Edinburgh

The capital city of Scotland is choked by constant fog and chronic stress. Most citizens are human, although a significant number of citizens are fairies (22%), deities (1%), and ghosts (2%). The ruling Duncan clan, a family of remarkable warriors, is strong and well-liked and many citizens hope that they will finally have a stable monarchy. The city continues to survive partly because it is generally tolerant of every race, faith, and lifestyle and its citizens do not fear magic and the supernatural nearly as much as those of the four other major principalities. Perhaps the absence of a fear of magic and the supernatural is the very reason behind the resurgence of dark magic in this country; their vulnerability and openness may ultimately be their downfall.

Faith: Any and all are welcome

Government: Oligarchy – Duncan clan

Corresponding plays (suggested): *Macbeth*

Bohemia

Bohemia is a wild land to which many outcasts flee from the five major principalities. The government consists of a council of elders who decide ideal migration, farming, and hunting choices for the group. However, no one is forced to follow or obey any law, save for treating others and oneself well. Many of the inhabitants of Bohemia are storytellers, musicians, and artists who are happy to share their creations and knowledge.

Faith: SHE

Government: Elder Council

Corresponding plays (suggested): *The Winter's Tale*

Wild Lands

Delphi

It is here that the Sibyls of Delphi reside, quietly sorting through space and time in order to help the troubled and lost who frequent their doorstep. Any who ask may claim sanctuary with the Oracle of Delphi for as long as the Sibyls' information about the future permits. The Oracle building is surrounded by merchant stands and the homes of laborers, all of whom have agreed to defend the group and its citizens if attacked or wronged. Beyond

that alliance, the inhabitants of Delphi are autonomous, respectful, and peaceful. Many of the few Deities that remain in Avon reside here, content to lie low and evade their worshippers. The town of Delphi is considered sacred; all those who have dared defile it have met most unpleasant fates.

Faith: Oracle of Delphi

Government: Medieval commune (sworn allegiances of mutual defense)

Corresponding plays (suggested): *The Winter's Tale*

Forest of Arden

Located just outside of England's jurisdiction, this forest is considered one of the wildest and most shamefully magical regions of Avon. Merchants traveling along its borders have told of sounds of sizable bonfires and familiar chanting reminiscent of the rituals of the worshippers of SHE. Those who are brave enough to enter soon find themselves forgetting their names and origins and witnessing bizarre spectacles that could only occur in dreams.

Faith: SHE

Government: Unknown

Corresponding plays (suggested): *As You Like It; A Midsummer Night's Dream*

A Mysterious Island

Though many sailors swear to have seen the egg-shaped island, none have been able to reach it. The mysterious island has barricaded itself with a treacherous coral reef, a resident school of hammerheads, and a few enticing sirens, all of which have claimed more than one ship and crew. In addition, the island is rumored to house a powerful sorcerer, Prospero, who delights in manipulating the weather in order to wreck any ship foolish enough to sail within its borders. There is no amount of gold that any sailor in Avon would accept in exchange for seeking this island.

Faith: Unknown

Government: Unknown – Prospero

Corresponding plays (suggested): *The Tempest; Twelfth Night*

Faith

Faith is an oft-debated subject for the inhabitants of Avon, whose predominant faiths vary from principality to principality and from race to race.

The Oracle of Delphi

The Sibyls of Delphi are the most revered beings in all of Avon, even above the so-called deities more recently lauded by the people of Scotland. The order only consists of female humans and ghosts; they are often referred to as priestesses, as they may never marry and can foretell the future by secret means that are never revealed to the uninitiated. Certain sibyls are designated as Searchers and spend their lives seeking out women worthy of the order, which are few and far between. Once a Sibyl is initiated, she may never leave on pain of death.

Deity Worship

Whether this race of beings should be worshiped or feared provides an interesting question for many in Avon. Are those who may walk on earth through the centuries without experiencing age or sickness gods or abominations? Though deities once numbered in the millions, their numbers have quietly dwindled in the last thousand years. Many have simply gone to sleep or transitioned to another realm, but some linger still. Some worshipers try to group deities into tidy categories to improve their comprehension, but the truth is that each deity transcends any recognizable label. Some can control fire or ice; others know the secrets of every warrior that has ever walked the earth; still others can heal any physical or mental wound. Most wander through the millennia alone, gradually blocking out the seemingly trivial concerns of mortals...unless they happen to cross paths with some particularly intriguing being or event.

SHE

The wild peoples of Avon – those who want as little to do with city dwellers as city dwellers want to do with them – have looked to SHE for guidance for as long as stars have been in the sky. Or so the remnants of ancient rituals and oral traditions seem to say. SHE controls nature, biological fortunes (the harvest, birth, death), and the ebb and flow of life. This entity is often also depicted and thought of as a nixie, a shape-shifting water spirit that can take on the form of any creature on earth. Worshipers are thought to have good luck if a wolf crosses their path, and offerings left for her at crossroads during a full moon can yield unexpected results.

OUR PLAYERS

Character Creation

At the start of each campaign, each player takes the following steps to create their character:

- 1) Select the character's sex, race, and class. Information about races and classes is detailed below in the RACE and CLASSES sections.

- 2) Select a free familiar or a special artifact; a player cannot select both.
 - a. The free familiar or artifact is assigned by the Director or chosen by the player and then vetted by the Director.
 - b. A familiar provides bonuses to the player and levels up with the player.
 - c. Special artifacts are interchangeable with others that the player finds throughout the campaign and provide extremely specific bonuses to the player when equipped. Only one artifact can be used/equipped at a time.

- 3) Select a free ability.
 - a. The free ability is assigned by the Director or chosen by the player and then vetted by the Director.
 - i. Examples of unreasonable starting abilities:
 1. Possessing all magical powers
 2. Absolute immortality
 3. A sword that can kill everything instantly
 - ii. Examples of reasonable starting abilities:
 1. Low-level ability to shoot small fireballs that do minimal damage (1-3 points) when they hit their target (although not instantly extremely skilled with it; it possibly is somewhat inaccurate, such as only hitting the target 1/5 or only causes 1 or 2 points of damage)
 2. Ability to use a shield (although not instantly extremely skilled with it)
 3. Ability to detect enemies that are in close proximity (in the next room or within a few hundred feet)

- 4) Give the character a name.

- 5) Distribute 10 free attribute points amongst the five universal attributes: Strength; Speech; Spirit; Eternal Life; and Balance.

PROGRESSION

Attributes

In *The Play's the Thing*, attributes are the foundational components for each character's combat and mental skills. They affect players' access to skills and the likelihood of success in combat and interpersonal situations (see STAGE BLOCKING section below).

Attribute List

Strength

This attribute develops melee combat skills (short range) and melee accuracy, from hand-held weapons and shields to unarmed combat.

- 1) Default: 6 points
- 2) Sample abilities (earned with level ups for knights; only 2 possible for other classes)
 - a. Fisticuffs – Level 2
 - Unlocks unarmed combat
 - b. Backstabber – Level 6
 - +2 damage if attack from behind with melee weapon)
 - c. Settle Down, Bro – Level 16
 - +3 strength in fist fights against magical people and magical animals
 - +1 Speech against humans
 - -2 Eternal Life (HP) against every other type of creature and class

Speech

Develops speech skills, including persuasion, intimidation, and seduction. Also includes cunning, which improves a player's ability to form strategies and think quickly.

- 1) Default: 4 points
- 2) Sample Abilities (earned with level ups for rangers; limit 2 for other classes)
 - a. Loudmouth – Level 4
 - Greater chance to get into brawls in bars and taverns
 - -1 Melee; intimidation attempts 50% more successful (+ ½ Speech rating to roll for intimidation success)
 - b. Silver Tongue – Level 6
 - +2 Speech against humans
 - -2 Speech against all other races; persuasion attempts are 50% more successful
 - c. Shepherd/Shepherdess – Level 10
 - +2 Speech with animals;
 - Can call nearby animals to fight alongside you or a companion for 2 turns

Spirit

This attribute determines the success and limits of magical abilities, passive and active. Sorcerers and sorceresses are especially sensitive to this attribute and rely on it to increase their damage and healing capabilities.

- 1) Default: 3 points
- 2) Sample Abilities (earned with level ups for sorcerers/sorceresses; 2 possible for all others):
 - a. Herbalist – Level 4
 - Can create health poultices for self and allies
 - Can level this ability up 2 times to increase efficacy and range of poultices (determined by Director)
 - b. Drain Life – Level 6
 - +1 Eternal Life for every turn that this attack is successfully hitting an

enemy

- Lasts for 4 turns maximum
- 2 turn cooldown

c. Ice is Nice – Level 14

- +2 Spirit
- Can freeze opponents for 1 turn
- Can level up once to increase efficacy and range of this ability (determined by Director; suggested: +2 more Spirit, can freeze opponents for 3 turns)

Eternal Life

This attribute determines a player's resistance to physical attacks. Some of these abilities yield improved resistance to magic attacks.

- 1) Default: 6 points
- 2) Sample Abilities (earned with level up for deities; 2 possible for all others):
 - a. Resurrection – Level 6
 - restore 25% of own health
 - -2 Balance
 - can level up 2 times to increase efficacy (to 50%) and to earn the ability to generate a healing cloud that heals any ally that enters by 25%
 - b. Dispel Magic – Level 10
 - remove all magical effects in a given area
 - can improve range with level up (determined by Director)

Balance

This attribute determines the accuracy and damage of magical and physical ranged attacks.

- 1) Default: 2 points
- 2) Sample Abilities (Earned with level ups for deities; 2 possible for all others):

a. Elven Fire – Level 18

- If attacking with a bow, a successful hit does the amount of damage rolled for half as many turns

Example

If a player attacks with a bow and his damage to the enemy amounts to 4 points, the enemy takes 4 damage for 2 turns ($4/2 = 2$).

Leveling Up

The frequency of leveling up occurs at increasingly longer intervals. Each time a player levels up, that player earns 4 more attribute points to distribute as desired.

See the following for the basic, default leveling up system. With this system, the campaign is intended to last for roughly 50 levels, culminating in a final confrontation with Shakespeare and Robin Goodfellow.

- **Default Level Up System**

- Every player begins at Level 1.
- The game contains **four degrees of quest difficulty**: simple, intermediate, advanced, and master.
- To move to Level 2, the player must complete 1 **simple, low-level quest**.
- In order to progress to Level 3, the player must complete 2 simple, low-level quests.
- In order to progress to Level 4, the player must complete 3 simple, low-level quests, and so on. This rule of adding one quest to the total needed to level up for low-level quests continues to increase and to apply for the entirety of the campaign.
- Once a player reaches Level 5, the player can pursue **mid-level intermediate quests**. At Level 5, a player only needs to complete 1 mid-level intermediate quest to level up, increasing by 1 with each successive level. This rule is essentially the same as the rule for low-level quests, except for the fact that it enters into play at Level 5.
- Once a player reaches Level 20, the player can pursue **advanced quests**, leveling up in the same manner as the aforementioned levels.

- Finally, once a player reaches Level 40, the player can pursue **master quests**, leveling up in the same manner as the aforementioned levels.

DIRECTOR NOTE

The success of a player's attempt at an action (e.g. attack, use of ability) is ultimately at the Director's discretion, but generally, if the roll's value is only slightly higher than the player's attribute rating, the player still should have a chance of completing that action, even if it is in a clumsy or less fulfilling manner. This game is intended to decrease the barrier of entry for new players and to give the Director and players space to focus on weaving a story together rather than on engaging in complex, intricate combat situations.

Abilities

- Each player chooses **1 ability for free** at the start of each campaign.
- Each player earns **1 ability point on every even level** as they level up.
- Each player can select 1 ability or skill within her class' primary attribute to learn on every even level.
 - Each ability within a player's own class costs 1 ability point.
 - A player may alternatively save ability points for later use.
- Each player may purchase an **unlimited number of abilities specific to their class**, but they still must purchase them with ability points.
- Each player may purchase up to **4 abilities specific to another class**.
- A player may select outside-class abilities from any or all of the other classes. A player does not have to purchase all 4 abilities from one other class.
 - These outside-class abilities instead cost 2 ability points each.
 - **Example**
A knight's primary attribute is strength, so a knight player gains 1 ability point and access to a new strength ability every two levels. The number of strength abilities that a knight may acquire is unlimited for as long as the game lasts, although she only gains an ability point on every other level. That knight can instead choose to spend that ability point on a skill or ability in another

attribute, but the knight can only choose two abilities from each of the other attributes for the duration of the campaign.

Ability Acquisition

In addition to attribute points, players also gain access to at least one new special skill or ability (determined by class and race) and may select one special skill or ability to learn each time that they level up.

While each attribute has a default point value, those point values change depending on which race and class a player has chosen. Race- and class-specific bonuses and penalties are outlined below in the Race and Class sections, respectively.

Stage Combat and Conflict Resolution

If another creature bites its thumb at you, you may feel as if you have no choice but to retaliate. If you choose to do so, refer to the following:

Each set of attribute points provides a guide for the number of d6 to roll when using that attribute in conversations, quests, or combat. The number of dice that a player rolls for a given stat increases in increments of six. Every player begins with 2d6 for each attribute until that attribute reaches the rating of a 9 or higher. Every time a player is 3 points away from the current maximum roll total for a given attribute, that player must add another d6 to roll for checks involving that attribute.

- **Example**

Say a player's Balance attribute increases from 8 to 9 points (3 points from the maximum of a roll of 12 with 2d6). That player now must roll 3d6 when determining combat or conflict resolution instead.

However, the following rule is a constant throughout the campaign: if a player rolls above the rating of the tested attribute, that player is less likely to succeed at the given endeavor. If the player rolls significantly above a tested attribute rating, the action should not succeed, but it is left to the Director's discretion.

The Director determines which attributes must be tested for a given action.

- **Example**

If a player is trying to persuade another character to do something, the Director would likely instruct the player to test her Speech rating, as communication is a fundamental element of the Speech attribute.

If a player is engaged in combat, damage is determined by the success of a player's roll. If a player is successful (rolls exactly or under the attribute's rating), the player does full damage. If a player's strength rating is 7 and the player rolls a 6, the player then causes 7 damage to the opponent's Eternal Life (against physical attacks, that is). If the player's strength rating is 7 and she rolls a 10, she either misses or causes less damage (left to the discretion of the Director).

Bard Specialization

Regardless of class or race, every player begins the game with the Bard Specialization, which provides the following:

1) Writing

- If a player writes and recites an original couplet or an original piece in iambic pentameter, they can earn a class-specific bonus for that play session. Only one bonus can be earned in this way per session.
 - Bonus Suggestions (Director may also determine)
 - +2 to Speech
 - +1 to a familiar's health (calming)
- In addition, if a player recites a couplet or a line in iambic pentameter from an existing Shakespearean play, that player can earn a lesser bonus (as compared to making something original). Only one bonus can be earned in this way per session.
 - Lesser Bonus Suggestions (Director may also determine)
 - +1 to Speech
 - +1 to Strength (courage)
- Iambic Pentameter
 - 10 syllables per line
 - Syllables alternate between emphasized and neutral beats

- **Example**

“But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?”

-- *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene 2

2) Ink Dispensary

- All players start with a default 5 point ink dispensary. Ink is especially rare in Avon, although it can be found via treasure chests, quest rewards, and select merchants in London.
- This resource is depleted whenever a player changes the outcome of an existing Shakespearean play.
- Players may also use this resource to undo one of the Director’s decisions or redo a roll.
- The Director decides the consequences (positive or negative).

3) Instruments

- If a player plays an actual instrument during the session, they earn a class-specific buff for that play session. Each player may only do this once per session.
 - Suggested Buffs
 - Knight: Shield Focus (+25% success with blocking)
 - Priest/Priestess: Healing Cloud (the entire party’s Eternal Life increases by 2 for the entire play session)
 - Sorcerer/Sorceress:

Races

Players may select their sex before or after selecting their class. Although all races have female and male counterparts, each race expresses the sexes differently, as outlined below. Players also have complete agency to tweak their characters in regards to sexual orientation and their place on the LGBTQIA spectrum in general.

Human

Humans are abundant in the realm of Avon. Although they are common, they are individually distinct and determined to achieve their goals. Most of them tend to work with physical weapons rather than magic. There is an even distribution of male and female humans throughout Avon, although they tend to gravitate towards one of the five principalities rather than live in the wild outskirts or in non-traditional environments.

1) Bonuses

- a. +1 Speech with other humans (modifier for special situations only)
- b. +1 Melee
- c. +1 Balance

2) Penalties

- a. -2 Eternal Life
- b. Eternal Life rating cannot exceed 50 points
- c. -1 Spirit

Fairy

Fairies are mischievous, highly intelligent, and unpredictable, often motivated by either personal gain or by playing tricks on others – particularly humans – for their own enjoyment. It should be noted that their intent is not always malevolent; they view this behavior as a way to be friendly and engage with others, as this is also how they interact with each other. However, a completely honest and lawful fairy would be a strange creature to encounter indeed. Most fairies are somewhat skilled in magic-related combat but are vulnerable in physical combat.

1) Bonuses

- a. +1 Eternal Life
- b. +1 Speech with all creatures
- c. +1 Spirit

2) Penalties

- a. -2 Melee
- b. -1 Balance

Ghost

Ghosts are nearly immune to physical attacks but extremely vulnerable to magic-related attacks and not particularly intelligent. Although they have some skill with magic, they are extremely clumsy and often morose about being trapped in this plane.

- 1) Bonuses
 - a. +3 Eternal Life
 - b. +2 Spirit
- 2) Penalties
 - a. -3 Speech with all creatures except for other ghosts
 - b. -2 Melee

Deity

Deities are less susceptible to both physical and magic-related attacks than other races and have a much higher Eternal Life rating than the other classes. However, they are extremely awkward and quiet, preferring to be alone rather than spend time with others, especially not mortals.

- 2) Bonuses
 - 1) +5 Eternal Life
 - 2) +1 Balance
 - 3) +1 Speech with other deities
- 3) Penalties
 - 1) -3 Speech with all other creatures
 - 2) -2 Melee

Classes

Players may choose from four classes, all of which have different skill sets and specializations. Each class has free access to its own class-specific skills and abilities, but players can access some of the skills and abilities of another class if they are willing to spend skill and ability points on them.

Knights

The knight is the traditional melee character in the game. They are strong and dutiful and operate on a just but merciful moral code. Corrupt knights are dangerous foes.

- 1) Bonus
 - a. +3 Strength
 - b. +2 Balance
- 2) Penalty
 - a. more susceptible to magic attacks (-1 Spirit)

Rangers

The ranger is the traditional rogue character in the game. They are quick-witted and sneaky as well as skilled with the wrangling of animals.

- 1) Bonus
 - a. Navigation bonus (+1 Speech when consulting maps)
 - b. +3 Speech
 - c. +2 Balance
 - d. poison resistance (+2 Eternal Life when contending with possible poisoning)
- 2) Penalty
 - a. more susceptible to magic attacks (-2 Eternal Life against magic attacks)
 - b. weaker melee attacks (-1 Strength)

Sorcerer/Sorceress

The sorceress is the most ambiguous of magical characters in the game. Their alliances are unclear and they have access to extremely powerful entropy abilities.

- 1) Bonus
 - a. Can control elements (select and improve with level up)
 - b. Immune to curses and hexes
- 2) Penalty
 - a. more susceptible to physical damage
 - b. healing spells are less potent (-1 to efficacy of any healing spell)

Priest/Priestess

The priestess is the most benevolent magical character in the game, focused on healing and supporting the party. They also can calm tense situations, such as attempting to resolve the centuries-long feud between the Capulets and Montagues. Do not underestimate them; they may be the difference between life and death.

- 1) Bonus
 - a. +2 Speech
 - b. +3 Balance
 - c. Immune to demon possession
- 2) Penalty
 - a. Highly susceptible to physical damage (-2 Eternal Life against melee attackers)

STAGE BLOCKING

Turns

- At the beginning of the session, each player rolls 1d6. The player with the highest roll goes first; continue to roll in the event of a tie. The order proceeds with the person to the first player's right as second, the person to the second player's right as third, and so on.
- Each player takes a structured turn, in the determined order, during the session. During their turn, each player can perform any actions they desire within an 8-minute period. This rule is intended to keep all of the players on task and engaged. This time limit will also prompt the Director to help inexperienced players when they are stuck in order to complete the turn within the allotted time.
 - The only **exception** to this rule is whenever the players are **engaging in combat**. In the case of combat, two or more players may coordinate joint attacks and flanking and enact their plans at the same time. If two or more players are acting at the same time.

CAST MEMBERS

Preset Players

The following characters are existing players from one of Shakespeare's plays. Any of them may be used as a starter character for an actual player or as an NPC. In either case, the preset character will progress just like any typical original character – the player may distribute attribute points as desired, choose abilities, etc. – but the Director advances the character if he or she is an NPC.

Hecate

Play: *Macbeth*

Race: Deity

Class: Sorceress

Faith: Pantheist (believes that God = non-supernatural synonym for Nature/the Universe and for the laws that govern Nature/the Universe)

Ability: Free, starting ability: fireball (1-4 damage; accuracy depends on Balance rating); all abilities are tied to fire-related destruction and fire shields.

Further Information: Hecate is actually SHE, the Wolf Mother that many in Avon have worshiped for centuries. She is quick-tempered, supernatural, and unpredictable.

Players of Interest

The Weird Sisters

Play: *Macbeth*

Information: These three witches enjoy meddling in human affairs and use their ability to see the past, present, and future to prey on the desires of humans. They were once Sibyls, but they performed a black magic ritual together that involved a human sacrifice. Rather than execute the women, the Sibyls cast the witches out to fend for themselves in exile. They now have an enchanted encampment just outside of Edinburgh and are simply biding their time until someone pays them a visit...be it Macbeth. Or you.

LOST FOLIO OVERVIEW

The following sections list details and suggestions regarding selected Shakespearean works. Players and the Director (GM) may choose to use any of the following quest prompts, diverge from the given prompts, or create their own using existing and original, vaguely Shakespearean characters. The works selected are

Prelude

Detail Fates intro

Selected Play Details

This section provides basic information about one of Shakespeare's most well-known plays coupled with Quest Prompt below.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Four young human lovers who are trying to sort out mismatched love and a troupe of amateur actors wander into the wondrous Forest of Arden, where they encounter a handsome fairy king and his beautiful fairy queen. Robin Goodfellow assists Oberon in his scheme to playfully toy with Titania – what else are immortals to do? One of the actors turns into a half-donkey and Titania falls for him via a questionable potion supplied by Oberon. By the play's conclusion, the lovers end up with their true loves and the actors return to their normal states and forget their strange experience but somehow know that they are forever changed.

QUEST PROMPT: Directly from an Existing Play*Lovers' Quarrel***Play:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream***Setting:** Forest of Arden**Difficulty Level:** Simple**Players:** Titania (Queen of the Fairies), Oberon (King of the Fairies), Assorted Fairies: Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed, a troupe of human actors**The Tale**

Forced into braving the Forest of Arden in order to reach the Oracle of Delphi, the party first encounters a blinding, bright entity that seems to delight in changing the party's location. The party members feel disoriented and confused, as the entity teleports the party backwards and forwards if you try to attack it. Attacking the fairy ends the quest and the party must try to find another way around or through the forest.

If you instead send a Ranger to talk to the entity and the Ranger rolls exactly or below her Speech rating, the creature reveals itself to be Peaseblossom, a fairy in Queen Titania's court. As long as the Ranger is not hostile, the persuasion attempt succeeds. If the Ranger rolls under her Speech rating, she may also convince the fairy to join the party after the completion of the quest.

After hearing your tale about needing to see the Sibyls to gain insight on the campaign that lies ahead, Peaseblossom escorts you Queen Titania. In order to gain Titania's aid, the party must defeat King Oberon's carnivorous plants. The carnivorous plants are mostly immune to magic but are easily dispatched by melee characters, as their Eternal Life against physical attacks is just 3 points.

Each player may roll up to three times to collect herbs for potions along the way; if players roll exactly or below their Eternal Life scores, they successfully acquire an ingredient. Players may share ingredients in order to craft potions.

The party's main goal is to mediate between Titania and Oberon. They are quarreling over Oberon's joke – that is, when he tricked Titania into falling in love with an actor who was half donkey and half human. The party may do any of the following:

- 1) Resolve the conflict via negotiations (maintaining the general intended progression of the story according to the actual play). Robin Goodfellow will try to steal an artifact from you.

- 2) Poison all of the fairies and claim the kingdom for yourselves.
- 3) Poison all of the actors, thereby starting a war in the neighboring Bohemia.

SELF-SCORE

Bonuses

(+5%) Background/theme is very interesting, original, or just very detailed.

I have always been interested in Shakespeare and have read most of his works many times. I conducted thorough research to ensure that I had completely accurate details before I delved into creating the alternate universe of Avon. I gave every region its own distinct personality and struggles.

(+5%) Background/theme is very clear and well-explained.

I put many hours into this portion of my RPG in particular. I wanted everything about the theme to be clear and specific. I also made sure to pay attention to formatting and making important keywords bold in order to draw the reader's attention to key points in this document.

(+5%) Rules section ties in with background/theme very well.

All classes, races, and locations in this RPG are directly tied to Shakespeare's plays. I chose classes and races entirely based on patterns and repetition I noticed while rereading the Bard's work.

(+1%) Rules section is very clear and well-explained.

I still could flush the rules out a bit more, but my rules section has improved significantly since my prototype, especially my leveling up and combat sections.

(+4%) Stats/skills/abilities/classes rules are very interesting or original.

I tried to stray from conventional naming for abilities and attributes to immerse the players in the realm of Avon and the world of Shakespeare. I also think that the elements of the Bard Specialization are unique, especially supplying rewards for playing actual instruments and for reciting and writing in iambic pentameter. This game is definitely crafted for literary performers, and I think the attributes, suggested abilities, and Bard Specialization deliver on that.

(+3%) One or more really cool maps.

The countries' locations are integrated with their personalities. I think this reflects the thought and care that I put into crafting the map layout.

(+2%) Professional-level graphic design/layout/art.

My map is a step up from a basic hand-drawn map but not a beautiful work of art.

DISCRETIONARY

(+1) Included preset character to get a new player started.

This inclusion supports my goal of trying to make an RPG that is accessible for new players.

Penalties

(-4%) Rules section is a bit short (less than 4000 words).

My rules section is around 3036 words. However, I don't think I deserve the full penalty because I feel as if a word count requirement almost discourages writing in a clear and concise fashion. I feel like I have written my rules clearly and avoided flowery embellishment so that the rules are more accessible and explicit. I also provided examples whenever I was not sure if my rules were completely clear. I also am not sure about all of the sections are counted as rules, so I may have missed sections that actually count towards the word count.

$$75 + 26 - 4 = 97\%$$