

EDGE THE OVER

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WITH CHRIS LITES

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THE
OVER**

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This edition is dedicated to Robin D. Laws,
who inspired the homebrew campaign that became *Over the Edge*
and whose contributions to Al Amarja outshined my own.

Over the Edge was made possible through the efforts of thousands of backers on Kickstarter and hundreds of playtesters online and at Origins and Gen Con. Thank you!

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SPECIAL THANKS: Justin Alexander, Jessica Banks, Bob Brynildson, Jerry Corrick, Nicolas Gluesenkamp, Kyla MCT, Jenae Pedersen, Travis Winter, and everyone at Source Comics and Games

Digital Edition v1.0

www.atlas-games.com

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CHAPTER ZERO



INTRO TO THE OUTFRÉ

IT BECAME NECESSARY TO DESTROY THE TOWN TO SAVE IT.

—UNNAMED U.S. MAJOR, 1968

Over the Edge is designed to highlight your creativity. The character generation rules produce unique characters that are ready to engage in the action, for good and ill. The mechanics are streamlined so you can focus on taking the story in any direction that calls to you. The setting is modern and weird, allowing you to incorporate details from the real world into your character design as a player or into your scenario design as a gamemaster. The setting of Al Amarja described here is full of interesting details, but what really counts is what you and your friends come up with on your own.

Genetically engineered assassins, transdimensional tourists, covert brainwashing programs, mind-expanding drugs, art inspired by nonhuman intelligences, roving baboons that want your sandwich, a State apparatus that's "here for you," and secret histories of our world — all these and more can be found on Al Amarja. Or sometimes, instead, these things find you.

What is *Over the Edge*?

The game's setting, characters, and rules all lean toward fast, weird action.

ISLAND OF THREAT AND PROMISE

The Atlantic island of Al Amarja offers opportunities found nowhere else, and many of its dangers are also found only here. In the game world, Al Amarja is a crossroads of mind-controlling conspiracies, twisted dimensions, inhuman depravity, questionable science, unholy commerce, and cutting-edge art. At your gaming table, it's a locus for whatever dangerous urban weirdness the gamemaster or players can dream up.

STORY-FORWARD CHARACTERS

The brightest feature of *Over the Edge* has always been the memorable characters that players invent. Players have great freedom to create the characters they want, and features such as a character's question mark and trouble provide dramatic hooks for exciting play.

FAST CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The system for rolling dice to resolve conflicts is streamlined, allowing gamemasters to pace the action from methodical to fast. In addition to generating a number that determines success and failure, the dice generate "good twists" and "bad twists." These results provide good and bad surprises beyond simply success and failure. You can even fail with a good twist or succeed with a bad one.

INSPIRATION FROM ANYWHERE

Every textbook, song, treatise, poem, painting, abstract, scripture, experiment, doctrine, or catalog that speaks to you is fair game for including in *Over the Edge*. Art, history, religion, psychology, biology, physics, engineering, and anthropology — anything from your education and experience can inform your game.

Vision for *Over the Edge*, 2019

THIS IS A WAR UNIVERSE. WAR ALL THE TIME. THAT IS ITS NATURE. THERE MAY BE OTHER UNIVERSES BASED ON ALL SORTS OF OTHER PRINCIPLES, BUT OURS SEEMS TO BE BASED ON WAR AND GAMES. ALL GAMES ARE BASICALLY HOSTILE.

—WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS, TAPED CONVERSATION, PUBLISHED 1991

A relaunch of the game where everything is new again. Nothing is a retreat. The island of Al Amarja completely re-envisioned. Every conspiracy, every

neighborhood, every major gamemaster-character is portrayed with a new spin. Dr. Nusbaum, the Glugs, the Terminal — everything old gets a new take. GMs

who love some 1992 versions of things can pick and choose 1992 elements and 2019 elements to make a hybrid setting, as they please. No attempt is made to square the new setting with the old one; it's not "25 years later." Everything is fresh.

- New core mechanic produces discrete results, not just a number on a sliding scale. It's more evoca-

tive and less arithmetical.

- New character traits propel action.
- New world details keep everyone guessing.
- New narrative rules improve storytelling.

Earlier Editions of *Over the Edge*

Most of the content in the earlier editions can find its way into your campaign, if you like. The old system is different, but most of the content was free-form background material and solid gamemastering advice, and that's all usable. Most of the characters, businesses, and conspiracies in the 21st-century version of the game have counterparts in the 20th-century version, and the gamemaster can mix and match. This game is your game, and you should do with it as you please. Also, I still get royalties on sales of the old edition, so if you don't have your copy already, my friends at Atlas Games can set you up.

SUPPORT MATERIAL FOR EARLIER EDITIONS

You have the best of both worlds. On one hand, Atlas Games has published more support material for *Al Amarja* than you can ever use, so that's good. On the other hand, it's for earlier editions of the game, so you can use that material only by deliberately changing it to suit the new game. Using the old material requires mental work, labor that transforms someone else's ideas into your own concepts.

USING THE WARP SYSTEM

The original system from 1992 is so good that I could have touched it up and used it again. But fans of the WaRP system already have it and don't need me to repeat myself. If you love the WaRP system, you can see for yourself how easy it is to use that system with the game's new content.

This Book

Forewarned is forearmed.

DON'T OBEY THESE RULES

Follow these rules like you follow good advice: carefully but without ever abandoning your discretion. Embody them, roll them around in your head, but make them serve you rather than the reverse. All intentional communities are consensual. Roleplaying games are a special kind of art where the consumer is also an artist.

GENDER AND PRONOUNS

This text uses the singular "they" when referring to a player-character because, why not? It uses "she" when referring to the gamemaster because every *Over the Edge* gamemaster unwittingly channels a shard of Monique D'Aubainne's identity, as she insinuates herself deeper into our reality. By spelling this danger out to you in the form of a metatextual comment, I prevent your subconscious defenses from protecting you.

STRUGGLE FOR REALITY

The game book you hold in your hands is an epiphenomenon, generated by reality waves from a parallel universe in a nearby branch/angle. There, the struggle, or jihad, for reality is all-consuming. The catastrophic powers unleashed in that universe are felt in other universes up and down the angularity, including our own. The alternate realities in which your *Over the Edge* story arcs take place are all much closer to that source of conflict than we are. What seem to be random ideas invented for your diversion are actually disturbing reflections, distorted through recursive transduction, of a sister universe that is in deep trouble. We can never know what it all means or what's really happening there, but that's their problem. Like light from a long-dead star, these reality waves may well represent a world-shattering struggle that has already taken place and been lost. There's nothing you can do.

Once you start playing *Over the Edge*, you will notice little elements of the “fictional” world appearing in your own life. You might run across someone whose name is clearly a fabrication from the Edge. You might read about or encounter unusual transgressions, remarkable people, counter-culture trends, dark philosophies, and perhaps scientific discoveries that all reflect the “fiction” of this “game.” Don’t be alarmed. The elements of that distant reality that seep into our own are inconsequential. Feel free to delight in these little grace notes that only you and others like you can notice, and don’t tell your psycho-therapist about them. These little aberrations are inconsequential. The danger of anything world-threatening making the leap into our “reality” is negligible. Breathe easy.

THERE IS NO MORAL...

...to this story. If your human heart is beating, the action you experience playing this game will have morals. There’s no need or possibility to be explicit about them.

USING TWO BOOKS

As the gamemaster, or GM, you could use two copies of this book. This game is about drawing out your imagination and the imaginations of your players, so you might benefit from having a copy that you can mark up with margin notes, impromptu edits to the material, references to the characters or players at your table, and whatever it takes to help you make the game your own. Dog-ear the pages, stick tape or tabs to the pages you reference the most, and staple shut the pages that you don’t want anyone else to see. No wizard is shy about marking up their own grimoire, and the book you’re holding is your own book of shadows, your personal and personalized guide to transforming the untrue into the true. Not writing in your book is like not getting a tattoo. You should make this book so personal to yourself that you don’t want others to read it. If you’re ever done with it, burn it. If you pass it along to someone else, it’s like saying it was never yours. This game is my book and not yours, until you write in it.

Meanwhile, you probably want a clean copy to share with the players. You might want them reading certain sections of background material without seeing your notes. If you want to get one of your players to try their hand at GMing, you’ll want an unmarked copy to hand over to them. You might also find it useful to have two copies just for yourself, so you can effectively have the book open to two different spreads at the same time. You might also feel better about marking up a copy of the game if you have a second, unmarked copy that you can keep for posterity.

EXTRA STUFF ON THE INTERNET

By the time you read this as a printed book, there should already be plenty of good resources on the Internet. If you’re reading this as a digital edition, there are probably also plenty of good resources on the Internet. Go see.

INVOCATION

O Aristoteles! O Jayarāsi Bhatta! O Ibn-Sinā!

Cast not your dead eyes upon us.

Isaac Newton! O Charles Darwin! O Rosalind Franklin!

Behold us not.

You showed us the universe.

But we prefer magic. Can you blame us?

The dead begrudge us nothing.

So be it...