

Action Hero

By David Caffee



Avalon Games



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**All comments, suggestions and contacts can be
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Introduction

Action Hero is the ultimate guide for GMs who want to push their action campaigns to the limit. This sourcebook serves as an aide to help action games run quicker and smoother. It is also here to provide story ideas and tips on customizing your campaigns for maximum thrills. Like the name suggests, this book is intended for cinematic adventures where the action is non-stop, car chases are a way of life and guns never have to be reloaded.

The Script

Every action/adventure campaign starts with a basic plot or at least a premise. Sometimes an action game can get slowed down by too much GM planning. The best idea is to play it by ear and make most of the scenes up as you go along. The “script” is really just a linked series of ideas for action sequences. The GM may write out key descriptions and bits of dialogue, but most sequences will be crafted by the players. When preparing for a gaming session, it is advised that the GM focus on maps, stats for bad guys and anything else that will make the game run quicker.

A good storyline should start with a dramatic introduction, perhaps a brief action scene. Everyone should be familiar with everyone else’s characters, even if the characters themselves haven’t met yet. The GM should work with the players and encourage them to come up with backgrounds for their characters. Think of NPC’s and plot hooks based on these backgrounds, then think of ways to connect the characters to each other. The goal is to get each character sucked

into the plot as quickly as possible. For example, a character may get a frantic phone call in the middle of the night. His estranged wife is telling him that their son has been kidnapped. Moments later another call comes in, the character’s old boss is calling to say that he has to take on one last assassination mission or else. That kind of instant beginning is impossible unless the GM knows that the character is a former CIA assassin who is trying to get involved in the lives of his son and estranged wife. In this example, not only is the first character immediately drawn into the adventure but the plot hook that’s been created can be used to draw other characters into the mix as well.

Once the characters have been introduced to the source of conflict in the story, the GM just has to sit back and watch the bullets fly and the cars turn over. The rest of the adventure really consists of a string of action sequences brought together by the actions of the PCs and a few role-playing scenes. The GM should limit the amount of time spent investigating, talking to people, or doing research. It’s okay to play it fast and loose with the dice if that propels the game toward the next action scene. Suppose a player announces that his character is doing a Computer Use skill check to hack into a computer network and find the location of the enemy’s base. Since the GM wants the characters to storm the enemy fortress anyway, he decides that the character’s Computer Use check will succeed before the dice are even rolled. If the player rolls really poorly then fudging the dice won’t work since it’s obvious that you are just giving it away. In this example, the GM ignores the standard rules for hacking into computers in order to keep the game running smoothly.

Since the GM can never tell what the characters are going to do once the adventure starts, the best he can do is be ready to improvise. At the same time, there are probably one or two action sequences that the GM just can't wait to run. If the GM gets these scenes ready ahead of time, then they can be slipped into the story at a moment's notice. A GM might have the notion to have a chase scene running through a crowded water park. This scene could necessitate a few notes on pushing your way through a crowd, rules for slippery surfaces, or even penalties for grappling while going down a water slide.

Plot Hooks

A plot hook is a basic premise that sets up an adventure. Essentially, the hook is a catch or plot twist that initially grabs the players' attentions and gets them involved in the action. A good plot hook is exciting and sets the tone for the rest of the adventure.

A plot hook generally appears at the first scene of the first gaming session. Generally this is the place where the GM introduces the characters to the central conflict of the adventure. A plot hook might also pop up in the middle of a game. When it is used this way, the plot hook becomes a way for the GM to introduce new foes or divert the players' attentions away from other things. Below are a few examples of how a plot hook can draw the characters into an action game.

- The government secretly gathers together a team of experts from various fields.
- Cryptic messages begin appearing all around the heroes.
- A routine assignment turns deadly.
- The characters find that a mutual acquaintance has been murdered.
- A friend of one of the characters makes a desperate phone call, only to be cut off

in the middle.

- A renegade government agent begins stalking the PCs.

Pacing

Pacing is everything in a game of lightning fast combat and frenzied chases. In order to capture the feel of an over the top action adventure, you need to mimic the intensity and tempo of an action movie. The game should leap from scene to scene without hesitation. The GM should go light on role-playing scenes, strategically placing the "talking parts" in places where they will add the most drama. Any time the pace slows down, the players get distracted or more than a few minutes goes by without a dice roll then something is going wrong. Skillfully placed encounters can help keep the game blazing along. Likewise, a group of reoccurring villains is a great way to surprise the characters when the pace drops or the group gets off track.

Breaks

Taking a break to stretch your legs or drive down to the corner store can seriously slow down the pace of the game. The GM would do best to limit the number of breaks that are taken. If you have to choose between three hours of non stop action or gaming for six hours with long breaks and multiple interruptions, choose the former. The nature of an action campaign necessitates that the GM maintains a roller coaster pace. Generally a break should be called before or after a role-playing scene, never in the middle of an action sequence. After a break is over the GM should get immediately back into the action.

Rising Action

When you are planning out your storyline, rising action will be an important consideration. If you start the game off with a massive fight sequence and then switch to a long period of role-playing, then you are going to cause a dip in the action. The

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Battle Tiles, Avalon Games, is a fun, and exciting way to improve your gaming experience. Use these high quality map tiles to create new and challenging battle arenas for your miniature gaming, or use them to create maps for role playing games of all types.

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At a cost of less than fifty cents a page, and hundreds of possible combinations, you can't go wrong with Battle Tiles, so get started and have a battle to remember.

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Need a fast picture of what your character looks like. These professional, full color works will fit the bill.

Each set comes with 10 full color portraits of different fantasy characters, each suitable for use in all of the most popular role-playing games.

Sets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are all ready for download, so go get 'em.

Mini-Games

Avalon Games is happy to offer tons of little games, that we like to call Mini-Games, and with over 30 titles, you are sure to find one or more games that will blow your mind. Little, however, does not mean lame. No, these are great gaming gems, just in small bite sized forms. Fun, fast and cheap, they are a great way to get some gaming fun into a short block of time. Have a look, you might be surprised at what you find.

Worlds of Wonder

Worlds of Wonder is a fast, simple to play RPG system designed for use by advanced players who wish to create detailed characters without having to roll on endless charts and deal with endless rules.

After 30+ years of playing, running and designing games, be they RPG's or board games, we at Avalon have come to one conclusion. Its not the game's rules that make it enjoyable, but the people you play with. With that in mind, Worlds of Wonder takes the most important aspect of any RPG, the character creation, and tries to offer players, and their GM, the tools needed to make the time spent playing together well worth the time spent creating the characters.

Worlds of Wonder Expansions

Want more Worlds of Wonder? Try one of the many expansions for the system. More monsters, foes, magic, skill sets and gaming stuff to keep you occupied for weeks, months, hell maybe for a lifetime. Ever expanding, the WoW system is made for gaming fun, so don't wait, have an adventure and enter Worlds of Wonder.

Arcana

Arcana is generic world, designed for use with any Fantasy RPG System, and so the information presented here and in other Arcana expansions will of course be a bit vague as to stats, levels and powers. The intention is to give the GM and players a world rich in personality, history and depth, one where they can seek adventure, but use any RPG system they feel most conferrable with.

The basics of the game world are presented here in the core book, but as expansions are released, the complexity of the world will grow as more and more of its history, dangers and wonders are explored. When it is all said and done, Arcana will become a vast world of detailed and expansive depth, one where that you and your friends can full explore.

Game Geek

Avalon's Monthly game magazine, inside you will find tons of gaming goodness, free games, add on materials for many of Avalon's titles, and a monthly sections dedicated to S&G, Battle Axe and Arcana. Great game stuff each and every month.

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loans that
change lives

S & G Battle System

Avalon's premier game system the S&G battle system allows you to play skirmish level engagements, and do so with a fast, easy to learn system that also allows for endless expansions and genres. With S&G you can fight battles between fantasy based elves and orcs, or blast off into the cold hard future with space marines and aliens.

2

Warlord Grom



2

4

Strength 3

Speed 8 / 1

Movement 4

Adrenal 4

Will 4

Health



Weapons and Armor


Weapons	As mod	Damage mod	Notes
Scimitar	-1	+1	-
Dagger	+0	-1	-

Special Abilities


- 1. Savage Blow (Attack, 3)**
 Grom can make a single savage attack, often killing a foe outright with a single blow of his deadly scimitar. You must declare this ability is being used before Attack Dice are rolled. On a single attack, Grom may add +2 Attack Dice to his total for that attack. (With no limit to the number of dice that can be rolled)
- 2. Command (Move, 2)**
 Grom may use his loud demanding bellows to command other orcs near by. When this ability is used, Grom may activate any one orc character, who is within five squares. This activated character may perform one action. (Note that the character may still take their normal actions when their turn comes up.) Gram may perform this ability but once a turn.
- 3. Shatter Shield (Attack, 1)**
 Grom often shatters shields and weapons with his mighty blows. Declare this ability before the Attack Dice are rolled. If Grom scores a hit, instead of doing any damage, he may shatter, and thus destroy, a foe's readied weapon or shield (Your choice.) If the foe does not have a readied weapon or shield, then this ability has no effect.

Magical items gain a save. Roll 1D6, and on a roll of 6+, the item resists the effect. Per five points of the item's cost, over the first five points, adds an extra +1 to the die roll is gained.







Wolf




Kir




Sie




Night Stalker



Major Glory



Lamia



Gyea

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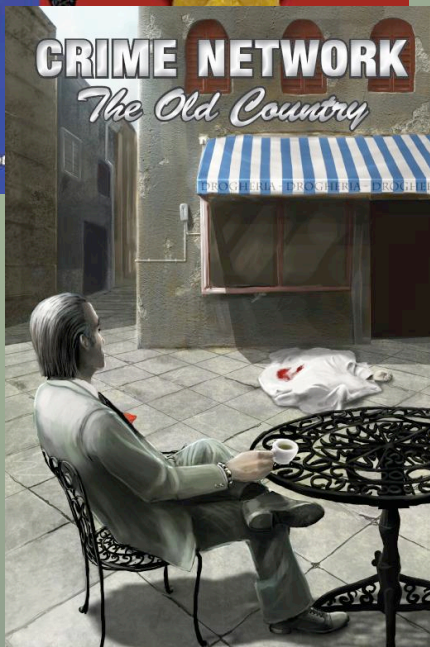
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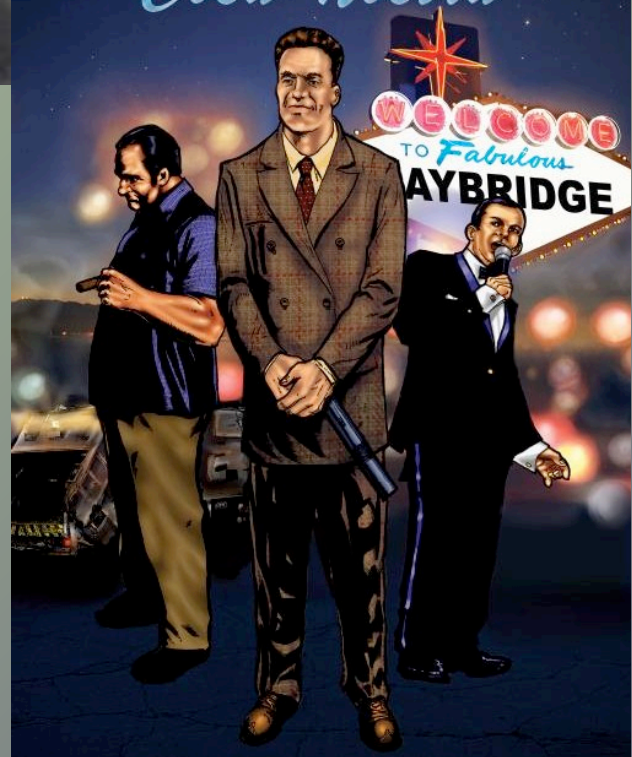
CRIME NETWORK

The Old Country



CRIME NETWORK

Cosa Nostra



Battle Axe is a simple to play tabletop system for skirmish level battles. Using cards instead of dice, you will find the game to be less luck based and much more tactical in nature. The rules and cards provide here will be enough to get you started, and new characters and rule expansions are on the way so you can continue to increase both the size and composition of your War Bands.

