Yellow Belt

What's a roleplaying game? The dictionary definition of *roleplaying* is to "act out or perform the part of a person or character." So, a *roleplaying **game*** is a game where you adopt the persona of a character and act as if you were them, at a most basic level. A role-playing game can be *rules-light*, meaning there is a greater emphasis on the roleplaying half than the game half, or *rules-heavy*, meaning the opposite.

There are two types of participants in the typical roleplaying game (referred to hereafter as RPG): The *Player*, who adopts the persona of a particular character, who they usually create, and the *Game-Master* (or *GM*) who describes the environment, the results of a Player's action or inaction, as well as playing other characters not controlled by a Player (or *NPC*s). Yellow Belt involves 1 GM and at least 1 Player.

Yellow Belt is meant as a rules-light introduction to roleplaying. Before proceeding, determine which person is to be GM for this play session. You can switch up the GM each subsequent session, or if they like it they can continue the role. The majority of this guide is aimed at the GM, as they have the most important job.

Character Creation: The GM should take a short poll to see what kind of game the group should play, such as fantasy, sci-fi, post-apocalyptic, etc. Once you've come to a consensus, give everyone a moment to think, then go around and invite each Player to introduce their characters. If they hesitate, prompt for things such as their name, their background, or some of their abilities and areas of expertise.

If they want to use magic or be able to have some other kind of super-ability, work with them to determine how it should work, in such a manner that keeps the game fun for everyone involved.

At the start, either give each player the same amount of Life or tweak it based on their physical descriptions. Keep track of how much they have, and give them a verbal description of their current status when prompted.

Campaign Creation: It is entirely up to the GM to prompt the players once the game begins. A couple of tips: start with a simple premise, such as awakening on an island, or attending a school. Based on what your Players want to do, adapt your internal view of the world accordingly. Taking notes will help. Don't be afraid to create outlandish scenarios as the story progresses.

Overcoming Challenges: Inevitably, your Players will encounter obstacles in their adventure, be it difficult terrain, attacking bandits, or attempting to seduce a bar-maid. Whatever the case, you have two options to resolve these scenarios:

1. If you are in possession of a twenty-sided die (1d20), you can roll it to determine if they succeed. The roll should aim to meet or surpass a particular Target Number, or TN. Come up with TN mentally before you roll, based on the character's abilities, the environment,

the obstacle, etc. If you roll a 20, it is a Crit-Success, which is an automatic success, and should grant some additional real or perceived benefit. A 1 is a Crit-Fail, or a Botch, and is an automatic failure with an additional real or perceived disadvantage. You can roll the die for the players, or they can roll it themselves.

2. If you don't have any dice handy, I present an alternative method. Depending on the difficulty of overcoming said obstacle, prompt the player in question for a number from 1 to a number of your choice, based on the difficulty, e.g. for a trivial task you could ask for a number between 1 and 5. Additionally, declare how close to a hidden TN they need to be to succeed (1 to 5 within 2, for example). If they guess the exact number, they Crit-Succeed. You can also have a Botch Number (BN), where if they guess the exact BN it is a Crit-Fail.

   a. This method allows you to 'fudge' the rolls a bit, meaning you can sway the story and the game in a particular direction to make the game more fun *for everyone*.

Ending the game: When you feel that the story is reaching its conclusion, or the players are getting bored, despite interesting scenarios for them to explore, it can help to suggest starting fresh. Some new characters, a new setting, or a new premise, can help to revitalize players. Make sure it's a unanimous decision, and bring your current Campaign to a close with a bang.

Alternatively, if everyone in the group dies horribly, it can be a good opportunity to switch the game up like above. If everyone is still invested in the current campaign, they can create new characters and keep playing. Encourage them to make *new* characters, instead of the same character yet again.