

what do you love?

▲ _____

▲ _____

□ □ □ □ □

passion

against what are you hardened?

▲ _____

▲ _____

□ □ □ □ □

strength

to what are you susceptible?

▲ _____

▲ _____

□ □ □ □ □

vulnerability

Steppenwolf

name two events that defined your life.

Not necessarily brief instances – possibly lifelong circumstances that have shaped who you are. Specify what each event means to you – how you were affected by it.

▲ _____

▲ _____

describe a paradoxical character trait.

Something that defines you, but takes two polarized forms. E.g., dependability can be seen as trustworthy and constant (positive), or dull and boring (negative).

what is your ultimate (ostensible) goal?

What does the man want to accomplish?

introduction

Steppenwolf is a game about one man. This man will be portrayed by two players – one called the Traveler, and the other the Road. The Traveler will generally be responsible for the man's actions and interests, while the Road will help determine the man's adversity and environment.

Together, they will craft a story that concerns a pivotal moment in the man's life. This could involve accomplishing a great feat, finding an answer to a difficult question, some form of self-discovery, etc. It is certain that the man will succeed in his quest; what is uncertain is how he will arrive, and what it will cost him along the way.

to start

Never forget that the Traveler and the Road are working together to portray the man and his environment. Before play begins, the two players will have to agree upon a setting (time period, location[s], tone, overall plot, etc.). Then, they will begin defining the man's attributes.

- *Aspects*. Divvy up eight points between the three Aspects (Passion, Strength, and Vulnerability); each must be rated from 1 to 5. (These values represent modifiers to the Outcome die, used in conflict resolution.) Then, each player chooses something in answer to each Aspect's question, and describes it in the space provided.
- *Defining Events*. Both players must agree upon two elements of the man that are considered vital – experiences, relationships, even possessions, without which the man would not be who he is.
- *Paradoxical Trait*. How strange it is that humans so frequently contradict themselves. Consider what has been written about the man, and take a step back, observing him in a harsh and objective light. There will be something that conflicts at the core of his being – something at which he is very adept, but that causes him great stress. Something of which he is very certain, but which troubles him deeply. Be creative.

The man needs no name, nor do we require any specific details about his previous history (not yet, at any rate). His current disposition is presently what concerns us.

system

Each of the two players will need two standard (six-sided) dice, of different colors. In conflict resolution, the players will always roll both; they are called the Narrative and Outcome dice.

- *Narrative* determines who gets to choose their Aspect, and who gets narrative privilege (who gets to describe the scene).
- *Outcome* determines the general outcome of the conflict.

There are no specific rules for rewards or penalties (experience or combat damage, for instance). The stories described by the players, though they may be broad in scope, do not concern minute changes in the man's traits.

conflict resolution

What is at stake? What are the options? The man wishes to do something (defined by the Traveler), but something will be blocking him (portrayed by the Road). They must agree on what the options are: what happens if the Traveler succeeds, and what happens if the Road gets his way.

- First, both players roll their Narrative dice. The player with the highest roll gets to narrate the scene in any way they wish.
- Once Aspects are chosen, both players roll their Outcome dice simultaneously. Add Aspect modifiers to the Outcome dice, and determine which outcome succeeds.

Example. The man (Passion 4, Strength 1, Vulnerability 3) is being seduced by his wife's best friend. The Traveler wants the man to resist this temptation. The Traveler wins the Narrative roll, and chooses to use his Passion for his wife and children. He then rolls the Outcome: 3 (+ Passion 4 = 7). The Road rolls in response, using the man's Vulnerability to sexual situations, and comes up with 5 (+ Vulnerability 3 = 8).

Remember that the Road represents the man's adversity, or negative influence. Since he won the conflict (Outcome 8 over 7), the man will succumb to sleeping with his wife's best friend. However, the Traveler won the Narrative roll, so he will narrate the scene, even though his preferred outcome did not come to pass.