

THUNDER CRIME

Bullshit,
Loopholes,
And *Friendship*.

A Role Playing Ruleset by Ben Floss

MAKE IT UP AS YOU GO...

Welcome to the insipid, ridiculous, and absurd world of *Thunder Crime*, a tabletop roleplaying game for all ages over the age of 5 and under the age of 5 but not the age of 5.

This manual is to better guide you along the path of how to play, interact, and conspire against one another in what is essentially structured chaos.

Don't come into this rule set expecting a detailed “How to” of the step by steps. This game is just as much about luck as it is the creativity of those involved- which leads me to-

WHAT IS *Thunder Crime*?

Thunder Crime is a game of bulls**t, loopholes, and whatever the GM (Game Master) fancies.

It is a world created by the GM and players in tandem, ruled by the absurd, and governed by the twisted imaginations of the players who inhabit it.

It is a game about doing whatever you want, with whomever you want, to whatever you choose. Every action has a consequence though, so be prepared for both the highs and lows of unlimited freedom.

There is no set world to *Thunder Crime*, no races, no classes, and no set expectations other than the ones you yourself bring into the game.

Why even make rules then?

Think of these more as an outline. None of these rules are hard-in-place, rather just a collection of best practices I've found for explaining the mechanics and guiding the narrative (if you can call it that) for the most freeform and fun experience.

In this guide you will find GM tips and tricks, character creation setup, mechanics for how to play, and examples to better illustrate what the GM, as well as the players, have in store for them.

Thunder Crime is as hard or as easy as both the GM and players make it, and up to your own creativity as a player to get yourself into or out of any situation.

A WORD OF CAUTION

If you are an appreciator of rules, structures, dense lore, and practical dice systems; *Thunder Crime* is a completely different experience.

Thunder Crime lives and dies on the creativity, open-mindedness, inclusiveness, and improvisation of everyone involved. Players who have died can affect dice rolls. The GM position can be usurped by the players. Metagaming isn't just a viable strategy, it's a survival tactic.

As much as these guidelines are to prepare you for what to expect, it is paramount that you expect the unexpected and dive head first into any and all chaos to have the best experience with *Thunder Crime*.

Tools of the trade

Here is what you need in order to play *Thunder Crime*:

- 5x8 Notecards, and a lot of them. *(can also be substituted for post-it notes, copy paper, envelopes, gift cards, napkins, tissues, toilet paper- whatever you can write on)*
- Pencils or pens, and a lot of them.
- A table or surface to sit around *(can also be played online, but in person is a bit more exciting)*
- Six sided dice (referred to as D6), and a lot of them.
- Twelve sided dice (referred to as D12) *optional but not necessary.*

NOTECARDS

The notecards serve as character sheets, items, trophies, npc's (non-player characters), anything that can be written down should be prepared to be written down.

5x8 is recommended since they are relatively cheap and come in 100 and 150 packs at most grocery stores, drug stores, office supply stores or easily bought in bulk online. They also have a large amount of area to fit not only character information and abilities, but also items and additional details.

Post-it notes also work very well, and have the added benefit of a sticky strip should character cards want to be kept, or to attach to the bottom of your character as trophies or additional items/ details.

Notebook paper tends to be too large, but when ripped and distributed can work,

character permanency (pg 7) however tends to make this a less than ideal option.

PENCILS & PENS

For writing. There's gonna be a good bit of that in this game.

Pencils have the obvious benefit of erasers for when stats and abilities change, or when a character dies (pg 7)

TABLETOP

Like any old table. Something to sit around.

Zoom works too but it's just a lot more fun to shout at people directly next to you. Aggressive interpersonal conflict just doesn't work over the internet (that's just cyberbullying at that point.¹)

SIX SIDED DICE (D6)

Decisions, damage, and combat are all decided by D6 dice rolls, the more you have, the better.

Each player starts off with one D6, this number may change throughout gameplay.

You may often find yourself rolling multiple D6's at the discretion of the GM, or in reaction to another character's offensive against you (see *COMBAT*, pg 6). These rolls will be covered in more detail in the *PLAYERS* section (pg 8).

TWELVE SIDED DICE (D12)

This is the DM's dice. It is optional, but tends to give better results when dealing damage or resolving player rolls/ outcomes. Can be substituted easily for 2 D6 (Two six sided die). This is covered in more depth in the *GAME MASTER* (pgs 9-10) section.

¹ *Thunder Crime* fully champions Cyber Bullying

GETTING STARTED

Setting up is quick and easy, unless you want it to not be (*why would you do that?*).

It breaks down to a simple order of operation:

STEP #1: ESTABLISH A GAME MASTER

The GM (Game Master) is the arbiter and god of this world. This can be done by dice roll, coin flip, or even just pointing at someone and making them be the GM.

The GM has many irresponsibilities (pg 9-10), creative and otherwise, so it is often the best practice to choose the least mentally stable and/or least tied to reality of the group to be the GM.

This does come with its own share of detail orientation and note taking, as well as making sure the experience is as unfair or fair as possible to all of the players.

A GM will need to be able to think quickly and roll with the punches, as well as colorfully play out the successes and failures of the players.²

STEP #2: CREATE CHARACTERS

Every character is made up of 3 elements:

- Name
- Occupation
- Skills.

Your *Name* and *Occupation* are up to you, and can be whatever you want. This is your chance to put some backstory or motivations into your character.

You are only allowed 3 *Skills* to start off with. They can be tied to your name or job, but really can be whatever you want.

There are two options for *Skill* creating:

1. Write your own skills. They can be whatever you want, up to +3 and down to -3.
 - a. “+” adds that number to your roll, increasing its likelihood to happen
 - b. “-” subtracts from your roll, making it less likely to happen
 - c. Your stats can include *two* “+” and *one* “-”, **or** *two* “-” and *one* “+”, but you *Only get 3 skills to start*
 - d. Wordplay is paramount here, as it is best practice to make skills that can be misconstrued and twisted through litigation to benefit your character.
 - e. If you tend to argue semantics, *this is a good choice*.
2. Let the GM choose your 3 skills
 - a. These **DO NOT** have a *maximum* “+” or *minimum* “-”
 - b. They might not relate to your character.
 - c. This is a good option if you are stuck on creating skills **BUT** these also depend on how chaotic your GM is.

Every character has a starting HP (Hit Points) of 12.

These may change throughout the game, but you will always have 12 HP at the start, no matter what.

²Your friend who works in finance will be bad at GMing.

When your HP drops to 0, you are dead, and your character will be added to the corpse pile for that session.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Don't get too attached to any character. It will often be at the hands of something incredibly benign that they meet their death, and it is highly encouraged to make a new character and jump right back in upon the untimely death of a previous character. Thus is the yin and yang of thunder and crime³*

By the end of character creation, your character note card should look something like this:

Doctor Hamsplat
Disgraced Aesthetician
HP: 12
+2 to Eyebrows
-2 to Operating with a license
+3 to Mall Kiosks

If you want, your character occupation can motivate your character, otherwise it is best practice to come into the game with some kind of goal in mind, no matter how nebulous.



STEP #3: ESTABLISH SETTING

This is at the discretion of the GM to make it as collaborative or surprising as possible.

Unraveling the mystery of the starting point can lead to fun character interactions and world building, but can just as easily be replaced with a simple explanation of the setting by the GM to the players.

That being said, the start for *any* game of *Thunder Crime* must have the following:

1. All players waking up in chairs (or tied to chairs- see *Hard Mode* on pg 11)
2. All players having in front of them an individual Attache Case with one 9mm pistol and 100 rounds of untraceable ammunition (or a mysterious closed Attache case- again, see *Hard Mode* on pg 11)

This is the great McGuffin of *Thunder Crime*. The pistols are for them to use and interact with, if so desired.

However you as the GM can play with their usefulness at your discretion, or even substitute them for something else, depending on the game.

³ You should bow to your sensei now.

STEP #4: GAMEPLAY

All gameplay starts **exactly** as follows (unless you wanna do your own thing, I'm a book, not your dad):

GM: "Hello everyone, and welcome to *Thunder Crime*, a game of bullshit, loopholes, and whatever the GM fancies- I, (*whatever your dumb name is*), will be your GM. Now let's meet our players for the evening!"

All players then introduce their characters and skills, unless they have specifically requested not to.

GM: "Now everyone sit back, relax, and *roll initiative!*"

All players then roll initiative with their D6. You can then go Highest first, then in descending number, or highest first and move left from highest- whatever's easiest, the point is to take turns.

The player who is going first then has a few minutes to decide their actions, roll on their actions, and explore the world.

Player turns end at the GM's discretion, and players are allowed to involve other players in their turns.

ROLLING THE DICE

Decisions and actions are made by rolling your D6 as a player. Good outcomes and bad outcomes depend on what you roll.

Really these scores are up to the GM's discretion, but here is a general outline of how they function.

1- The worst possible outcome, catastrophic failure. Will probably result in injury, death, and possibly death for other players as well.

2- You didn't do it and you probably got hurt trying.

3- You didn't do it, and we didn't think you could. You've met expectations.

4- Meh, you did it, but we're not impressed.

5- You did it about as well as you could have done it.

6- The best possible outcome, catastrophic success. Will probably result in injury, death, and maybe death for other players as well.

When and how you use the dice rolls is decided solely by the GM, who is encouraged to make you roll *whenever they see fit* (pg 10).

COMBAT

Combat is resolved fairly simply in *ThunderCrime*-

The attacker rolls for their attack to hit. On a **4+**, it does.

On a **6**, the attack hits no matter what.

On a **3**, they miss.

On a **2**, the attacker opens themselves up for a counter attack.

On a **1**, the attacker misses *and* hurts themselves.

The defender then gets to roll to attack, should they choose, with the same outcomes based on their roll.

STEP #5: DEATH

As with real life, death is inevitable in *Thunder Crime*.

But death is never the end of a session, far from it. Death is merely a stepping stone to even more characters and interactions.

Once you die in *Thunder Crime*, you keep your initiative place/ turn order, only you get to make another character and start over- tied to a chair, with a briefcase in front of you.

Don't think of death as a hindrance, merely an opportunity to make an even more absurd and obtuse character.

How does *Thunder Crime* end?

When you win.

How do you win?

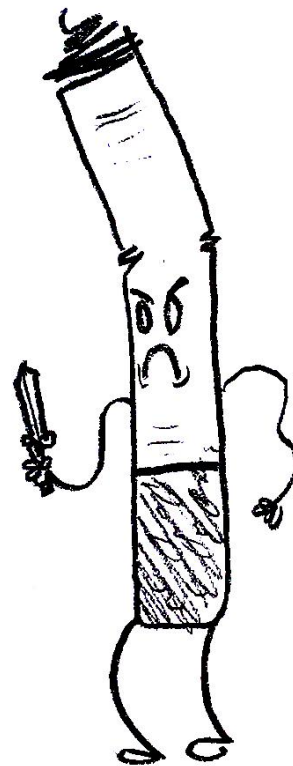
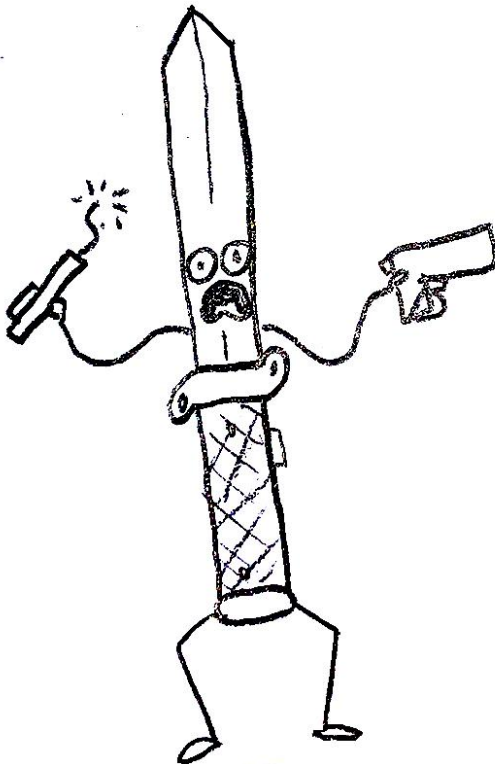
When the GM says you win.

Yeah, duh, but like, what are the win conditions?

Oh. I don't know.

What? Seriously?

Yeah. Pound dirt, nerd.



BEING A PLAYER

As a player in *Thunder Crime*, there is really only one goal-

-Whatever you want.

The best way to enjoy *Thunder Crime* is to create a character with either an adaptive goal, a nebulous goal, or a goal that is so bizarrely esoteric and specific that you will need to resort to plotting fratricide against yourself in the future.

Part of the gameplay is how *you* decide to build the experience. Going in without expectations is just as viable as going in with a ridiculous goal, what matters is flexibility.

Thinking on your feet, responding to prompts, and rolling with the punches (or in some cases, multiple murder attempts) is going to be what guides you as a player. Lose yourself in the absurdity of the character, and put your faith in the chaos that surrounds you.

It is very likely that a player plot will take over whatever plot the GM loosely constructed in the minutes before playing, and that's fine.

Instead of any steps or instructions, here's a list of things to try while you play *Thunder Crime*-



- ☐ Try to have the most dead characters by the end of the session.
- ☐ Roll to win *Thunder Crime* at the beginning of the game
- ☐ Find a bagel and eat it (in real life)
- ☐ Try to convince another player to be your horse
- ☐ Convince a horse to be a player
- ☐ Play as a horse playing a player
- ☐ Horse around with another player
- ☐ Create a binding contract for another players soul and trick them into signing it

The limits really are up to your imagination as you are both the best driving force for gameplay and the biggest obstacle.

Some examples of past goals are:

- ☐ A player playing as Wayne Gretzky was trying to reform the 1986 Edmonton Oilers Hockey team.
- ☐ A player playing as actor Bill Paxton was trying to collect every character Bill Paxton has ever played into one super group
- ☐ A player was trying to start WW1 by going forward in time, to the past, and killing himself
- ☐ A player was a cockroach trying to find garbage to eat.

Find a goal that fits your character, or something that you think will break the game, and stick to it. Your character may not survive, but the goal can stay consistent across many different characters, or change depending on who or what you want to play.

BEING A GM

If you are running a game of *Thunder Crime*, there are a few simple tricks that can help you create a wonderfully destructive playground for your players to frolic in.

There are no correct or incorrect situations to start your players in, problems to throw at them, or challenges for them to overcome. It is your job to add to the chaos and stir the pot when push comes to shove.

ESTABLISHING SETTING

Although partially covered on page 4, as GM you'll be responsible for the entire world that your session takes place in.

This includes plots, set pieces, size-everything that goes into the creation of a regular roleplaying game but simplified.

Again, since the point of the game is to be as freeform and improvised as possible, it's hard to give a set series of rules on how to start your session, so I'll provide some examples:

- ☐ Everyone wakes up in a crashing blimp
- ☐ Everyone wakes up inside of the bomb-bay of the Enola Gay and need to get out
- ☐ Everyone wakes up in a dog park surrounded by hostage negotiators, except for one player who, chosen at random, must make a list of demands before the game starts
- ☐ Nobody wakes up. Everyone is dreaming peacefully in their beds while their unconscious selves astral project across the starpaths of infinity.

The goal is to create a starting environment that drives a very basic plot. This allows you to think on your feet for the rest of the session and create settings, characters, and situations as you go, and to match the actions of your players.

BRINGING THE HURT

Ultimately, a lot of the plot is driven by the rolls of your players. If they do well, their storyline progresses, if they don't, then they probably die.

But that doesn't mean you can't have some fun with either. Interpreting the dice rolls allows you to create the next steps for the player to act on, advance the scenario forward, or completely throw a wrench in the players plans, depending on the roll.

A best practice is as such:

6's are so good that they're bad,
1's are so bad that they're good.

This allows you to constantly keep players on their toes and keep the scenario moving in unexpected ways.

TOO BIG TO FAIL

When coming up with plot points, events, roll outcomes, or scenarios, there are two ways of approach-

-A grounded approach where the events unfold at an even but brisk pace and eventually ratchet up to a large spectacle.

-Jump the shark from the get-go and never look back; full tilt boogie, apocalyptic, pedal to the metal, bold faced lunacy.

Both are valid.

There is no right way to GM *Thunder Crime*. Outlined plans that pace the action out and allow for player creativity are just as valid as seat-of-your-pants non-stop improvised chaos.

As long as you're able to think quickly, react on your feet, and roll with the punches, you and the players will both be making enough for each other to do.

THE BS IS STRONG IN THIS ONE

Without exception, one of the most important things about being a GM is that ***you do not have to play fair.***

The point is to be as much a challenge to the player as the actions they are rolling against. This is especially the case in Hardcore Mode (pg 11).

Nonsense rolls are an amazing tool. Not only do they create moment to moment conflict for the characters, but depending on the roll can also have entertaining outcomes.

Some examples of this are:

- ☐ Roll to Acknowledge Knees
- ☐ Roll to Have Eyes
- ☐ Roll to Know words
- ☐ Roll to Understand how rooms work
- ☐ Roll to Inhale (but let them exhale without a roll)

There is nothing off limits for you to make the players roll on, nor should you limit yourself by any means. The more obtuse the rolls, often, the more fun.

Being a GM in *Thunder Crime* is an excuse to be as creatively obtuse as your heart imagines.

THIS SOUNDS LIKE AN EGO TRIP WITH A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE

And if you can tell me how that's any different from any other role playing game I'll mail you a crisp \$5 dollar bill and a paper bag full of cough.

The game is just as much about the players screwing with the GM as it is the GM screwing with the players.

Playing *Thunder Crime* pushes against a lot of the norms of role playing games in order to tell stories and deliver gameplay that other role playing games can't.

As GM, you should try your best to keep the balance of power between yourself and the players just as chaotic as the gameplay, but never too one sided.

After all, if the players roll well enough they can very easily overthrow you.



HARDCORE MODE

ADDITIONAL RULES

This isn't so much an adapted ruleset as it is a few small changes to make characters die very quickly and without warning.

- ☐ Rolls of 2 must take D12 damage
- ☐ Rolls of 1 take 2 D12 damage.
- ☐ When starting a game, make sure players are tied to their chairs. They must then roll to untie themselves.
- ☐ All the briefcases are closed *and locked*. Players must roll to open them.

And that's it. A Lot of buildup for a pretty flaccid rules change.

After you see how many characters die just trying to get out of their chairs you'll understand why this is the Hardcore Mode option.

BONE DICE

Bone Dice are a pair of dice and are exactly as they sound, but have one very specific twist.

The player who choses Bone Dice gets one D6 for themselves, and then another D6 is given out randomly to another player.

Every time the Bone Dice player makes a roll, the person with the other dice must roll at the same time, and their roll is subtracted from the first player's roll.



For example:

JIMMY picked the Bone Dice, and JANE was randomly selected to have the second D6.

JIMMY rolled a 6!

But JANE rolled a 5, subtracting her roll from JIMMY's.

Because of JANE's roll, JIMMY actually got a 1, and failed his action spectacularly.

The bone dice mean you can never roll a 6, but that you can also now roll a 0.

What that means is entirely up to the GM, but if a 1 is the worst possible option, then they'll have to dig deep to figure out how bad a 0 is.

The second Bone Dice is rotated after every turn the first Bone Dice Player takes.

BRUCEY BONUS

You actually don't have to play this game with D6's.

You can play with D20's, D10's, D8's- any dice really.

You also don't even have to play this system.

Do you love your *VAMPIRE: THE DARK AGES* character? Bring them into a game.

Your *PARANOIA* mutant? Get in here.

Your *PATHFINDER* rogue build?

Door is open.

Your small town criminal from *FIASCO*?

Water is warm, my boy.

They have all their native stats, your GM just has to now treat them as if they are playing in their native system.

This is **not** a fun trick to play on New GM's who may not be familiar with multiple RPG systems.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY:

JOE is playing as *Huffmeister*, a Janitor with the psychic ability to turn inside out.

- +3 to being inside out
- 3 to being outside in
- +1 to cleaning

JANET is playing as *Dolly Parton*, the country western musician .

- +3 to music
- +3 to american treasure
- 3 to Jolene

WHIP CREAM DAN is playing as *Whip Cream Dan*.

- 3 to friendliness
- 3 to being allowed around children
- +1 to "Dan"

The trio awake in a store room- the building is rickety and wooden, and the wind can be heard outside blowing hard against the structure.

WHIP CREAM DAN gets initiative, deciding to remain in his chair for his entire turn.

JANET goes next, rolling to stand up out of the chair and go for the briefcase. She rolls a 1, and after a brief deliberation it is determined that the chair's name is Jolene, meaning she has a -3 to her roll. Her character tumbles to the floor getting impaled by the briefcase, Taking 12 damage killing her character instantly.

JANET creates a new character.

JOE decides to have Huffmeister stand on his chair. He does so on a roll of 4. Huffmeister then swan-dives off the chair to the briefcase. Rolling a 6, Joe is able to land

the swan dive, open the briefcase, load the gun inside, pack up all the bullets, and score a 9.5 from the Russian judge. Joe is looking at a solid bronze, possible silver. Joe then decides to bribe the Russian judge to get that bumped to a 10.

He rolls a 3. The judge simply declines the bribe.

WHIP CREAM DAN is up next, and rolls to "Dan". He rolls a 6, and adding his modifier, turns it into a 7.

When asked by the GM what it means "to Dan", WHIP CREAM DAN throws a booger at them.

WHIP CREAM DAN continues to remain in his chair for the rest of the turn, doing a "Dan".

JANET has rolled a new character.

JANET is now playing as Waylon Jennings, the country western musician.

- +3 to Guitar
- +2 to harmonica
- 1 to Succeeding

JANET decides to remain in the chair, and hedges her bets. She rolls a 4, but since she has a minus to succeeding, it turns into a 3.

JANET stands up.

JANET ignores the briefcase and heads for the door, playing the harmonica as she walks. She rolls a 4, with her harmonica giving her a +2, and the Success giving her a -1, landing her a 5.

She makes it to the door in one piece.

She rolls to open the door. She gets a 3, but since that is a failure she argues that she should have a +1, since it wasn't a success.

The GM allows this, but since the +1 makes it a success, she must immediately take it away, trapping her in a paradox loop of success and failure.

Her turn then goes to JOE, who decides he doesn't want to go outside. He rolls to create his own nation state inside of this room. He rolls a 4, creating a moderately stable and economically sound city-state with a static population and a projected 4% growth of industry in the next 5 years.

He rolls to create a diverse agricultural program. On a 3, the parliamentary sub committee decides against it, favoring a strengthened infrastructure and public transportation program.

WHIP CREAM DAN rolls without saying what for. He gets a 6. When asked by the GM what the roll was for, WHIP CREAM DAN coughs up a live mouse.

WHIP CREAM DAN continues to "Dan" in his chair for his entire turn.

JANET rolls to get unstuck from the feedback loop. She rolls a 1.

The GM notifies her that her feedback loop has grown and is now affecting the area around it, becoming a black hole in this small storeroom.

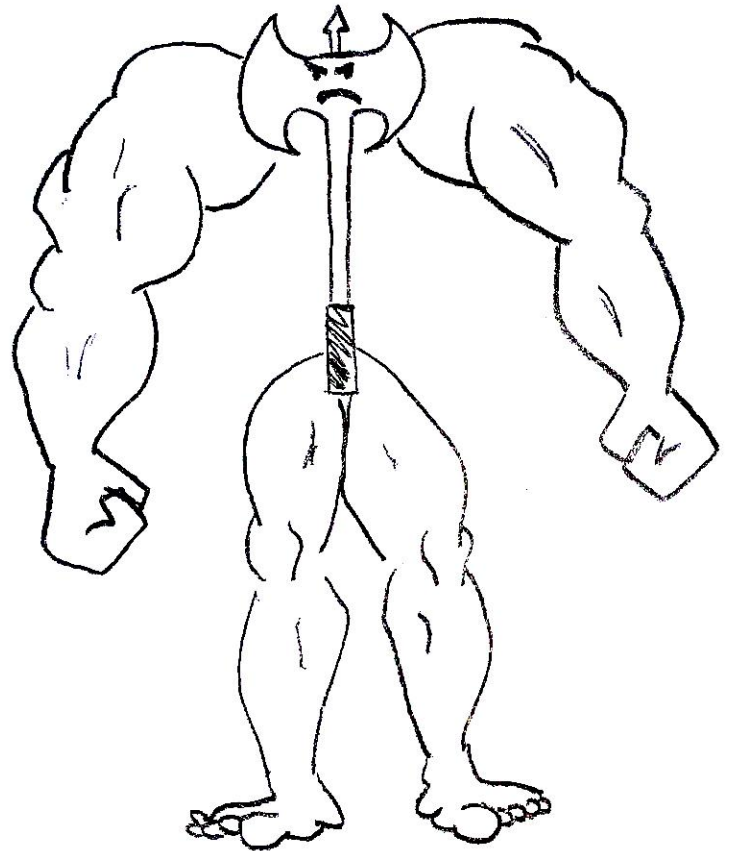
JOE must make a roll to evacuate his city-state. He rolls a 3, and they do not evacuate. The parliamentary committee does not see the danger a black hole poses.

WHIP CREAM DAN also rolls. He gets a 6, and since the Black Hole was technically born moments ago and is considered a minor, gets to add +3 to avoid being near it, making his roll a 9.

WHIP CREAM DAN successfully doesn't move at all, while JANET and JOE are sucked into the black hole.

JANET rolls a 1 to survive, and JOE rolls a 2. Neither survive the encounter, losing all 12 of their hit points and dying.

WHIP CREAM DAN is declared the winner since neither JANET nor JOE want to make new characters.



Question? Comments? Suggestions?

Please send any and all feedback to

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With the header “ThunderCrime”

Ben Floss 2022