



Mythic

Game Master Emulator

Create dynamic role-playing
adventures without preparation

For use as a supplement for your favorite role-playing games

Mythic™

Game Master Emulator

Adventure Generator

by Tana Pigeon

Published by Word Mill Games

Credits

“To help, to continually help
and share, that is the sum
of all knowledge;
that is the meaning of art.”

Eleonora Duse

WRITING & TYPESETTING
Tana Pigeon

ART
Jorge Muñoz & RyK Productions

PLAYER SUPPORT
For more about Mythic, including supporting products,
links to online fan groups, and more, go online to
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Mythic™

Game Master Emulator

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“Imagination is the one weapon
in the war against reality.”

Jules de Gaultier

Introduction

Welcome to Mythic: Game Master Emulator, improvisational role-playing using your favorite role-playing games. Mythic: GM Emulator is meant for use by role-players with a little experience under their belts and their favorite game in hand. It is not a stand-alone game. For that, we have Mythic (just Mythic), which is a fully fledged, universal role-playing game. Mythic was published in early 2003 as an attempt to produce an rpg that could be played solo or with a group, minus the game master. Or, with the Game Master, but without preparation.

Judging from the enthusiastic response from those who purchased and played Mythic, the system is a success.

Mythic is really two products in one. It is a universal rpg, and a system for emulating a GM for any role-playing game. Some bought Mythic for both portions, while others use only the emulation system. Recognizing that not everyone wants the universal game sections of Mythic, we are publishing this version that contains only the emulation rules. The system presented here is slightly updated from the original version published in Mythic.

Now, on to the meat of the matter. What is GM emulation? I'm glad you asked ...

WHAT IS THIS THING ALL ABOUT?

Most RPGs operate under the principle that there are players and there is a Game Master, who is responsible for running the show. The GM prepares all the details of an adventure, and then “runs” the players through that adventure. This usually requires a great deal of preparation on the part of the GM and the handling of many details.

Mythic: GME is different in that it requires no preparation from the GM. Mythic adventures are meant to be played off the cuff, with perhaps a few minutes of brainstorming to come up with the opening scene.

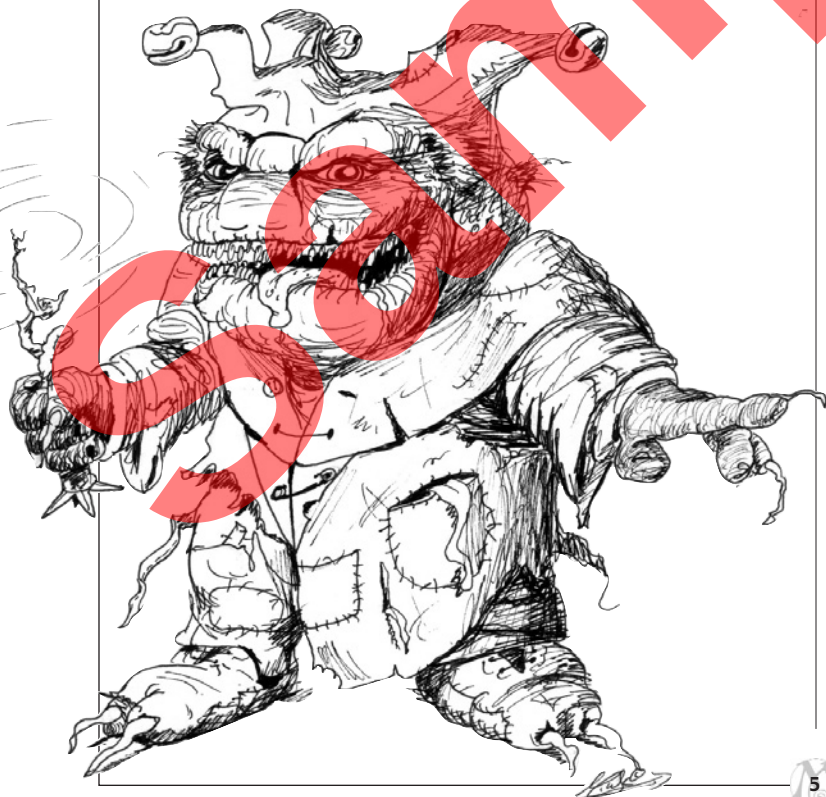
Mythic can also be played entirely without a GM. The same mechanics in Mythic that allow a GM to run an adventure without preparation also allow a group of players to do without the GM.

You can think of Mythic as an artificial intelligence. It is designed to use simple rules of logic to answer any yes/no question. So, whether you are playing alone, or acting as an unprepared GM, or are a group of players without a GM, just ask your questions ... only, instead of asking a live GM, you ask Mythic.

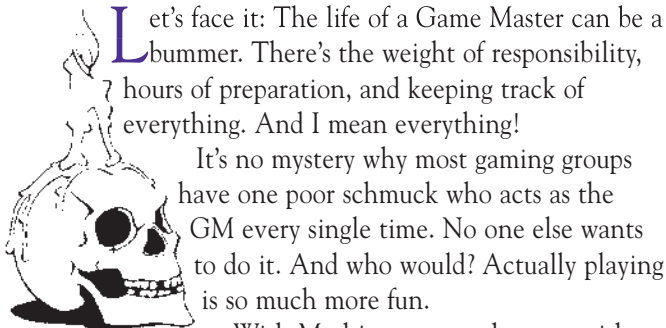
We'll get into this more in a bit. Just you wait and see.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

In each chapter you will find shaded boxes and “torn paper” boxes. The shaded boxes provide examples and clarifications, while the paper boxes offer useful rules. At the back of this book you will find a summary of most of these rules, and other bits of useful information collected for you to find easily.



Mythic Adventures



Let's face it: The life of a Game Master can be a bummer. There's the weight of responsibility, hours of preparation, and keeping track of everything. And I mean everything!

It's no mystery why most gaming groups have one poor schmuck who acts as the GM every single time. No one else wants to do it. And who would? Actually playing is so much more fun.

With Mythic, you can do away with the GM entirely, if you wish. Or, if your GM enjoys playing God, Mythic can make adventures more fun for the GM by eliminating all of that nasty preparation. In a Mythic adventure, the GM (or players sans GM) can start an evening's entertainment with about five minutes of prep time. As the adventure unfolds, the GM is just as surprised by the twists and turns as the players are.

Fun for everyone.

No GM? What you talkin' 'bout Willis!

Mythic is a gaming system that automates the functions of a living, breathing GM. It works through interpretation and logical principles. (We'll get more into that later. For now, trust me.) The upshot is, with Mythic acting as your GM, that poor schmuck can finally roll up a character and get his hands dirty. It also means you can play solo if you wish (and who hasn't wanted to do that, just once?)

How can such a system be used? Let's see ...

No GM, multiple players

Everyone whip out your character! To get an adventure going, players either roll up or decide on an opening scenario, and perhaps a few details or two, and Mythic: GME takes it from there. All action is decided through the asking of yes/no questions and the application of logical principles. By asking and answering questions, the adventure moves along, with the occasional random event throwing players a curve ball. The action is broken into scenes, just like in a movie, to keep everything straight.

No GM, one player

Mythic: GME can be used to go solo. There have been various solo systems in the past. But let's be honest, none of them are truly satisfying. How many variations of "Choose-Your-Own" can you go through before you start longing for something more? Solo play in Mythic works the same as in group play. You're just alone.

One GM, any number of players

For those who like to be a GM, we have something for you, too. The same tools that allow Mythic to automatically generate adventures on the fly without a GM also work with a GM. This means very little to zero preparation, if you don't want to prepare. Simply create an opening scenario (you can come up with that on the drive over), or roll one up, and follow Mythic as it guides you along. Mythic will throw in its own twists and turns, so the GM will be just as shocked as the players as the adventure proceeds.

This is not to say, though, that total control is taken out of the hands of the GM. The GM is free to break away from the structure that Mythic puts together. If nothing else, Mythic will generate an adventure skeleton that the GM can work with. At the most, Mythic will spin the entire adventure for the GM, whose job will be to administer the process.

Mythic with other RPGs

Mythic: GME generates dynamic, unfolding adventures on the fly. As a GM emulator, Mythic is meant to be played with other role-playing games. Mythic takes the place of the GM, but the main RPG's rules still handle character creation, combat, task resolution and everything it would normally handle. Questions that players would ask the GM are now asked to Mythic, instead.

The write stuff

Finally, Mythic: GME can be used as a writing tool. The architecture that creates dynamic adventures is really an automated story-telling system. It will work just as well without any games or formalized characters attached. Just set the scene, ask some questions, and start writing.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOGIC AND INTERPRETATION

There are two concepts that are central to successfully running a Mythic adventure: logic and interpretation. The entire mechanic for generating adventures on the fly, running without a GM, and making it all work hinge on the proper application of logic and interpretation.

Where logic comes in

Logic is used in Mythic to get an idea of what happens next. This is done by considering what has already occurred, applying whatever new twists have popped up, and deciding what the most logical outcome will be. This expected outcome is usually tested on the Fate Chart to find out which direction it actually goes.

The general rule is, whatever is most logical, that is what is expected to happen. Notice, I say “expected.” The story will rarely proceed exactly where you think it will and unexpected events will crop up that will turn your logical adventure on its ear. However, we need a basis to work from and logic provides it.

This harping on logic will make more sense later in the book, but I wanted to hook your mind on it now while you’re fresh.

Where interpretation comes in

Just as all things are logical in Mythic, all answers to important questions are arrived upon through interpretation. Most information in Mythic comes through the asking of simple yes/no questions. Mythic provides a framework for providing general answers to these questions. These answers must be interpreted, logically of course.

This, too, will make more sense later in the book.

Improvisation

I’m going to throw a bonus concept for you. In addition to logic and interpretation, improvisation is Mythic’s third linchpin that makes it all work. Think about our claims for a moment: you can play without any preparation and without a GM. Huh?!

Logic dictates what happens next, interpretation decides what exactly logic is talking about, and improvisation is the glue that fills in the holes and keeps it all together.

Improvisation comes from the players usually in the form of questions. A player can ask any question, and the answer will change the course of the adventure, perhaps in ways the player hadn’t even guessed. But it’s the asking of questions that moves events along, and those questions are derived improvisationally.

For instance, the players’ characters are standing in the foyer of an ancient, abandoned mansion. They know only that the place is musty and decayed, but must have once been a very spacious and beautiful house. A player asks, “Are there stairs going up to the second floor?” Using Mythic rules, they receive an answer of “yes.”

Thus, a new detail about the gameworld has been established (there are stairs in the foyer leading up to the second floor). This detail did not exist until the player asked the question, and the question was out of his imagination, improvised.

All details in Mythic are generated in just this way. Questions are asked, dice are rolled, the results are viewed through a lense of logic and interpretation, which maintains the world’s consistency and gives it the same logical solidity as it would possess as if there were a living GM with sheets full of data running the operation. The only difference is that details of the game world do not exist until a player specifically asks for them. The end result, however, is the same.



The Fate Chart



The Fate Chart is the heart of Mythic. Everything that happens in a Mythic adventure is resolved by forming a yes/no question. The logic of that question is then applied to the Fate Chart, which gives a percentage probability of a “yes” answer. The results are either yes, no, exceptionally yes or exceptionally no. The players then interpret the results to fit logically into the adventure. All questions are resolved in this manner, from determining the contents of a room to finding out who the villain really is.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

All action is moved along in Mythic by asking yes/no questions. Are there monsters in the room? Is the door locked? Is it raining today?

Normally, such questions would be asked to a Game Master who is keeping track of such details. In a Mythic adventure, the GM can be replaced; the rules of Mythic are designed to answer all questions put to it and in a logical manner, as long as they are phrased as a yes/no question.

A glance at the next page will show you the Fate Chart. Along the left side are probability descriptors (impossible, likely, a sure thing, etc.) and along the bottom are “Chaos Ranks.” Chaos is tracked throughout the adventure to represent how out of control the situation is becoming. The higher the chaos, the greater your chances of a yes response to a question, which usually means more action. By referencing odds on the left with chaos along the bottom, the Fate Chart gives you the percentage chance of your question being a “yes.”

When a player asks a question, the next step is to determine what you think the odds are of that question being a yes. This is a totally subjective value, as you can see from the odds listed on the left. Your choices start in the middle at 50/50. These are good odds to pick if you really think there is a 50% chance of getting a yes, or when you have no idea of the probability. Additional choices range upward with Somewhat likely, Likely, Very likely, Near sure thing, A sure thing, and Has to be. Odds range downwards from 50/50 with Unlikely, Very unlikely, No way, and Impossible.

The descriptive nature of the odds makes it simple to determine because you can use everyday language. Are the

odds of the roulette table turning up black 50/50? Is it very likely to rain? Is there just no way that a key will be under the doormat?

You may wonder at the Impossible and Has to be odds. After all, if it's impossible, it can't happen, right? Not necessarily. In fictional worlds, even the seemingly impossible can occur, and the Fate Chart keeps the door open for that possibility. For instance, a character has died. Thus, the odds of the man standing at the door being that dead character are impossible. This doesn't mean that it can't actually happen, as the impossible happens all the time in movies and books. As far as the characters are concerned, however, it is impossible.

So, who makes the determination of the odds? If you are playing with a GM, he makes this decision. If you are not, then the group of players must come to a consensus. If you cannot decide, then the group must average their opinions and take the closest description.

A word of caution here, however: don't take forever. Decide quickly, and move on. Go with the odds that seem right, but don't wrack your brain too much.

For example: The players are leading their characters, a trio of old-west cowboys, through a canyon as they search for a band of escaping bank robbers. One of the players is nervous of an ambush, so he asks the question, “Are there cliffs above us where they could ambush us from?” The player who asks the question thinks the odds are very likely, while the other players think the odds are only likely. They decide, democratically, since 2 out of 3 think it's likely, then likely will be the odds.

You have your question and you have your odds. Now it's time to consult the Fate Chart. Cross reference the odds with the current chaos score (we'll get into the chaos rank a little later) for your probability of a “yes” answer to the question. Roll 1D100 and compare it to this value. If you roll within the value, then the answer is “yes.” If you roll above, then the answer is “no.”

By rolling very low, or very high, you can achieve exceptional results. These are the little numbers to the left and right of the larger, percentage numbers. Rolling equal to or less than the left number is an exceptional yes, rolling equal to or higher than the right number is an exceptional no.

You'll notice that some numbers are negative, while others go above 100. These results are virtually a guaranteed “no” or “yes.” However, you still must roll to see if an exceptional result occurs.

Fate Chart

To use this chart, cross reference the odds of a question resulting in a “yes” answer with the current chaos rank. The result is the percentage chance of the question resulting in a “yes” answer. A roll within the range of the number on the left is an “exceptional yes” and equal or more than the number on the right is an “exceptional no.”

Odds	Impossible	10 50 ₉₁	5 25 ₈₆	3 15 ₈₄	2 10 ₈₃	1 5 ₈₂	1 5 ₈₂	0 0 ₈₁	0 0 ₈₁	0 -20 ₇₇
	No way	15 75 ₉₆	10 50 ₉₁	7 35 ₈₈	5 25 ₈₆	3 15 ₈₄	2 10 ₈₃	1 5 ₈₂	1 5 ₈₂	0 0 ₈₁
	Very unlikely	16 85 ₉₇	13 65 ₉₄	10 50 ₉₁	9 45 ₉₀	5 25 ₈₆	3 15 ₈₄	2 10 ₈₃	1 5 ₈₂	1 5 ₈₂
	Unlikely	18 90 ₉₉	15 75 ₉₆	11 55 ₉₂	10 50 ₉₁	7 35 ₈₈	4 20 ₈₅	3 15 ₈₄	2 10 ₈₃	1 5 ₈₂
	50/50	19 95 ₁₀₀	16 85 ₉₇	15 75 ₉₆	13 65 ₉₄	10 50 ₉₁	7 35 ₈₈	5 25 ₈₆	3 15 ₈₄	2 10 ₈₃
	Somewhat likely	19 95 ₁₀₀	18 90 ₉₉	16 85 ₉₇	16 80 ₉₇	13 65 ₉₄	10 50 ₉₁	9 45 ₉₀	5 25 ₈₆	4 20 ₈₅
	Likely	20 100 ₀	19 95 ₁₀₀	18 90 ₉₉	16 85 ₉₇	15 75 ₉₆	11 55 ₉₂	10 50 ₉₁	7 35 ₈₈	5 25 ₈₆
	Very likely	21 105 ₀	19 95 ₁₀₀	19 95 ₁₀₀	18 90 ₉₉	16 85 ₉₇	15 75 ₉₆	13 65 ₉₄	10 50 ₉₁	9 45 ₉₀
	Near sure thing	23 115 ₀	20 100 ₀	19 95 ₁₀₀	19 95 ₁₀₀	18 90 ₉₉	16 80 ₉₇	15 75 ₉₆	11 55 ₉₂	10 50 ₉₁
	A sure thing	25 125 ₀	22 110 ₀	19 95 ₁₀₀	19 95 ₁₀₀	18 90 ₉₉	16 85 ₉₇	16 80 ₉₇	13 65 ₉₄	11 55 ₉₂
	Has to be	26 145 ₀	26 130 ₀	20 100 ₀	20 100 ₀	19 95 ₁₀₀	19 95 ₁₀₀	18 90 ₉₉	16 85 ₉₇	16 80 ₉₇
	Exceptional Yes The lower 1/5 of the success range.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Exceptional No The upper 1/5 of the failure range.	Chaos Rank								

More information, please

Since you are using Mythic with another game system, that other system will likely have a mechanic for handling such situations as combat and task resolution. Mythic, on the other hand, will flesh out the game-world itself. Since Mythic adventures can be played without a GM, the only source of information about the world around you is through yes/no questioning.

The most common questions, then, will be questions seeking more detail about adventure surroundings. Are there exits in this room? Are there more than three goons? Do the thieves have a getaway car ready? Does the newspaper run a story on my character's successful rescue operation?

Often, general information about the world around your characters is enough. You know that the hall continues straight on, but you don't bother to ask what kind of stone you feel underfoot. The players can ask the question, of course, if they think it is important. However, the point is, the level of detail is up to you.

Sometimes, of course, details are very important. For instance, the character may be a fantasy warrior who has rounded a corner in a cavern and encountered an ogre.

Before the warrior commits himself to combat, he asks a few questions. Such as: Is the ogre armed? Is he surprised to see me? Do I see friends of his behind him down the hall?

These are questions that are easily and quickly answered using the Fate Chart. The answer is either yes or no, and a few quick questions will tell this player all he needs to know before he decides to attack or run.

The influence of Chaos on Questions

You will find out about Chaos, and how it effects a Mythic adventure, in the adventure chapter. For now, you need to know that you will keep track of a chaos factor ranging from 1 to 9. The higher the number, the more likely a “yes” answer is and more unexpected events occur.

Can't find the page!

Another way to use the Fate Chart is to come up with quick resolutions to a situation when you are not sure what the actual rules are. You may know that the rpg you are using has a mechanic to deal with character's drowning in quicksand, but you can't find it in the rule book no matter how many pages you flip.

To keep things moving, you could simply use the yes/no mechanic of the Fate Chart as a fill-in to adjudicate rules on the spot.

Of course, you could take this all the way and play an entire role-playing game using nothing but the Fate Chart. It would make for a very rules-light way to play, but it would work.

When to roll, when to make it up

Should you use the Fate Chart to answer every question? "Is the sun shining today? Does the taxi driver say 'Hi'? Do I have exact change in my wallet?"

No. Please.

Don't use the Fate Chart for every question; your characters will never get out the front door. If the question is not important to the adventure, then just use good old-fashioned logic and don't bother rolling. If there is confusion as to the most logical answer, then go ahead and use the chart.

Much of the color of your adventure will come from the logical answers that were fleshed out by prior Fate Chart questions. Maybe you did roll to see if the taxi driver says "Hi." He doesn't. Later, when characters talk to him to get news of local happenings, he is less likely to be chatty, as we have already established that he is not very friendly. Knowing this about him will change the odds of future questions concerning his actions.

In this way, the logical chain of events builds upon itself, shaping the entire structure of the adventure. Keeping past events and logic in mind also cuts down on the number of rolls required on the Fate Chart. The more information you already possess, the less you have to ask of the chart.

On the other hand, sometimes one question on the Fate Chart is not enough to clarify a situation. It may take yet another question to figure out what the original answer meant.

For instance: "I open the door and enter the room. Is it empty?" The answer: No. Well, if it's not empty, what's in it? At this point, you can either use logic, or ask another question to clarify. If your character has been chasing a

monster through a catacomb, it makes logical sense that the monster is in the room, cornered. However, if you're not sure of this, then you could ask a question like, "Is the monster I've been chasing in here?"

To keep the frequency of questions down, and encourage logical thinking, try and ask a question in such a way that you will only need one question on the Fate Chart to answer it. Or, at most, two questions. That should be enough information for logic to take over from there.

For instance, a pair of occult investigators creep through a graveyard at midnight, searching for the walking dead. They

Sample Questions and Answers

"My character parachutes out of the plane. He tries to land in an open field. Does he make it safely?"

Yes: Yep.

No: He lands in the field, but hurts himself.

Exceptional Yes: He lands without a problem, and very quickly.

Exceptional No: He misses the field entirely and crashes into the forest. He hurts himself, badly.

"Do I succeed in running into the house and slamming the door shut before the vampire pounces on me?"

Yes: 'nuff said.

No: You make it to the door, then he pounces on you.

Exceptional Yes: You make it to the door in double time, shut it, lock it, and have a few seconds to spare.

Exceptional No: You trip and fall, never making it close to the door. Not only does the vampire pounce on you, but let's see if you're hurt by the fall, too.

"As I walk through the dark hall, I listen carefully. Do I hear any sounds?"

Yes: You hear something, but you don't know what yet.

No: All is silent.

Exceptional Yes: You hear something very loud, perhaps very sudden. It may take another question to figure out what it is.

Exceptional No: All is silent. There is no appropriate exceptional result, so this remains the same as a simple no.

"I want to get into the house. Is there a set of keys under the door mat, by chance?"

Yes: Your lucky day.

No: No.

Exceptional Yes: No, but when you try the door, it's unlocked.

Exceptional No: Heck, there's not even a door mat.

inspect a mausoleum, checking to see if the entrance has been opened lately. One of the players asks, "Do we hear anything?" Yes. "Does it sound like something scrambling inside?" No. "Does it sound like someone walking through the graveyard?" No. "Is it something flying through the air?" No.

This player is hitting a run of no answers and apparently plans on continuing to ask until he gets a positive answer. He could have stopped after the second question, "Does it sound like something scrambling inside?" We already know that they hear something, and it's not coming from inside the mausoleum. They could simply use logic at this point to say they hear something outside, in the graveyard. A shuffling sound, perhaps. Or something too faint to identify. Going the logic route after two questions yields an answer that the players should be able to work with.

Of course, if you really want to, you can keep asking more questions. I find, however, that setting the one to two

question maximum automatically stops players from asking a series of detailed questions; they get to the Big Picture much faster.

The art of interpretation

Using the Fate Chart to find your percentage chance of success is only the beginning. Next, someone must roll some dice and see if the answer is "yes" or "no." It is up to the GM, or the players if there is no GM, to figure out what the answer really means.

Interpretation is an important part of Mythic. Again, logic must prevail. Whatever seems the most logical answer, given the circumstances, is the result.

Sometimes interpretations will come easily. If the question was, "I open the desk drawer. Is there a gun inside?" A no answer is simple enough, and a yes means there is indeed a gun in the desk. It doesn't say what kind of gun, but a logical assumption would be a common handgun.

After interpreting the Fate Chart result, if the players wish, they can try to clarify the answer further with more questions. "Is the gun a glock? Is it loaded? Is there extra ammunition in the desk?"

Eventually, players learn to ask the right questions. It is best to ask "Big Picture" questions, rather than many small, detail questions. The more important the situation, the more detailed questions you should ask, but don't get in the habit of asking for excruciating detail in every circumstance. The point is to gather only as much information as needed to make a logical decision.

Exceptional results

Sometimes when a roll is made on the Fate Chart, the player will roll very high or very low. This can create an exceptional result.

Exceptionals occur when a roll is made in the upper or lower 20% (one-fifth) of the percentage range given.

In other words, if the odds of a yes are 50%, then a roll of 1-10 is an exceptional yes, and a 91-100 is an exceptional no. If the odds are 80%, then a 1-16 is an exceptional yes, and a 97-100 is an exceptional no.

So you don't have to work out the exceptional values for yourself every time, the Fate Chart lists the lower and upper ranges

Summary of How to Use the Fate Chart

1: State a question: Form a yes/no question.

2: Determine odds: Estimate the odds of the question coming out "yes."

3: Determine probability: Cross reference the odds with the current Chaos score to get your percentage chance of a "yes" answer.

4: Roll: Roll 1D100. If you roll within the percentage range, the answer is yes. If you roll above, the answer is no. If you roll in the lower 1/5 of the range, then the answer is an exceptional yes. If you roll in the upper 1/5 of the failure range, then the answer is an exceptional no.

5: Interpret the answer: Draw the most logical conclusion from the results. If this is not possible, then ask another question to clarify, returning to step 1.

