

SLAPDASH
the last minute RPG
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SO YOU WANT TO PLAY AN RPG, but you don't have dice, or a lot of time, or any patience. Worry not! Slapdash can be played using nothing but a handful of coins, some paper and pencils, and your (limited) wits. In practice, nearly anything can be substituted for the coins – buttons, breadcrumbs, mouse skulls, your fingers – and the pencils and paper are only really necessary if you have a lousy memory. Okay, it looks like you're ready to play!

FIRST THINGS FIRST, pick someone to be the Game Master. Ideally, this will be the person most familiar with the game already. If you're all equally nubbish, pick someone quick-witted and devious. Then, decide on the setting. Do you want to be Space Pirates? Vampire Hunters? Roller Coaster Tycoons? It's up to you, but decide quickly. We haven't got much time, and most decisions are meaningless anyway.

THE NEWLY-CROWNED GM is gonna wanna sneak in some last-second prep. For that, we recommend checking out the section on THREATS and CONSEQUENCES.

EVERYBODY ELSE, create your characters. Your character will consist of the following:

Your Name (eg. “Barnabus”)

Your Title (eg. “Barnabus the Shark-Man”)

The Thing You Are The Best In The World At (eg. “Horticulture”)

The Thing You Are The Worst In The World At (eg. “Controlling My Bloodlust”)

Create these things in conversation with each other. Try to create a balanced party (whatever that means to you). If you're having trouble coming up with your greatest strength, pretend you're reminiscing with your comrades about past adventures.

“I say, Barnabus,” you might venture, *“Remember when your uncontrollable bloodlust got us into trouble during that high-stakes game of blackjack?”*

“Why yes,” Barnabus might reply, *“Good thing you're **The Best in the World At Drunken Diplomacy**, otherwise we'd still be paying those dry-cleaning bills!”*

Or perhaps you're stuck on your greatest weakness. You can use the same technique for that. *“Oh Barnabus,”* you might croon, *“I can never thank you enough for placating those enormous venus flytraps with your peerless horticulture.”*

“Damn right you can't,” Barnabus might snort, *“I never would have had to step in if you weren't **So Damn Bad At Dancing**.”*

OKAY, YOU'VE GOT YOUR CHARACTERS, now what? Well, now you play. Hopefully the GM has scraped something together by now – at least enough to give you your overarching Goal and set the first scene. Each player should take 3 coins (or tokens, or fingers, or whatever). Now, starting with who-the-hell-ever wants to go first, start taking turns.

ON YOUR TURN, you get three actions: one **FIND**, one **MOVE**, and one **DO**.

FIND lets you find stuff lying around that the GM didn't think to describe. All you've got to do is say "I look for [OBJECT] in [LOCATION]." The GM will then either agree that you found that thing, or tell you what you actually found instead.

For example, if you say "I look for the Unstoppable Sword of Everything's laying in my backpack", the GM might respond, "Unfortunately you forgot to buy one of those, but you do find a very menacing looking broomstick."

MOVE lets you move from wherever you are to wherever you want to go, assuming you have a way to get there and nothing's stopping you.

DO is where the magic happens. Or the killing, or the diplomacy, or really whatever you want. To do something, describe what you're trying to do and then spend some tokens.

1 TOKEN IS A GOOD SUCCESS. 2 tokens is a great success. 3 tokens is a legendary success. The GM will let you know how much success is enough success. If you're doing anything besides the Thing You're The Best In The World At, you can only ever achieve a good success. This means you should constantly be looking for ways to shoehorn your expertise into the situation. You know what they say: "When the only tool you have is a hammer, lobby the GM for hammer buffs."

YOU CAN REDUCE THE COST of a good, great, or legendary success by 1 if you incorporate your Weakness into your description of your action. Make it good, though.

IF THE POINT OF YOUR ACTION WAS TO HELP SOMEBODY, you can give them the number of tokens you spent on the action.

AT THE END OF YOUR TURN, pick somebody else to go next. People can volunteer to go next if they've got a good idea, but nobody goes twice until everybody's had a turn. The GM can always jump in as appropriate.

BUT WHAT IF YOU START YOUR TURN WITHOUT ANY TOKENS? I'm glad you asked. Starting your turn with zero tokens means you must perform a **FULL BUNGLE**. When performing a Full Bungle, you may not FIND, MOVE, or DO. You must spend your entire round fucking things up for everybody using the Thing You Are The Worst In The World At.

IT'S NOT ALL BAD, THOUGH. First of all, you can't take damage during your Full Bungle. It's like you're wearing idiot armor. Second of all, the consequences of your Bungle don't have to be all bad. You can accidentally make good things happen too, if you're clever about how you describe your action. Third, at the end of your Full Bungle, you get all your tokens back and are free to start succeeding again.

THE GAME ENDS when you have overcome or evaded all the **THREATS** between you and your goal. What's a Threat, you ask, and why did we capitalize it? What a coincidence, we were just about to explain that.

THREATS ARE IF-THEN STATEMENTS THAT THE GM MAKES. A given challenge might consist of just one Threat (eg. "If you move at all, the dragon will fry you."), or multiple Threats ("If you stand still, the boulder will crush you, but if you keep running, you'll fall into that spiky pit.") If a character ever does one of the things they've been warned about (moves, stands still, or runs, in our examples), they will suffer the **CONSEQUENCES**.

CONSEQUENCES ARE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU FUCK UP. Once a Threat has been triggered, anyone who hasn't acted yet this round has one last turn to try and fix things before the Consequence happens. A Consequence can take any form, but some common Consequences are Damage (forcing one or more players to give up one or more tokens) or Escalation (adding a new Threat to the scenario). When setting up the scenario, the GM should pick a number anywhere from twice to three times the number of players. If the players trigger that many Consequences, it means they've failed to achieve their Goal.

THE GOAL IS THE BIGGEST THREAT OF ALL. At the start of the adventure, after the GM has described the scenario, they should state the Goal thusly: "You must [ACHIEVE THIS GOAL] or else [A VERY BAD THING WILL HAPPEN]." It's a bummer to be so negative, sure, but we find that the crippling fear of failure really motivates the players.

WHEN THE PLAYERS HAVE EITHER ACHIEVED THEIR GOAL OR THOROUGHLY BUNGLED IT, the GM should describe a suitably dramatic conclusion. Then you can go back to your lives. Congratulations. You played Slapdash.

IF YOU'RE REALLY STRAPPED FOR IDEAS, HERE ARE SOME:

Best In The World At:

Archery
Bathing
Cats
Dreaming
Eating
Flying
Getting Revenge
Hypnotism
Ice Sculpture
Jokes
Kissing

Worst in the World At:

Lying
Meeting People
Not Vomiting
Odor Control
Politeness
Questioning Authority
Rafting
Silence
Trivia
Understanding Body Language
Violence

Threats/Consequences

If you make a loud noise, the cave will collapse
If you exhale inside the vault, the alarm will trigger
If you come within three feet of the orc, he will club you
If you don't get out of this room in two rounds, it will fill with water
If you use improper language around the duchess, you will be very embarrassed
If you fall asleep, you will have a nightmare
If you inhale the gas, you will fall asleep
If you touch the body, you'll be in trouble with the police
If you read the book, you will learn something you did not want to know
If you play cards with Shifty Mike, he will take your money
If you eat that cake, something exciting will happen