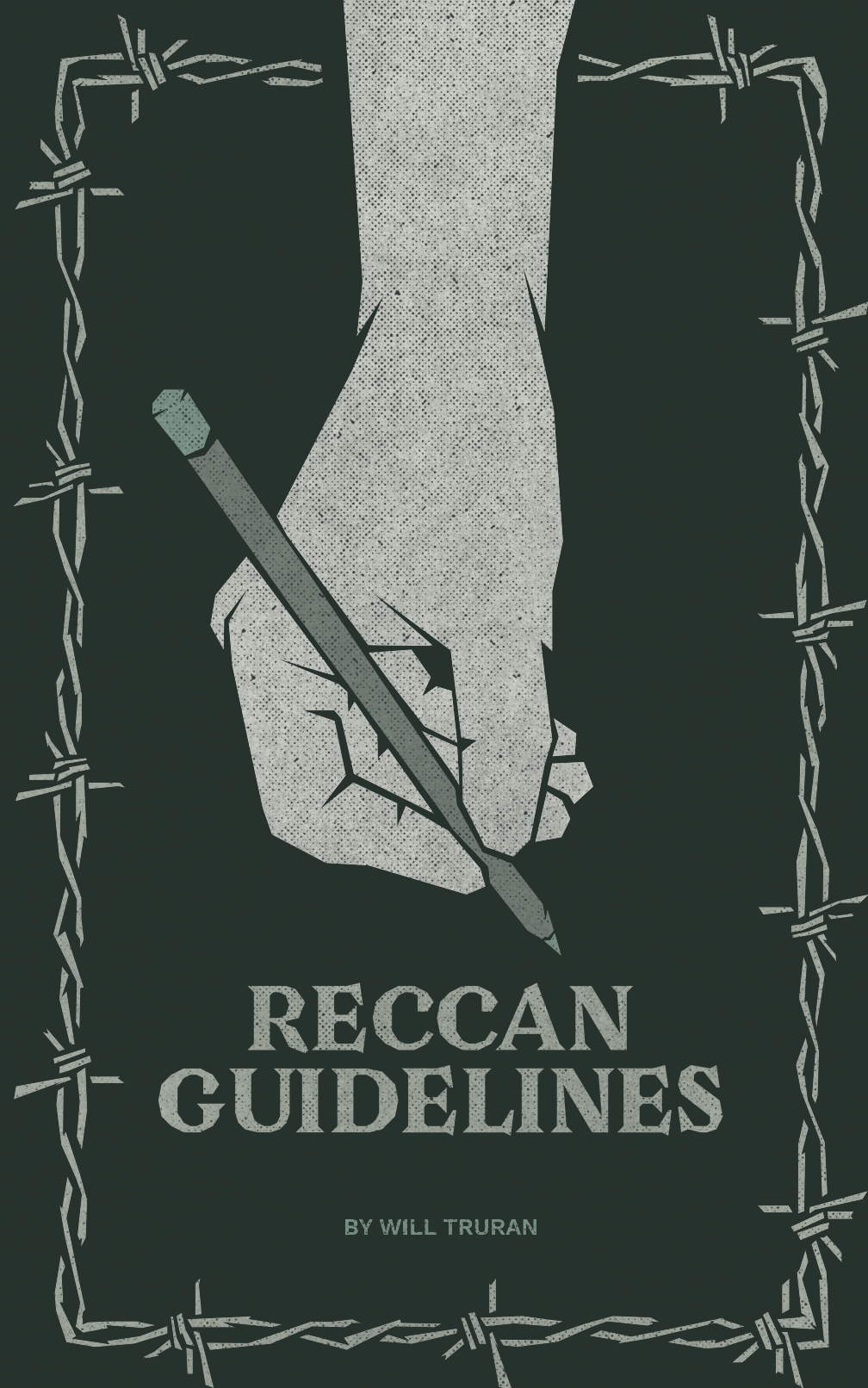




RECCAN GUIDELINES

BY WILL TRURAN

RECCAN GUIDELINES

Reccan is an open-source resource that provides historians and game designers a visual framework to share a historical setting. Utilizing these guidelines will aid in the development of printed and digital documents that align with the other materials within The Racked System.

NEVER STRAY

Hold true to the sources, without straying, and acknowledge them in the material.

MIND YOUR AUDIENCE

The audience will be experiencing dramatic stories and emotional moments. Be mindful of their mental state.

HELP TELL THEIR STORY

You are creating this experience for a modern audience, but representing victims of the past. Treat every decision with respect.



Rack (v) To cause to suffer torture, pain, anguish, or ruin
Reccan Root word. Old English. To tell, narrate

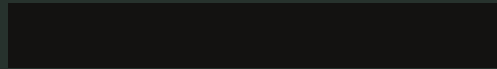




TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1** **COLORS**
- 2** **TYPOGRAPHY**
- 3** **USING THE GRID**
- 4** **TITLE PAGES**
- 5** **EXAMPLE PAGES**
- 6** **BLOCK ITEMS**
- 7** **IMAGE RULES**

COLORS



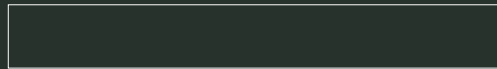
74, 66, 67, 81



32, 20, 23, 00



0, 0, 0, 0



75, 60, 68, 60



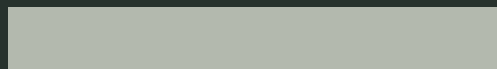
64, 40, 52, 45



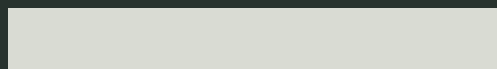
51, 27, 44, 00



53, 38, 48, 08



31, 20, 30, 00



14, 9, 15, 00

4

MAKING A CHARACTER



Background, Personality & Property

Those playing as the Cast or the Journal Keeper need to create characters. This can often be an emotional component to the experience where the players begin to realize that the victims that so often go nameless are as human as the players themselves.



74, 66, 67, 81



32, 20, 23, 00



0, 0, 0, 0



75, 60, 68, 60



64, 40, 52, 45



51, 27, 44, 00



53, 38, 48, 08



31, 20, 30, 00



14, 9, 15, 00

COLORS

Color usage can be the most powerful tool in an arsenal. It can quickly convey the overtly dark themes of the material. Provided on the previous pages is the core color grouping and its CMYK values. In addition to the core colors, players can shift the hue of the palette. This will make materials more unique, but in a way that will allow it to feel at home with other materials using the Racked System.





*You are not simply playing a person you wish
to be, but one that could have been.*



Avara

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOo
PpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

Work Sans

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOo
PpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

40pt

H1 HEADER

36pt

H2 HEADER

24pt

H3 HEADER

12pt

H4 HEADER

12pt

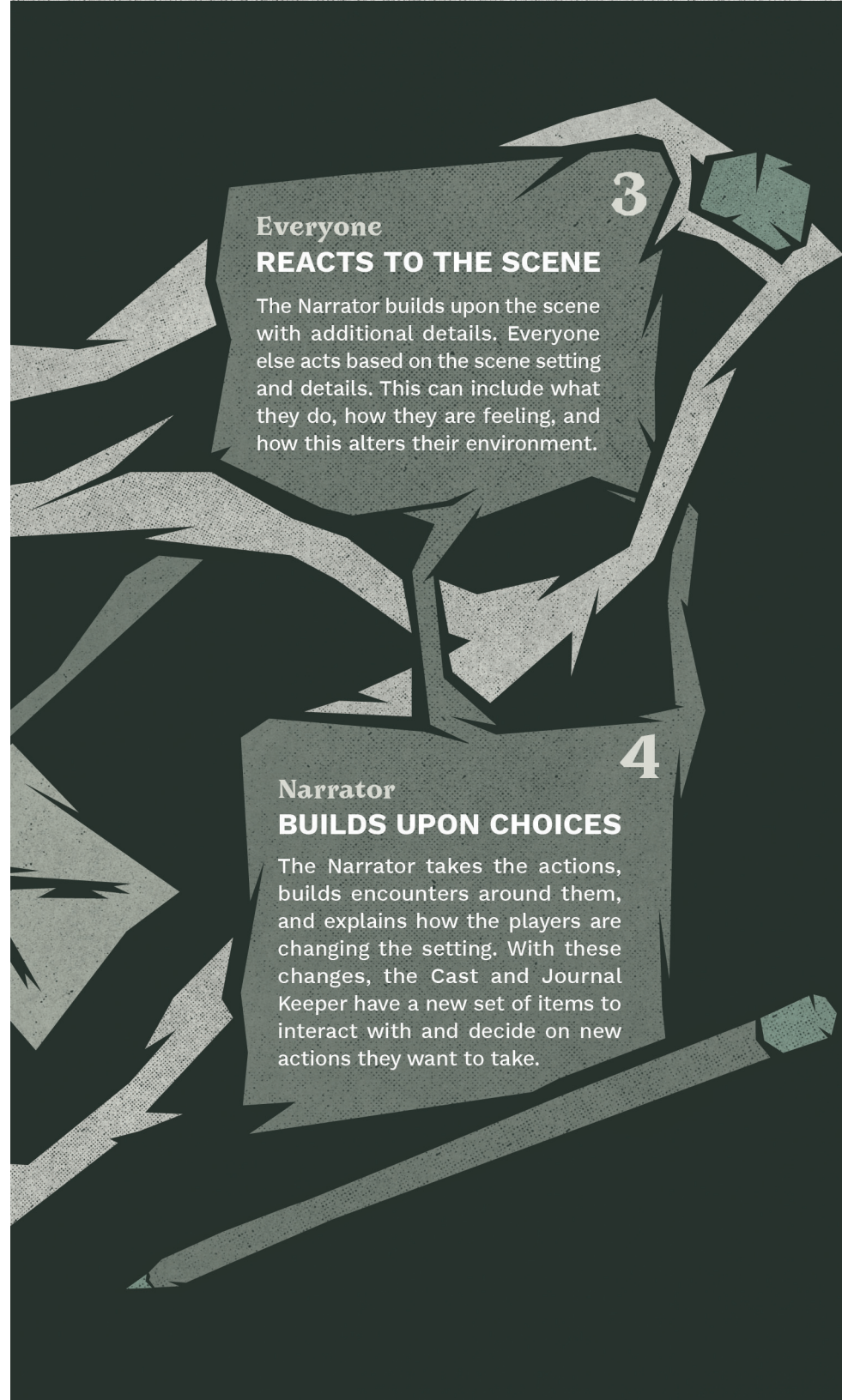
H5 HEADER

9pt

Body Copy

9pt

Caption



3 Everyone REACTS TO THE SCENE

The Narrator builds upon the scene with additional details. Everyone else acts based on the scene setting and details. This can include what they do, how they are feeling, and how this alters their environment.

4 Narrator BUILDS UPON CHOICES

The Narrator takes the actions, builds encounters around them, and explains how the players are changing the setting. With these changes, the Cast and Journal Keeper have a new set of items to interact with and decide on new actions they want to take.

THE STAGES OF PLAY

1

Narrator ESTABLISHES EVENT

The Narrator explains what is occurring and introduces the setting, including how it has affected the players and bringing the entire experience into focus. Through this initial establishment, enough tools will be provided that all of the players can visualize the atmosphere.

2

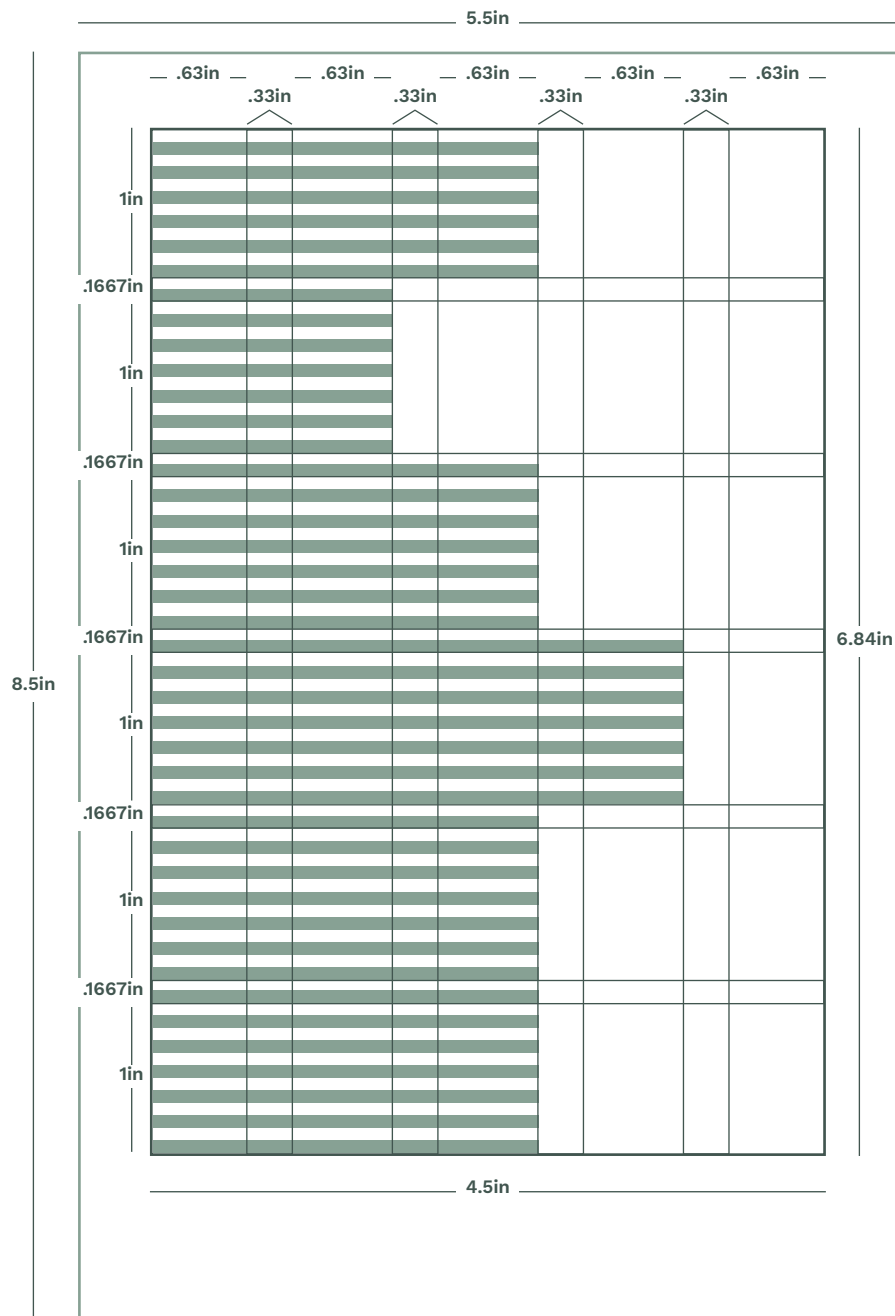
Journal Keeper REACTS WITH SCENE

The Journal Keeper takes in what the Narrator has shared and begins to draw a scene. The Journal Keeper may choose to include details such as the location of the players, the time of day, or the smells wafting through the air.

TYPOGRAPHY

The fonts chosen to be used across all Racked System materials are Rakkas and Work Sans. These typefaces were chosen because they provide a dramatic header, while allowing the copy to be legible and reflect the almost academic nature of the content. These typefaces are available through Google Fonts, which is free to everyone. It was important for the tools used to create these materials be as available as this guideline.

In addition to constraining the material to only two typefaces, there are specific font sizes and families suggested for the various applications that will come up when laying out a setting document. In this zine, readers will see how this type system is implemented.



to make sure the players do not leave the table traumatized in a way that negatively impacts their well-being.

The X Card, created by John Stavropoulos, should be implemented to enable the entire table to end scenes or show distress without verbalizing why. This tool can be as simple as a piece of paper each player is given with an X drawn on it. At any time a player feels uncomfortable they present the 'card' to the table which signals that the scene needs to be wrapped up or that the content has gotten too dark and needs to be lightened up.

In addition to The X Card, the next chapter covers Roles which will enable more collaborative storytelling. This allows multiple members at the table to have control of the pacing and to share the responsibility of ensuring that no one crosses from uncomfortable to a realm of misery in which they are no longer able to engage with the material.

The Player Roles are covered in the next chapter starting on page 14.

Learn more about the X Card by visiting

tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg

Required Items

Though the Racked System is designed to be simple to play, there are a few items players need.

- **The rule set (this zine)**
- **A setting document**
- **A character sheet for each player**
- **Some pencils or pens**
- **At least six, 6-sided dice to be shared**

THE ROLES

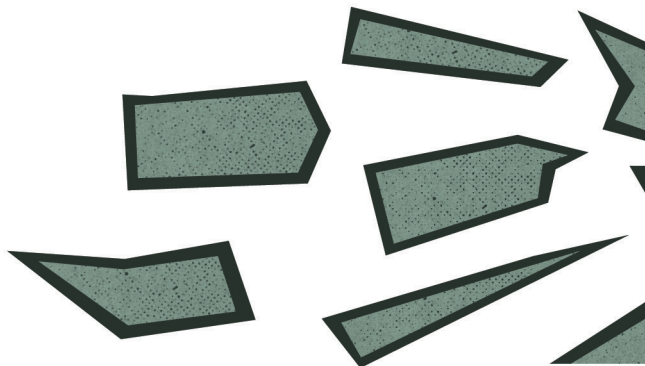
The Narrator is the equivalent of the gamemaster (GM) in other systems.

The three roles are the Narrator, the Journal Keeper, and the Cast. In short, the Narrator controls events and time, the Journal Keeper establishes the environment and pacing, and the Cast together guide a story through the historical setting.

The Narrator

The Narrator is often the one organizing the game. They prepare the material, set the scene, and act out all the characters not being played by the rest of the table. This role is by far the most difficult and requires the most sensitivity because often they will be representing the most evil humans in history. With that, the Narrator must understand how to discuss ideas that the players may not be able to handle without sugar coating the truth of the events. Taking breaks, interrupting gameplay, and breaking immersion will all be necessary at points and should not be avoided.

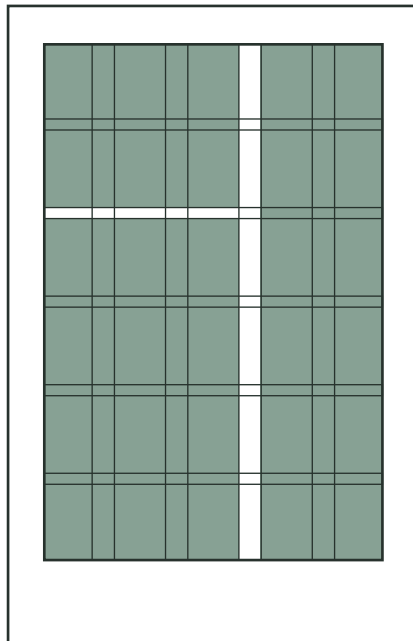
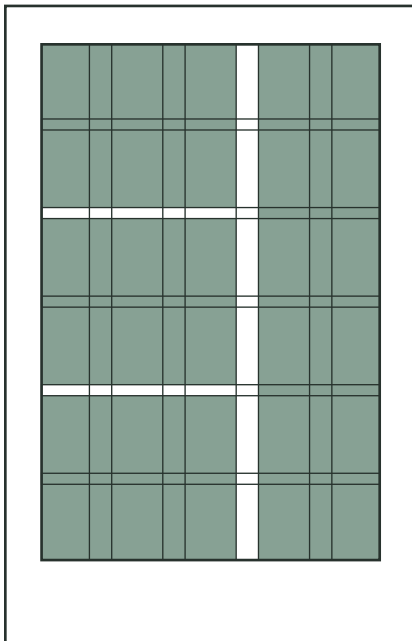
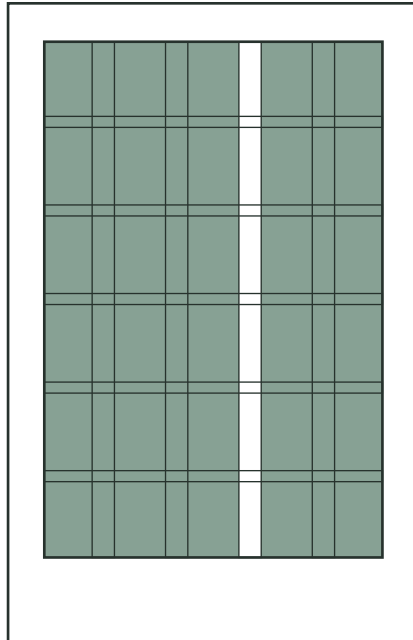
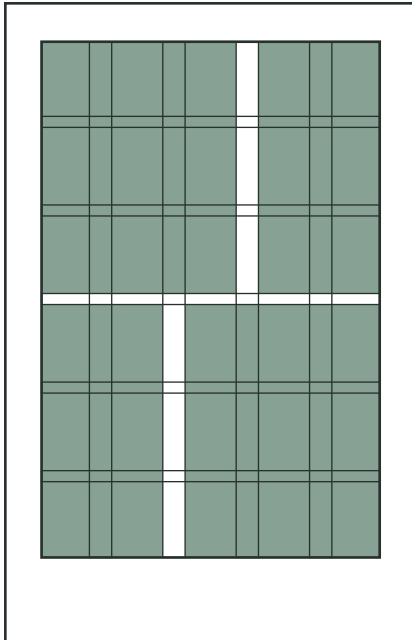
In addition to managing the table, the Narrator is also responsible for studying the materials before running the game. Settings will be broken up into chapters that cover specific time periods and will provide many resources so they can properly understand what was occurring during the recreated period.



THE GRID

The grid is the table to which all of the content is strapped. It is strict in what it allows, but thoughtfully considered to provide a structure that will aid in displaying materials. The following pages will provide examples of how this grid can be used, primarily how type and images are placed within its structure.

The dimensions are designed for documents utilizing folded letter sized paper, creating 5.5x8.5 pages. This paper's availability and affordable cost makes it popular in zine production. Keeping to this grid and page dimensions will allow the chapter to sit with this document, the rule set, and any other settings the owner may have on their shelf.



THE GAMPLAY

The Racked System allows all players to make actions whenever they feel ready. There are no turns and sometimes inaction is as powerful of a stance as action. Each chapter begins with the Narrator setting the scene.

The group gather their character sheets and the Narrator reads the Chapter opener. "The date is April 7th, in the city of Berlin. Last week there was a boycott of Jewish owned businesses and earlier in January, Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany..."

Once the Narrator finishes the setting, the Journal Keeper explains where they are. This could be based on any information found in the players' character sheets, or even what occurred in a previous chapter.

The Journal Keeper, knowing the characters are all young children, states that they are home after school eating a snack.

Now that the Narrator has initiated the chapter, and the Journal Keeper has set the scene, all players at the table can take actions and ask questions.

One of the players asks what they are snacking on. The Narrator not knowing exactly what they would be eating says something to the best of their knowledge, "They are snacking on a small bowl of pretzels and while eating your father walks in. You all are aware that he is home much earlier than normal and that something is wrong, because he takes your mother into another room and a conversation of whispers can be overheard."

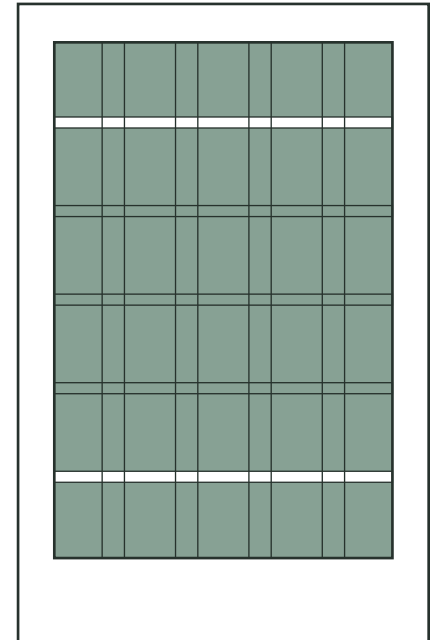
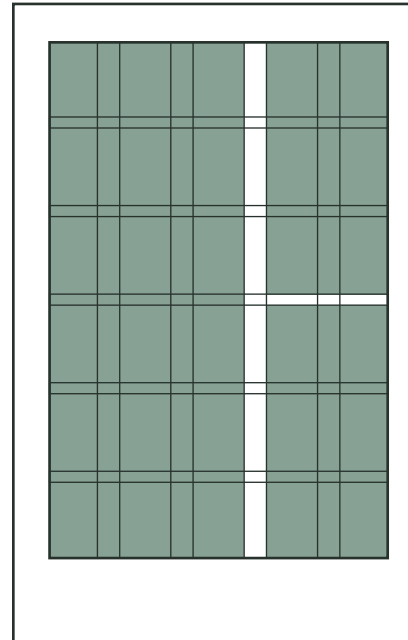
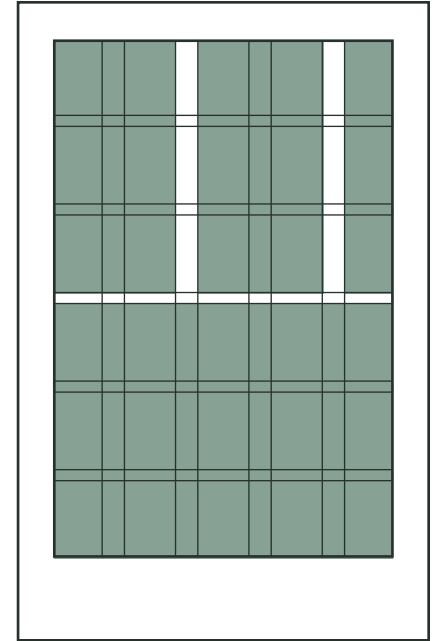
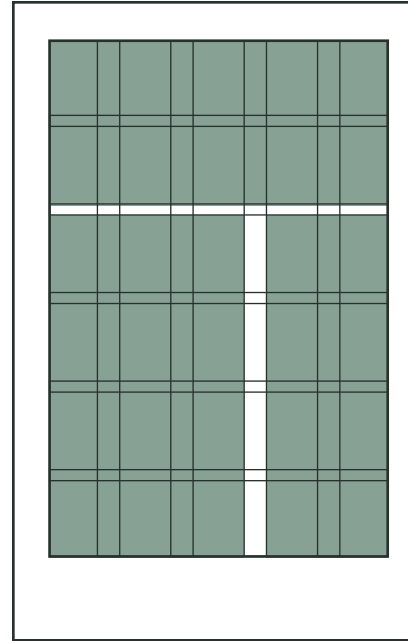
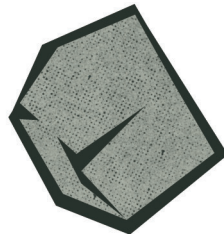
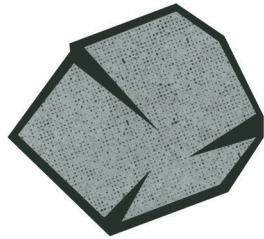
After explaining the Narrator pauses, allowing the players to talk.

This is just a sample of what could happen. The Narrator will have many topic points and



A common trait among Tabletop Roleplaying Games (TTRPGs) is that taking on the persona of a character can build strong emotional ties to a story and engage a player unlike any other form of media. This is the primary reason the system was built. The Racked System takes complex historical events and breaks them down into small moments that can be better understood through roleplaying. By removing the cold distance created by a textbook, it is more likely that players can comprehend the emotions behind historical events, and even more importantly learn lessons that can be applied to modern life.

The Racked System approaches history with a completely new lens. This brings along many powerful benefits, but also requires a higher level of attention in communicating the material and recognizing the mental well-being of the players at the table. Sessions will most likely contain many scenes where the players are experiencing what it is like to be a victim in a way they have only seen in the movies. It is important to present the material with the respect it deserves and not water it down. With that respect in mind, it is also important



COLOPHON

This zine was designed and written by William Truran as a part of his graduate studies at Rochester Institute of Technology in the year MMXXI. It was set in the typefaces Work Sans, designed by Wei Huang and Avara, designed by Raphaël Bastide, Lucas Le Bihan, Walid Bouchouchi, Jérémy Landes, and Wei Huang. The physical editions were printed with an Epson ET 3760 on Canson Newsprint and hand sewn in Rochester, NY.



2

No personality trait can have more than 9 of those points at the time of creating a character. In addition, each row must have at least 1 point spent.

Cautious ————— ● ————— Curious

Passive ————— ● ————— Aggressive

Compassionate ————— ● ————— Detached

Reserved ————— ● ————— Energetic

Sensitive ————— ● ————— Secure

The personality graph serves two purposes. First, it acts as an in-game aid to help the player make decisions that reflect the character they are roleplaying. If the players see a figure quickly turn a corner, will curiosity bring them to investigate? Or will they cautiously avoid potential trouble? Second, the personality graph is necessary for resolving encounters. If a player chooses an action that aligns with their personality graph, they will get a bonus to their roll. This will be explained in more detail in **Chapter 6: Rolling Dice & Event Encounters**.

Character Templates

The second tool to aid in character creation are the templates. Templates assist those not comfortable with creating a character from scratch by providing sample characters to choose from. All aspects of the character sheet can be altered and customized. Players can browse character templates to help further understand the setting.

The graph is not a concrete guide. Allow each player to explore what they believe each trait should look like.



THE SYSTEM

Unlike most systems, the players do not play the roles that birth legends. They will not act as people we read about in history books. There are no combat stats, no treasures to be won, and no dreams of exploring far away lands. The Racked System is designed to build roleplaying experiences around the moments that impacted an individual, but do not fit into the context of a textbook. The moments that made the heroes... the villains... the dates... and the data all fade away. In these moments, mere survival is all consuming.

This system is designed so that the majority of players can sit down and start playing without learning complex rules. They will not need to memorize any stats, but rather can focus on who they will become. The simplicity that is given to the players is, however, countered with the heavy preparation that goes into each session. The Narrator, a term you will become familiar with, must become familiar with historical moments and feel comfortable with the material so that all players learn together without straying from historical truth in the struggles the system is recognizing.

The Racked System creates fictional moments based on actual events. This should never be used in an attempt to recreate the records of an individual. The goal is to allow the players to create a new story and leave with empathy for those who actually felt the pain they imagine -- if only for a moment in the comfort of a home around a table with their friends.

ONE – TWO COLUMN TEXT

When this document discusses columned text, it is describing the width of the text block in columns. There are five columns, and the rarest of cases will span only one or two columns. Text blocks this thin should rarely be used and avoided when possible. Rare occasions may call for a small chunk of body copy, but be cautious in the use of the one- or two-column text. Its limited line length makes it harder to read than the wider column covered on the next page.

Pages 28

*For full page examples
of Single Column Text*

THREE - FOUR COLUMN TEXT

Pages 30-33

*For full page examples
of Two Column Text*

Three- and four-column text will carry the majority of the copy. It can stretch the entire height of the page, be split into groups, move on the page, and be intersected with large imagery. Its increased width, in comparison to the one- and two-column text, allows for easy reading. Text should not span past four columns and should be kept within three where possible.

COLOPHON

This zine was designed and written by William Truran as a part of his graduate studies at Rochester Institute of Technology in the year MMXXI. It was set in the typefaces Work Sans, designed by Wei Huang and Avara, designed by Raphaël Bastide, Lucas Le Bihan, Walid Bouchouchi, Jérémy Landes, and Wei Huang. The physical editions were printed with an Epson ET 3760 on Canson Newsprint and hand sewn in Rochester, NY.



THE SYSTEM

Unlike most systems, the players do not play the roles that birth legends. They will not act as people we read about in history books. There are no combat stats, no treasures to be won, and no dreams of exploring far away lands. The Racked System is designed to build roleplaying experiences around the moments that impacted an individual, but do not fit into the context of a textbook. The moments that made the heroes... the villains... the dates... and the data all fade away. In these moments, mere survival is all consuming.

This system is designed so that the majority of players can sit down and start playing without learning complex rules. They will not need to memorize any stats, but rather can focus on who they will become. The simplicity that is given to the players is, however, countered with the heavy preparation that goes into each session. The Narrator, a term you will become familiar with, must become familiar with historical moments and feel comfortable with the material so that all players learn together without straying from historical truth in the struggles the system is recognizing.

The Racked System creates fictional moments based on actual events. This should never be used in an attempt to recreate the records of an individual. The goal is to allow the players to create a new story and leave with empathy for those who actually felt the pain they imagine -- if only for a moment in the comfort of a home around a table with their friends.

8

No personality trait can have more than 9 of those points at the time of creating a character. In addition, each row must have at least 1 point spent.

Cautious ————— Curious
Passive ————— Aggressive
Compassionate ————— Detached
Reserved ————— Energetic
Sensitive ————— Secure

The personality graph serves two purposes. First, it acts as an in-game aid to help the player make decisions that reflect the character they are roleplaying. If the players see a figure quickly turn a corner, will curiosity bring them to investigate? Or will they cautiously avoid potential trouble? Second, the personality graph is necessary for resolving encounters. If a player chooses an action that aligns with their personality graph, they will get a bonus to their roll. This will be explained in more detail in **Chapter 6: Rolling Dice & Event Encounters**.

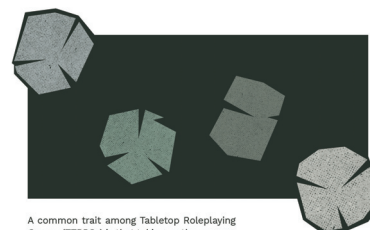
Character Templates

The second tool to aid in character creation are the templates. Templates assist those not comfortable with creating a character from scratch by providing sample characters to choose from. All aspects of the character sheet can be altered and customized. Players can browse character templates to help further understand the setting.

The graph is not a concrete guide. Allow each player to explore what they believe each trait should look like.



27



A common trait among Tabletop Roleplaying Games (TTRPGs) is that taking on the persona of a character can build strong emotional ties to a story and engage a player unlike any other form of media. This is the primary reason the system was built. The Racked System takes complex historical events and breaks them down into small moments that can be better understood through roleplaying. By removing the cold distance created by a textbook, it is more likely that players can comprehend the emotions behind historical events, and even more importantly learn lessons that can be applied to modern life.

The Racked System approaches history with a completely new lens. This brings along many powerful benefits, but also requires a higher level of attention in communicating the material and recognizing the mental well-being of the players at the table. Sessions will most likely contain many scenes where the players are experiencing what it is like to be a victim in a way they have only seen in the movies. It is important to present the material with the respect it deserves and not water it down. With that respect in mind, it is also important

12

THE GAMPLAY

The Racked System allows all players to make actions whenever they feel ready. There are no turns and sometimes inaction is as powerful of a stance as action. Each chapter begins with the Narrator setting the scene.

The group gather their character sheets and the Narrator reads the Chapter opener. "The date is April 7th, in the city of Berlin. Last week there was a boycott of Jewish owned businesses and earlier in January, Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany..."

Once the Narrator finishes the setting, the Journal Keeper explains where they are. This could be based on any information found in the players' character sheets, or even what occurred in a previous chapter.

The Journal Keeper, knowing the characters are all young children, states that they are home after school eating a snack.

Now that the Narrator has initiated the chapter, and the Journal Keeper has set the scene, all players at the table can take actions and ask questions.

One of the players asks what they are snacking on. The Narrator not knowing exactly what they would be eating says something to the best of their knowledge, "They are snacking on a small bowl of pretzels and while eating your father walks in. You all are aware that he is home much earlier than normal and that something is wrong, because he takes your mother into another room and a conversation of whispers can be overheard."

After explaining the Narrator pauses, allowing the players to talk.

This is just a sample of what could happen. The Narrator will have many topic points and

32

THE ROLES

The Narrator is the equivalent of the gamemaster (GM) in other systems.

The three roles are the Narrator, the Journal Keeper, and the Cast. In short, the Narrator controls events and time, the Journal Keeper establishes the environment and pacing, and the Cast together guide a story through the historical setting.

The Narrator

The Narrator is often the one organizing the game. They prepare the material, set the scene, and act out all the characters not being played by the rest of the table. This role is by far the most difficult and requires the most sensitivity because often they will be representing the most evil humans in history. With that, the Narrator must understand how to discuss ideas that the players may not be able to handle without sugar coating the truth of the events. Taking breaks, interrupting gameplay, and breaking immersion will all be necessary at points and should not be avoided.

In addition to managing the table, the Narrator is also responsible for studying the materials before running the game. Settings will be broken up into chapters that cover specific time periods and will provide many resources so they can properly understand what was occurring during the recreated period.

18

to make sure the players do not leave the table traumatized in a way that negatively impacts their well-being.

The X Card, created by John Stavropoulos, should be implemented to enable the entire table to end scenes or show distress without verbalizing why. This tool can be as simple as a piece of paper each player is given with an X drawn on it. At any time a player feels uncomfortable they present the 'card' to the table which signals that the scene needs to be wrapped up or that the content has gotten too dark and needs to be lightened up.

In addition to The X Card, the next chapter covers Roles which will enable more collaborative storytelling. This allows multiple members at the table to have control of the pacing and to share the responsibility of ensuring that no one crosses from uncomfortable to a realm of misery in which they are no longer able to engage with the material.

The Player Roles are covered in the next chapter starting on page 14.

Learn more about the X Card by visiting tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg

Required Items

Though the Racked System is designed to be simple to play, there are a few items players need.

- The rule set (this zine)

- A setting document

- A character sheet for each player

- Some pencils or pens

- At least six, 6-sided dice to be shared

13

EXAMPLE PAGES

The remainder of the guide will offer full page examples of the thumbnail samples in the grid usage section.

18

27

SIDEBAR CONTENT

Sidebar content lives in the outer column of the page. It is used to provide notes, small accent images, navigation elements, and important quotes or call-out blocks. The sidebar content can be used to break up a mundane page by providing a small visual break or act as a note to add a reference. Sidebar Content should almost always utilize the caption sized type (9pt Italic Work Sans).

Pages 34-35
*For full page examples
of Sidebar Content*

CROSS SPREAD CONTENT

Pages 36-39

*For full page examples
of Cross Spread Content*

Often we want to break free from the limitations that come with a single page. When that happens, players must consider the entire spread. Images can fill not only three columns, but also pour into the columns of the adjacent page. Another option is to use a spread as a break and fill it with an image to give the reader a short pause in what can be difficult-to-consume material of the setting. When working within the spread, text is still handled the same as it was in early sections.

ILLUSTRATION SUGGESTIONS

If the setting document will rely on custom illustrations, like the majority of this zine, they should be treated in one of two ways.

The first way is to fill rows and columns with a single block of color with the subjects breaking out of the frame and potentially interfering with the edges of the text. This style is illustrated in the top two images.

The second way is placing the subject directly onto the page without a background element. This method of injecting imagery allows the text to build around it and breaks away from the rigid edge formed by blocks of text.

Public Domain

*Many organizations that
educate about historical
events offer public
domain photography that
can be utilized to help
tell your setting's story.*

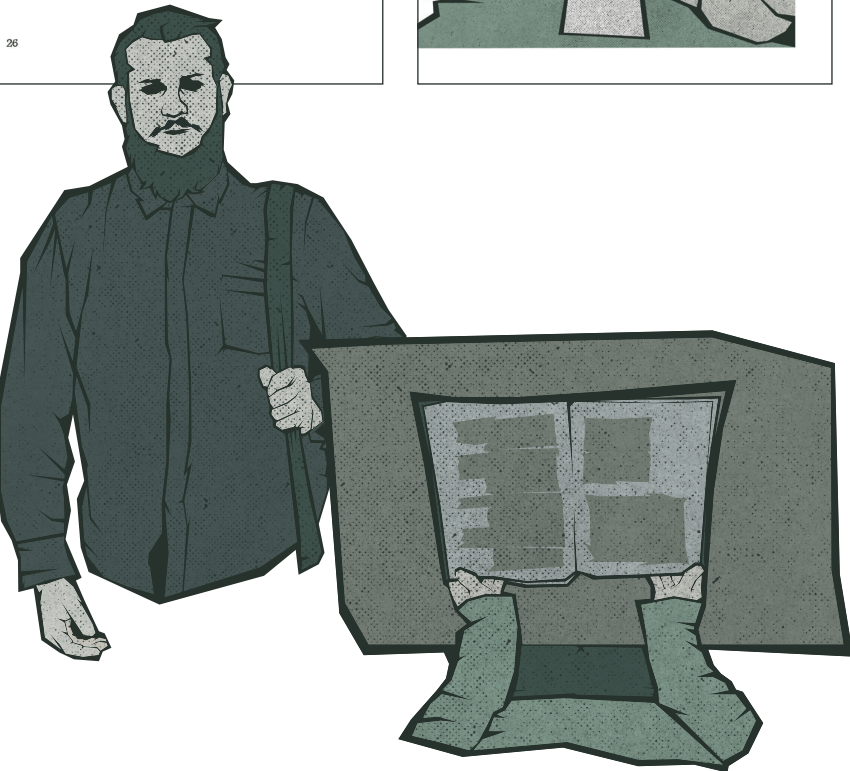
MAKING A CHARACTER

A player is not simply playing a person they wish to be, but one that could have been. The setting document will contain tools and information to aid in creating characters that represent the period. Each character can take inspiration from the player's life, as if they were living during the set period. It may also take inspiration from movies similar to the setting. Players are discouraged from attempting to recreate historical figures, a practice that can be insensitive, offensive, and inaccurate. The Racked System should never be used to recreate a person's life or retell an individual's story. The system should aid in telling fictional stories based on real events so that everyone involved can feel as if they have a new understanding of events.

There are two tools in every setting: the Character Sheet and the Character Templates. These will help guide character creation as well as introduce players into the system's format.

Character Sheet

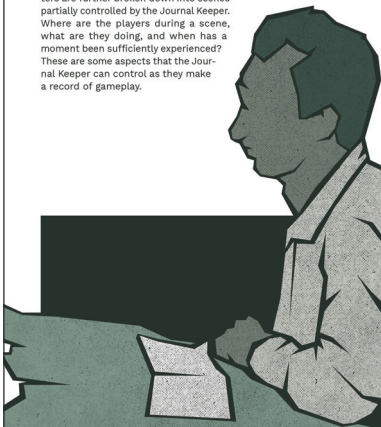
The character sheet will contain specific items related to the setting, but all character sheets will also contain a personality graph. This graph illustrates opposing traits that may come up in each session, such as Cautious and Curious. Each pairing is broken up into twenty-one parts, with the center pre-filled. The player is able to fill in a total of fifteen parts across all of the pairings. This will determine the personality of their character.



The Journal Keeper

In addition to the Narrator, the Journal Keeper aids in progressing the story. When thinking about a session, players must picture the story as though it is being recorded within a journal. The Narrator controls the world of the journal, but the Journal Keeper controls what is written down. Sessions are told through chapters controlled by the Narrator. These chapters are further broken down into scenes partially controlled by the Journal Keeper. Where are the players during a scene, what are they doing, and when has a moment been sufficiently experienced? These are some aspects that the Journal Keeper can control as they make a record of gameplay.

The Journal Keeper can almost be considered a second Narrator, but this role does not require any preparation.



THE STAGES OF PLAY

1 Narrator ESTABLISHES EVENT

The Narrator explains what is occurring and introduces the setting, including how it has affected the players and bringing the entire experience into focus. Through this initial establishment, enough tools will be provided that all of the players can visualize the atmosphere.

2 Journal Keeper REACTS WITH SCENE

The Journal Keeper takes in what the Narrator has shared and begins to draw a scene. The Journal Keeper may choose to include details such as the location of the players, the time of day, or the smells wafting through the air.

3 Everyone REACTS TO THE SCENE

The Narrator builds upon the scene with additional details. Everyone else acts based on the scene setting and details. This can include what they do, how they are feeling, and how this alters their environment.

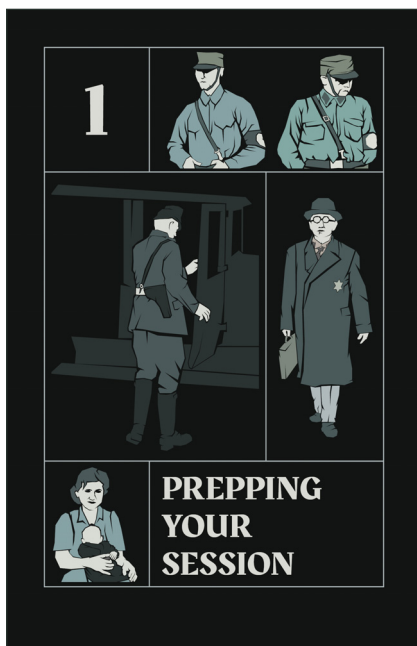
4 Narrator BUILDS UPON CHOICES

The Narrator takes the actions, builds encounters around them, and explains how the players are changing the setting. With these changes, the Game and Journal Keeper have a new set of items to interact with and decide on new actions they want to take.

PERSONA OF A CHARACTER



You are not simply playing a person you wish to be, but one that could have been.



TITLE PAGES

The title page represents the beginning of a chapter. It should always appear on the left page with the first bit of written content appearing on the right page. The images included within this page should hint at what is coming and set the tone for the content found within each chapter.

Pages 40-43
For full page examples of Title Pages

When beginning to build the setting document, take inventory of what images are available or how much time can be dedicated to create the imagery. If enough images exist to show a narrative, use the Title page where the content is divided into cells. If images are limited, use the example that builds off a single image.

Whichever style is chosen, it must persist for all chapters. The title page should be consistent and visually striking. Jumping between styles will make that more difficult.