

Colours In Conflict

Fifteen minutes ago, the world ended. Here you were, about to play some silly game with your friends, when all of a sudden the mists of oblivion, aether, reached throughout reality, rending everything. It's all gone now, but you and your companions here with you were saved. Given purpose by a great spirit of the base elements of creation, a Farwe, you have the power to express a new world from the ground up. From now on you are a Malar, a Painter, and the elements are your palette. Your journey won't be easy. Aether continues to chew away at the little that's left, and if you let it the mists will destroy you too. Just listen for the song of the keystones among the remnants of what was. Find them, and whole realms will be in your grasp.

Inspired by games like Mystic Empyrean, Bastion and Nobilis, as well as other works such as The Neverending Story, Homestuck, Dresden Codak, and the Malazan Book Of The Fallen series, Colours In Conflict brings powerful, epic scale stories of creation and destruction to your table. Using a system of draws – be they from a bag of coloured stones or chits, or a deck of cards – Colours In Conflict builds on the Apocalypse World and Mystic Empyrean systems to deliver moment to moment drama. Agenda and Principles put the power in all of the players' hands to make the world move, with individual players taking ownership of various realms and dangers. Now go out and paint a new world.

What You'll Need

- At least one other person beyond yourself. Three or four is ideal. Fewer is fine, and more gets... interesting. No Game Master or Master Of Ceremonies here, though. We're all just folk.
- Something to draw from. Coloured beads, wood chips drawn on with markers, paint swatches. Six colours (see below), at least three of each colour. Alternately, use playing cards (9, 10, J, Q, K, A).
- Something to write, draw or, if you're really crazy, paint with. In fact, I dare you to paint your character sheet.

Element	Colours	Cards
Fire	Red	9
Air	Blue	10
Water	Green	Jack
Stone	Violet	Queen
Light	Yellow	King
Aether	Black	Ace

Playing The Game

Always say:

- What honesty demands
- What the principles demand
- What any prepared materials you have demand

The Agendas are the reasons you play the game. Do these always. You play the game:

- to make each other's lives not boring.
- to find out what happens.
- to destroy the world and then fill it with wonder.
- to share graciously. You aren't alone here; be enthusiastic about your fellow players' visions and ideas.
- to play as though you just lost everything that ever mattered.

The Principles are things you should seek to do whenever you say anything in the game.

- Emphasize colours. Paint the world with passion.
- Go big or go home. Make it an epic.
- Address yourself to the characters, and tell it like a story.
- When the world moves be covert, but direct.
- Make everything personal, and tie it to the past.
- Ask lots of questions and build on the answers.
- Respond with escalation and occasional victory.
- Be each other's biggest fan.
- Think offscreen, too.
- Don't have a conversation with yourself. Don't make the other players have conversations with themselves.

The World Moves are the specific things you say when you're describing the situation to others from the perspective of the world. When people stop talking about what they're doing and turn to the table to see how the chips fall, someone, anyone, gets to pick something from this list to say, but remember, be covert but direct: don't say the moves name, and make it something critical of attention. Also when someone draws and the draw is Opposed, somebody pick as hard a World Move as they like and run with it. Always set up harder moves with softer moves first.

- Separate them.
- Put someone in danger.
- Trade wounds.
- Harm someone.
- Take something away from them.
- Show them the downside of their passions and powers.
- Give them an ugly choice.

- Tell them the consequences and ask.
- Turn their move back on them.
- Make a Realm Move or a Threat Move.

The World Tool

The World Tool represents the elemental composition of the world, varying from Realm to Realm. Elements are very important in Emphyrean, and will influence actions performed in a Realm. When making a World tool, the only requirement is that it's something to draw from blind. Beads or coloured chits in a bag, a deck of cards, a random colour generator. There are six elements in the World: Fire, Light, Water, Stone, Air, and Aether. Aether is the element of oblivion, the mists that came in and destroyed the world, and so opposes all other elements. The World is composed of 3 tokens of each element. If you're using cards, shuffle after each action; otherwise, simply return your draws to the tool.

Each Malar has one of the five elements they're primarily composed of and two that they are lacking in. No Malar has aether as a part of them. When you draw from the balance to determine the results of actions, compare the draw to your own elemental makeup. If the draw is of your dominant element it is considered Aligned. If the draw is either aether or one of the elements you lack, the draw is Opposed. Otherwise the draw is Neutral. On any Opposed result, the World moves against you (q.v.). Most moves will also have something special happen when drawing a particular element; this happens in addition to the basic effect from an Aligned, Neutral or Opposed draw.

(Filling in your Playcard)

Aether – What is it?

Aether isn't. That's the trick. Aether is what you no longer see in the place of a sunrise. Aether is what's there when that place right there used to be your home and now it's gone. Aether is what's left over when there's that emptiness inside because your only friend just told you how much they hate what you've become. But it's worse than that, because it's taking everything away right before your eyes.

Places touched by the mists of aether start to rend and fade. Drifting off until they're just more swirling fog of nothingness. Mortals who interact with aether, well, it gets in them. The creature becomes hollow, and dim. It'll die, in its own good time, and it's heartbreaking to see it keep going. The aether that's seeped into it corrupts anything it touches but keeps its vessels safe. The aethertouched creature cannot be harmed even as it falls apart. Luckily (or not, as it may be), Malari cannot be infected by aether. They start to fade, just like land, and buildings, and plants, but at least they don't become enemy to those they once cared for. They do that well enough on their own.

The Remnant, Keystones, and Realms

The stuff that's left, floating around in aether? That's a realm. The Remnant: that which is left over. The Remnant is a very fluid realm, bent easily by emotion and action. To make something more solid, more real, you'll need a Keystone. Keystones are relics from the world before that are filled with creative potential. When you unlock the power in a keystone you can use to to make something real and permanent, a realm. A keystone, if unlocked with selfishness dominant in the heart, can also be used to greatly empower the bearer.

(Remnant Moves)

A realm can be a new planet, a vast expanse possibly connected to other realms, or even something more ephemeral like a world of dreams. Any realm is populated by mortal denizens, usually one or two dominant species along with more wild creatures. In the case of the Remnant, well, it'll be mostly corrupted or desperately afraid leavings from the previous world; whatever managed to clutch to the light of the keystone, or creatures preserved as tools of aether. Realm creation is a slow route to power. When you unleash a realm using a keystone, an emotion in the hearts of viewers, granting any Malar a new Passion.

(Creating Realms)

When used to empower yourself, the power of the keystone alters your elemental composition. Either one element you were lacking becomes suddenly present, or an element joins those dominant in you. Reanswer the questions on your sheet related to the elements, and redefine who this makes you. In addition, you gain a potent artifact. A weapon against Aethertouched or Malar, a wand that spawns a forest at a touch, or even an amulet that summons a great colossus. Finally, unlocking a keystone in this way gives the you alone a new Passion.

(Creating Artifacts)

(Creating Passions)

Basic Moves

~~When you take action at risk to yourself or others, name what it may cost you, and draw from the world's balance. If Aligned, you succeed without cost; if Neutral, you succeed at cost.~~

When you charge into battle against mortal creatures, draw. If you draw Aligned hold 3, Neutral hold 1. If you draw Opposed hold 1 anyway; the world still moves against you. While you have hold, your majesty protects you from any mortal creatures. Spend your hold to:

- Clear a way out of the battlefield for others.
- Kill any mortal creatures without mercy.
- Prevent harm from coming to another.

Additionally if you draw Air, the wind gathers around you sending mortal creatures flying back.

When you brutally assail another Malar, you not only hurt them, you see into them. Wound them and draw. If you draw Aligned, ask 2, Neutral ask 1.

- Why does this cut so deep?
- What emotion does this draw forth in you?
- How do you plan to respond?

Additionally if you draw Fire, primal flame infuses your strike and the wound you deal is deep; inflict a second wound. One way or another, if they are in a position to, they may wound you as well.

When you hide your nature to move unnoticed, you may with ease. If you wish to draw on your power in your disguise, draw. Aligned, you may pass the ability off without notice among mortal creatures. Neutral, use it more than once and your nature will be revealed. If you draw Stone, the earth itself is ready to keep your secrets; should you be discovered, you may slip away without notice through stone or natural ground.

When you create something from your memories to solve a problem, do so. Tell us what its capability is, and its nature. Tell us why you cherish it, and draw. If Aligned, one of the below is true. If Neutral, two. If you draw Opposed, all three, and know that aether will corrupt it further.

- It looks wrong, false, not what you so cherished
- It feels ill, dark, of tainted nature.
- It's capability is unsettling.

If you draw Stone, that which you create is fortified by the fundament and cannot be destroyed unless you relinquish your hold over it.

When you stand fast and defend another, draw. If Aligned, hold 2. If Neutral, hold 1. While you have hold, you may wound anyone who moves aggressively toward your charge. Spend your hold to:

- Learn the hidden weakness of a foe you face.
- Learn the hidden strength of your charge.
- Draw out a known strength in your charge.

If you draw Stone, you may root in place with the strength of the mountain and cannot be moved unless you will it.

When you enter a new situation with other Malari, draw and ask any one question about the state of things from another Malar's perspective; they must answer honestly. If you draw Aligned act as though you were Aided when acting on the answer. If you draw Opposed ask anyway, but the world still moves against you. If you draw Light, the truth shines through to you here; at any point you may ask one more question about this place, being Aided by the answer.

When you confront aethertouched beings with the truth of the coming world, say a few words and draw. Neutral or Aligned, the light in you shines strong, and the invulnerability of the

aetherlings fades for now. If you draw Aligned, tell us what new insight your light has given you into the nature of aether. Further, if you draw Light, your heart shines bright casting the aether completely from mortal creatures near to you; they are freed.

When you use calm words to settle tempers, draw. If you draw Aligned, the power of your words reverberates deep, and heals wounds in all who listen to what you say. Aligned or Neutral, say how any mortal creatures present will react, following your words; they will do so until something interferes. Malari forge their own way. Additionally if you draw Water, calming mists flow to all who can hear you, and none may commit violence while you continue to display peace.

When you Aid another with their action, they draw an extra token from the world tool and discard the worst result. Whatever cost, you face it too.

When you Hinder another's action, tell us what it costs you. They draw an extra token from the world tool and discard the best result.

~~When you are stuck by something you know will kill you, say this: "And that is how I was to die." If that's all there is to say, release your hold over the world. But if there is a memory that drags you back, forces you to keep on, tell us what it is. Tell us how even though you should have died, you get back up. Write down what you've lost, and write down what can now never kill you.~~

When you are stuck by something you know in your heart should kill you, draw and tell us the memory that pushes you to continue on. If you draw Aligned, the source can never kill you. Neutral, you are lucky; tell us how the memory pulls you from the edge. On Opposed, you will die shortly, and that which you've brought into the world is free to thrive or doom itself as its nature permits.