ASH V3.00: The Merry Wanderers

Setting:

The Merry Wanderers "tMW" is an RPG of problem solving, quick-thinking, and creativity.

You play within a fictional world of foreign tech and magic. You live among an ocean-faring people that live aboard multi-vessel cities known as vessels. The provided setting focuses on one flotilla, Amauren, but you are free to travel the Shanean Ocean itself, northwards to the coast of the inhabited mainlands, or south to the exotic Tersune Isles.

You are a Protean, a shapeshifter. You are, more correctly, an exiled Protean. You may assume a form or trait (any Identity) from any defeated opponent. You can change your worn clothing with ease.

As part of your exile you had your name emblazoned upon you. All other Proteans can recognize you for what you are—some may align with you, others may try to kill you, and—worst of all—some may try to manipulate you.

No non-exiled Protean will reveal themselves to you; you will never live among your people again. However, they may be all around you without you knowing. You, and other exiles, are alone in the human world.

You regenerate fast enough to never die. But you can be hurt: tortured, imprisoned, or even knocked unconscious. You have no "HP", the Fiction determines your status.

Begin or end a war. Forge your own empire. Sail the seas as officers of a pirate crew. Hunt down other Exiles. Liberate oppressed humans. Oppress humans. Deceive, beguile, and otherwise cause strife for humans. Satiate your larcenous proclivities. It doesn't matter.

You and your friends can decide what relationships bind your characters and proceed from there.

The mechanical challenges of the game revolve around preparing your character with the proper Identities for the current goal. Being the world's best fighter is great for a duel, but useless against an army or situations of political intrigue. Your reward comes from what you can achieve with the ability to shapeshift.

Character Creation:

<u>Step 1: Choose Metamorph or Mimic</u>

All Proteans are either a Metamorph or a Mimic.

Metamorphs are versatile but less capable with any one Identity.
- They have 5 Identities with a maximum of 6-points in each.
- They use 2D10 for any conflict.
- They revel in the Protean ability to be *anyone*.

Mimics are adept with any Identity, but limited to a few.
- They have 3 Identities with a maximum of 10-points each.
- They use 2D6 for any conflict.
- They value quality of mimicry over quantity of Identities.

<u>Step 2: Describe your character</u>

All characters begin as a non-remarkable nobody. They can have any appearance you want: gender, shape, size, age, hair/eye/skin colour.

Skip this step if you intend to purchase someone's face—an Identity that grants you the form of someone with influence.

<u>Step 3: Name Two Identities</u>

All characters begin with 2 Identities.
- An Identity does not state how good your character is at something.
- It should prioritize fun over "power". Being smart, funny, good-looking, or good-at-everything may not be as useful as being stupid, foot-in-mouth inarticulate, ugly, or clumsy-at-everything.
- It can be a resource, experience, style, relationship, etc.
- It can be the physical form/voice/mannerisms/scent… of any NPC

Grant each of your 2 Identities one Advancement Point "AP" (fill in character sheet for one box).

<u>Step 4: Assign 10 more AP in any Identity you'd like.</u>

As the title says…

NPC Creation

Give them 1-5 Identities as necessary. Give them 0-10 AP in each Identity as necessary. Use discretion. Use 2D6 or 2D10 depending on NPC "toughness".

Session Flow/Resolution

One player serves the others as the Sessioneer—the Session's engineer. They Roleplay "RP' for all Non-player Characters "NPCs" and have final authority on issues concerning the Fiction's (in-game setting) response to player characters "PCs".

All other players are PCs.

The Sessioneer begins as the narrator (either first-person through an NPC or as an any-degree omniscient observer). Any player can name their character a contender and initiate a conflict.

1.) Contender's Reaction
Contender explains his reaction to the current narration.

2.) Narrator's Response
Current narrator explains his reaction to the Contender's reaction.

3.) Cite Identities
Contender then Narrator cite any one applicable Identity.

4.) Context Bonus
Contender then Narrator justifies a Context Bonus for their character's current action. (Refer to below table). If one player's CB exceeds the other, then the winner gets the difference in rock-paper-scissors "RPS" re-tries. (Ex: X has Favourable but Y has Significant. Y would get 3-2=1 RPS re-try.

5.) Roll Dice
Both roll dice (2d6 for Mimics and 2D10 for Metamorphs). Doubles allow a re-roll.

6.) Add Success Levels
Both add up Success Levels "SL" (sum of Identity rank and dice result) then Decide Advancement Points.
If one player has more SL then they proceed with that many Advancement Points "AP". (Ex: X has 6 SL and Y has 11 SL. Y has 5 AP for the rest of the conflict).

7.) RPS
Both perform a best-of-one rock-paper-scissors duel. "RPS". Any player with at least 1 RPS re-try can force a re-try at RPS.

8.) New Narrator
The RPS winner becomes the new Narrator. If the winner had AP then they may steal one Identity from the loser or buff their own Identities in any way relevant to the conflict outcome. The new narrator narrates.

Context Bonus	Rock-paper-scissors re-tries earned	Description
Negligible	1	May or may not have made a difference, but sure! Why not?
Favourable	2	It will help. Not much, but enough…
Significant	3	Of course this will help.
Godsend	4	Almost like you planned it.

Conflict Resolution Example

Sessioneer: It is a pleasant morning aboard the Amauren. The sun is low in the sky and a crowd has gathered to enjoy Character A's beheading. Despite the headsman being nowhere in sight two experienced guards haul Char A up to the block. They take the steps gingerly, afraid to lose their footing with such a bear of a man as Char A.

1.) Contender's Reaction
Player A: As we go up the stairs I try to shove my left-hand guard off the stairs.

2.) Narrator's Response
Sessioneer: The guard is smaller than you, but quick. He grabs you by the wrist to stabilize himself. He tries to drag you with him.

3.) Cite Identities
Player A: Well right now I am like Warlord Kremm, so my shove has a lot of bulk behind it. I use my "Warlord Kremm" Identity to gain 4 Success Levels.
Sessioneer: The guard's been doing this for years, his "guardsman" Identity more than applies. That's 5 Success Levels.

4.) Context Bonus
Player A: I'm in a bad spot, but the guard should…(considers) struggle with finding my wrist. He'll have to be looking into the sun; you said it's low in the sky, as he tries to grab my wrist. That's Favourable, at least.
Sesssioneer: The guard is smaller, yes, but he's been doing this for years. I did say he was experienced. Also, he was taking the steps "gingerly" so he has a few moments of stable footing before losing his balance to your shove. The guard on your right would also be impeding you, easing the blow that the left-hand guard will take. Significant I'd say.
Player A: (reluctantly) Agreed.

5.) Roll Dice
Player A: (a Mimic, rolls 2D6). I got a 2 and 4. That's 6 Success Levels.
Sessioneer: (rolls 2D6). I got a 1 and 3. That's 3 Success Levels.

6.) Add Success Levels
Player A: 4 for Identities and 6 for Dice. That's 10.
Sessioneer: 5 for Identities and 3 for Dice. That's 8, so 2 Advancement Points for you if you win.
Player A: Yup.

7.) Rock-paper-scissors.
(Both RPS, Contender Player A wins).
Sessioneer: I want to use my one re-try for Context Bonus.
(Both RPS again, Contender wins again).

8.) New Narrator
Player A: So I win. I use the 2 Advancement Points I earned to take a new Identity of Guardsman X. Char A successfully shoves the left-hand guard off the stairs. He promptly does the same to the right-hand guard. Char A quickly flees into the crowd toward a nearby alleyway. Once there I assume the form of Guardsman X and march away from the scene.

Task Resolution (PC vs. non-sentient challenge)
- Meet or exceed task difficulty (6-point scale) with an Identity
- OR roll your two dice. Result denotes relative success at task. Use discretion.