

Masks in the Madhouse, the RPG

V1.10

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Note: Everything below is subject to change!

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Summary

- Ask me questions about your character and offer me your ideas for your character.
- Tell me your character's name and costume idea. You can change your name/costume at any time.
- Don't worry about the details in this document unless you want to. I will summarize all important rules when you need to know them.
- Share your ideas with friends and be creative! Start working on your costume.



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1.) Game Preview:

i.) Game Overview:

You are all participating (willingly or not) in the jail-bust of a low-security section within Gotham City's Arkham Asylum. Everyone's superpowers have been disabled, but at least you've all found your suits and masks.

Also, some of you have found your weapons...

It is only a matter of time before Batman shows up and busts your party, because... you know, Batman! Which of you will manage to fulfill your goals (wealth, reputation, revenge...) before the Caped Crusader starts smashing faces?

ii.) Factions:

You are all trapped in (and the guards trapped out of) a section of the Asylum known as the Madhouse. There are no big name villains or heroes here. There are, however, four factions mingling in the Madhouse this evening.

The most villainous is the League of Evil Masterminds, and (let's be honest) their name gives them more praise than they deserve. Their leader is in decline and the League members are rapidly warming to the idea of a change in management.

The Alliance of Justice incorrectly assumed tonight would be a good night to eke out revenge on the League's leader. Now they're trapped in the Madhouse as well. Their leader is a hot-tempered side-kick recently-turned-leader due to his mentor's death at the hands... claws/scythes/hooks of an as-of-yet-undetermined League member. The Alliance are costumed crime-fighters that risk their lives to change Gotham's streets for the better.

The Enigmatics are non-Gothamites; no one knows why they even came to Gotham in the first place. Their leader is a powerful individual in his own right, but has no connections in Gotham. This anonymity grants the mysterious Enigmatics a significant advantage. Perhaps they want to stay and rule Gotham... or perhaps they'll leave at the first chance they get. Maybe they want to save kittens from trees, or put kittens in trees, or something. No one knows. Tonight's a prime time for them to show their true motives.

The fourth faction is the Independents. These are the girls and guys that aren't currently committed to any one faction. They may be heroes, villains, or anything in-between. They may try weaseling their way into a faction, or beginning their own.

The League and Enigmatics were recently incarcerated by Batman. The Alliance snuck into prison (don't ask why they thought it was a good idea) and got caught in this lockdown. Some Independents have been in jail for hours, others for decades.

iii.) Player Info:

Each player must create and submit their character's moniker and costume motif. You may be as serious or silly as you'd like.

Ex Moniker (pseudonym/street name): Jazz Hands the Dazzler.

Ex Motif (costume theme/colours): Sequined gloves and neon (primary colours) spandex.

Once I've privately informed you of your character's background information please feel free to suggest alterations that you think will enhance your character.

Closer to the date of the game I will provide you with your character's secret identity (civilian name), resources (weapons, secret information, money, or reputation points), and your character's win and lose conditions. Every character will have unique win and lose conditions. If you achieve your win condition you earn points, if you allow your lose condition to happen then you lose points.

When the game ends (when Batman busts in and shuts down everyone's murderous fun) every player will receive points for completing their win condition (worth lots), having committed (each person wrote the other's name down at the end) allies, or having resources remaining.

Note that no character can die, so no one will have to sit idly on the side-lines. If a character is held at gunpoint they'll be forced to Unmask themselves, reveal their secret Identity (which is a major loss of points), and forfeit all of their resources. All weapons are one-use only.

The player with the most points at the end wins.

2.) Game Design:

I welcome feedback on game mechanics. You are not required to memorize anything from this section.

i.) Game Inspiration

This game is inspired by “murder mysteries”. When I began designing The Madhouse I recognized that the fun of “murder mysteries” is the scheming with other players and the thrill of forging alliances to further one’s own goals. To this end I dropped the eponymous scripted murder of murder mysteries and focused on better equipping (both narratively and mechanically) players with the resources to pursue their goals.

The game comfortably accommodates 12-18 players. There are 3 factions of 4 plus as many stragglers as desired.

ii.) Factions

The 3 factions of League, Alliance, and Enigmatics are all wary enough of one another to encourage their players to at least begin seeking out allies on their current team. However, some players’ win/lose conditions will prompt them to betray their team-mates (alongside everyone else) and try to found new factions.

iii.) Setting

Setting the game in Arkham Asylum aids players in understanding the tone of the game. Trapping the characters in the Madhouse sets clear geographical boundaries and the knowledge of Batman’s arrival sets a clear temporal boundary. This helps frame the players’ interaction with the environment. The Madhouse also justifies the de-powering of superpowers—providing an even playing field for mortals and demi-gods alike.

iv.) Resources

Money (1 point per \$100, 000)

Every 1 point provides a character with five \$20 bills (green) of monopoly money. (\$1 game=\$1000 monopoly). If you are Unmasked you must forfeit all of your money.

Reputation Points (1 point per 3 RepPoints “RP”)

RP are used to represent “street cred” among the characters. Possessing RP signifies that rumours are circulating in your favour. If you are Unmasked you must forfeit all of your RP.

Secrets (2 points)

Some characters will receive secret information about another character(s). This information can be used to blackmail, bribe, mislead, or buy allies. All secrets will be true. Many win/lose conditions will be affected by the secrets (to increase their potency).

Weapons (3 points)

There will be 5 weapons among all players (roughly 33% ratio). All weapons will be handed out in sealed envelopes. Characters can threaten/barter with sealed envelopes all they want, but they must “release” the weapon if they want to Unmask someone (weapon thereafter removed from the game). 1 in 5 of the weapons will be a dud, and useless when attempting to Unmask someone.

v.) Unmasking

A weapon can be used to “Unmask” any other character. An Unmasked character must surrender all of their resources (money and reputation points) to the individual that Unmasked them. If you try to Unmask someone and they retaliate with a weapon of their own then both weapons are removed from the game without any other effect. Unmasking allows all players to play, without fear of death. This circumvents the need to find something for “dead” players to do and encourages riskier play-styles.

3.) Game-Night

i.) How Does it Start?

I will give every player their resources and their win/lose conditions. All characters will begin with 5 points worth of resources.

The characters will be divided into their respective teams. They will be given some time to begin familiarizing themselves with (plotting against) their team-mates.

The characters will then be allowed to disperse and meet other characters and play the game as they'd like.

ii.) At the End of the Game

At the end of the game all players will be asked to submit information. On a piece of paper they will write down...

- 1.) Their own character's name
- 2.) The single Faction they (believe they) belonged to.
- 3.) The name of "their" faction's leader.
- 4.) Were you Unmasked (yes or no)
- 5.) The names of their committed allies.
- 6.) Name 3 people who roleplayed the best.
- 7.) Name 3 people who had the best costume.

Everyone must be honest about the details they write down on the sheet.

iii.) How to Earn Points

There will be a few ways to earn points and a few ways to lose points. The person with the most points at the end wins.

Condition...	You get...
Achieve your win condition	+ 10
Allow your lose condition	-5
Were Unmasked	-4
Have \$100, 000	+1
Have 3 RepPoints	+1
Have a committed ally	+2
Have 4 votes for "best roleplaying"	+4
Have 4 votes for "best costume"	+4

You must be honest about all details in this chart. I will tally everything at the end.

Characters

The League of Evil Masterminds

Codename B: Jeff. The founder and current leader of the League. B, uncharacteristically, didn't gloat in the Alliance's faces when their leader was killed. This is likely because B's been slowly declining in power for years.

Codename C: Kyle. He wants to be the leader of the League, and everyone knows it. He is known to be a fair and reasonable man, so it's a marvel that B's survived C's frequent attempts at revolt, bribery, and out-right assassination for this long.

Codename D: Annie. She is B's right-hand woman and her loyalty is unquestionable. She's the newest (surviving) member to the League—a testament to her unparalleled effectiveness in all things nefarious. But if only she could have half as many brilliant ideas as B (used to have) she might just step out from under his shadow.

Codename E: Kailey. She is radiantly beautiful and far too dangerous. Everyone knows not to cross her because she'll just cross you right back, except she'll do twice as good a job and ruin you exactly when you can't afford another enemy. Labeling her as a triple-crosser would be an under-statement... but at least you can count on her to keep her word.

The Alliance of Justice

Codename 2: Garret. This current leader of the Alliance, once-sidekick to the late Alliance leader, knows the name of the Leaguer that killed his mentor. He has vowed revenge. For Justice!

Codename 3: Matt. A true veteran that's been a costumed crime-fighter for his entire life. 3 was the Alliance's first recruit and he's gained a great deal of respect over his many years serving as a protector of the people.

Codename 4: Travis. The "new kid" on the team. He's got a good heart and an unwavering moral compass. His dedication to justice is incorruptible.

Codename 5: Kendra. The bad girl that gets results... excessively effective results. The Alliance has (more than once) turned a blind eye to some of your methods, which has strained your relations with them. Despite being Alliance-bound you're still a "lone wolf" and don't have much patience for talking rather than acting.

The Enigmatics

Codename II: Craig. This is not a man to be toyed with; he commands the respect of the Enigmatics and anyone else around him. No one, not even his own team, knows why he came to Gotham in the first place. Is he building a new empire, replacing an old one, or simply trying to get home (wherever that may be)? This man is a wildcard, a *very* powerful wildcard.

Codename III: Joe. He acts while his sibling, IV, thinks. His brutish disposition is a stark contrast to his brother's brains; but that's not to say III doesn't have brains—because... well, who am I kidding? He doesn't have brains. But he's got power, and his brother's got smarts, and they'll *always* help each other out.

Codename IV: Mark. He's over-suspicious and slow to trust. This fellow is observant, so don't be surprised if he's learned more about you than you'd like him to know. Also, make sure to not cross him because then you'll have to account for his brains and his brother's, III's, force.

Codename V: Stefani. "The Scarlet Hand" is the newest recruit to the Enigmatics. This previous-Leaguer once struck out on her own and made a name for herself. Now she's earned a spot among the Enigmatics as II's local informant.

The Independents

Codename i1: Kevin. "The Mad Hatter" likes hats. And he's mad. Mad/crazy or Mad/angry, you ask? Perhaps he's neither... or maybe both? Why don't you strike up a conversation with him and find out for yourself...?

Codename i2: Amanda. She's a no-name wanna-be amateur villain—and not a very good one at that. She's so bad at being a villain that she might as well be a hero. No one's surprised that she managed to get herself locked up in the Madhouse. And no, it's not just you—she's definitely ripe for recruitment.