

Now, I know you're all groggy from the trip, but it's time to focus! Snap to it!

You'll all have forgotten the last couple of days. That's normal when you cross inter-dimensional boundaries. However, you agreed to be here and participate, so quit whining. This is a legitimate operation! We are the Quantum Restoration League; the QRL.

I know you have a lot of questions, so here are answers: The multiverse is fracturing. Rampant time travel is causing continuity glitches and spaghettifying history. YES that's the genuine scientific term for it, and shut up while I'm talking! Look, if the damage isn't repaired soon, the multiverse will become like one giant choose-your-own-adventure book with the page numbers written in totally randomly. And it's worse than that! Branches of many -verses have self-destructed under the strain, with the ripples travelling into the past and future, and across the whole multiverse. More -verses are collapsing at an alarming rate! Existence is shutting down!

The damage is being caused "**Chaos Cheaters**". The Chaos Cheaters tinker with the quantum foam to get what they want, cheating luck, fate, and death. Bloody time travellers! When they mess with quantum fate, they leave behind trails of anomalies in chance and probability and spawn carriers: creatures or objects whose lives are peculiarly altered by the actions of the Cheater.

I know what you're thinking. Why am I here? Answer: you have special talents that few beings in the entire multiverse possess. You can detect those anomalies! It's an ability we can't seem to replicate with technology. So, we came to you. We asked, and you agreed, to help us repair the multiverse. You'll be slipped into one of the -verses at a critical branch near several Chaos Cheaters and tasked with three missions; (i) to repair the quantum damage, which comes in four classifications - kinks, warps, rips, and tears, (ii) to clean up the chaos carriers, creatures or objects who have been specially influenced by the Cheaters but are otherwise innocent victims, and (iii) to seek out and eliminate the Chaos Cheaters with extreme prejudice. Death is not enough. Remove them from existence entirely!

The cheaters can be tracked by the quantum anomalies left in their wake -

→ **Kinks**: Kinks are unique because they must all be found and removed before other anomalies will show up. Kinks create a wide boundary around an area of major quantum chaos, like scabs on spacetime. Before you can clean a wound, you must rip off the scabs. Kinks have no presentation, so use your intuition and natural talents to find them. Even cheaters are invisible while even one kink remains. Now you know why you're so important!

→ **Warps**: Unnatural deformations in spacetime, warps show up dotted in an explosive pattern around stationary rips and tears. In addition to being detectable by you, they present as subtle expansions or contractions of time and space. For example, that bus might appear a bit shorter than normal, or maybe your taxi driver sounds as though he's speaking a bit slowly. Normal humans stretch or contract along with everything else so they don't notice, but you are immune just by your nature. Unlike the other anomalies, warps are only temporarily healed, and only disappear when the Cheaters responsible for the major quantum chaos event are all eliminated with quantum bombs.

→ **Rips and Tears**: Cuts in spacetime. Rips are small and present almost like warps, but they're more like skips instead of stretches. Tears are large and dramatic and present as so-called glitches in the "matrix", weird events where people and objects jump around in space and time, or duplicate briefly. Really, they're causality breaks. Rips and tears generally indicate that a carrier is nearby and they can jump in and out of existence if the carrier is a moving creature or object. When healed, an immobile warp shows up in their place regardless of the severity of the rip or tear. Furthermore, when a tear is healed, you may also see dramatic changes in causality, such as the disappearance of the bus you were riding on. Don't panic!

Normal humans are oblivious to the mess. They work so damned hard to maintain the illusion that nothing is wrong, that it may seem to be a conspiracy. Rest assured, they cannot mentally comprehend and reasoning with them is futile. Don't try!! Besides, you'll tip off the Cheaters, and if the Cheaters discover you're hunting them, many will take action to protect themselves or escape.

ZERO-POINT POSSE

HAPLESS DEFENDERS OF FATE

Tools! Yes, we're granting you the use of some gear to help you out. Although we haven't figured out how to detect the quantum anomalies, we sure as shoot know how to use them once they're discovered. Ironically, though the chaos is itself random, large amounts behave in predictable ways. This makes us all Cheaters too, but the net result is very positive if you complete your mission!

First, you'll be issued a company **ACU, anomaly containment unit**, designed to capture quantum chaos and store it in a readily usable state to a max of 42 points. Sucks 'em right up. ACUs collect one chaos point per mended anomaly, regardless of its severity. Warps and carriers are an unlimited source of chaos points so charge up as needed to complete your mission, but be quick to reduce your overall impact! You can exchange chaos points freely with other members of the posse through your ACU. Within 10 feet you can trade reliably, but it gets dodgy if you're trading from farther away.

Unused quantum chaos can diffuse out of the ACU. After about three to three and a half hours from when the first point is stored in an ACU, you may actually cause a glitch in your vicinity and you'll lose half your chaos points! The greater the amount that is lost, the more severe the glitch. With your detection talents, you should smell it coming, but it's risky. Also, it only matters how old the oldest point in the tank is. The quality of any quantum chaos stored in the ACU afterwards immediately degrades to quality of the oldest. Empty tanks are refreshed tanks!

Next: the **BRDs, bio-regenerative devices**. Those human meat bags you'll be wrapped in are weak. They can heal themselves, but the process is slow and quite frankly pathetic. Hah! On Mencis, we could gush blood for days just for fun! .. Damn it Frank, that wasn't an invitation, stop bleeding! Alright, so you can plug your ACUs into your BRDs. Trade chaos points for highly powerful regeneration. In fact, for seven chaos points, you can bring a fallen comrade back from death (with one point of health). Note that the BRD only works using fresh chaos, no more than five minutes old.

Finally, you have the **quantum bombs**, the most dangerous smart-weapons in existence. Use them to clean up history. In easy cases, cheating was spawned by a single Eureka moment, like a damaged cybernetic arm from the future that one of our agents discovered. He eliminated that arm with a well-placed quantum bomb and that branch of probabilities was snipped at the root. Done and done.

However, your mission can be much more complicated. A set of dice in some casino rolls sixes, causing the dice roller to win millions, allowing the daughter's daughter to get a great education using funds from the estate, inspiring her to invent a new theory of time, inspiring her friend Bob to invent time travel. Eliminating Bob is not enough and causes more damage, like roughly cutting a wound with a knife! Bob is a carrier. You have to work all the way back to the casino dice. Only when that event is cleaned will the true cheater become apparent; say, a 13 year old prodigy time traveller who travelled back in time before the casino dice roller won his millions. Bob wouldn't have had the opportunity to invent time travel if the 13 year old prodigy didn't do it "first". Dig deep! You'll find the cheaters.

Careful with the bombs, recruits. In one case, a QRL agent glitched out an entire planet beneath her feet. Since all you recruits are immune to glitches in causality, that agent found herself stranded in space. If that happens again, we're prepared to pick you up this time, but try to avoid it please. We don't need the hassle ..

Alright! You're going to be assigned randomly to teams, inserted into a -verse timeline near several Chaos Cheaters, and set to work. Yes, you're untrained, but you already know how to find the anomalies because you've unwittingly been doing it all your life. The rest is gravy. Trust me. Find the anomalies, suck 'em up, and follow the trail back to the carriers and then the Chaos Cheaters responsible. When you find them, take 'em out!

Harsh penalty, but that's what they get for meddling with existence! **Get to work!**

Welcome, dear player, to Zero-Point Posse. It is a game of the imagination, similar to improv but without a stage and with the players themselves doubling as the audience. You need a character (called a player character, PC), a few other players, a Game Master (GM), and lots of six-sided dice. Your GM is like a maestro, harmonizing the players your PCs, so that the experience is more fulfilling for everyone. You'll be directing your PCs to wander the GM's world, healing the anomalies and cleaning carriers though, like warps, carriers and even cheaters only stay clean temporarily until the cheaters are all eliminated with quantum bombs. It may take a lot of work to find out who (or what) they are.

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

Inevitably, your characters will suffer bumps and bruises. PCs start with 7 points of **health** maximum. As you earn rewards, this can grow to as much as double (though it's not critical for your mission). For cinematic effect, all damaging effects including gunshot wounds cause no more than one point of damage, but there are outright fatal events, which the GM will warn you about. Upon reaching 0 points of health, you die, but your BRD can get you back on your feet if your posse can reach you.

Note that you *look* like just another human from the -verse, slightly ahead of our modern world. Besides your anomaly detection ability and QRL gear, you have no special abilities at the beginning of the game. However, you come from a more complicated history of your choosing. Maybe you were a space-faring plant-like alien or an accountant with psychic powers. Get together with the GM and your fellow players and write a quick blurb describing both your normal, boring human form, and your character's original form and history before being drafted by the Quantum Restoration League. The blurb hints at the special abilities that will later leak through your normal human form.

To seed those leaks, write down the following about your PC: 3-5 **powers** possessed by your original form, of a level of power that you might see in a movie about superheroes or mutants. (The GM might allow more or less powers to change the length of the game.) Describe each power with 1-3 search tags, and associate each tag with a colour or colours that match the theme or emotion of that tag. E.G. for an invisibility power, you might choose the following search tags/colours: ninja/black and red, sneaky/black. The search tags are words you might use to find that power in an online search if you weren't allowed to use the name of the power. PCs cannot overlap colours by too much. Generally each PC should have at least one ability of colours not shared by other PCs. Note that, in game, you can only use powers if your ACU tank is not empty.

PLAYING THE GAME

While exploring, you'll want to perform actions. The ability to perform an action or use a power is a **skill**, which can be boosted as you evolve. Some, like surgery, cannot be performed by an untrained person while others are so easy that they're not worth mentioning. The rest will be reasonable but tricky: picking a lock, overhearing a conversation, or blocking a punch. Roll a d6 and you succeed if you get a 6 or more. The PCs roll to interact with objects or non-player characters (NPCs), and the GM decides on a whim for NPCs interacting with each other. NPCs generally don't roll dice.

EVOLVING YOUR CHARACTER

After all the kinks in the area are removed by the posse, the *whole party* of PCs gets a number of **evolution points (EP)** equal to twice the sum of the number of powers owned by all PCs. The PCs must decide as a group how to assign points. You *do not* have to distribute one EP per power and you can assign them to regular abilities. Each point gives the player a +1 when rolling for success on a power or skill, though a roll of 1 is always a failure. The players also gain a number of **specialization tokens (ST)** equal to the number of powers. These allow the player using that power or skill to succeed on a die roll unless a 1 is rolled. Specialization tokens ignore EPs and require that a chaos point be spent for each given roll. PCs can win another ST by chaining together seven meaningful successes in a row. A maximum of number of tokens are available, up to twice the number of powers. The GM can warn what is meaningful.

EP and ST can be shifted amongst PCs who are in contact. After the PCs heal their first seven anomalies, one EP at random "freezes" and cannot be moved again. The rest of the EPs freeze one at a time and unpredictably, at a rate of about one point per seven healed anomalies. STs freeze next, also at random and at the same rate. Even frozen, to use STs requires that PCs expend chaos points.

THE ROLE OF THE GM

In "Zero-Point Posse", the Game Master (GM) takes on four layers of responsibility.

The first layer involves assisting players as they build and evolve their characters, as described earlier.

The second has the GM narrate to set up the scenes, describe and direct the actions of the non-player characters (NPCs), and give depth to the fictional world that the players experience through their PCs. With just this layer alone, you have a sandbox game where events can go in any direction through collaboration of the GM and the players. For this first layer, the GM requires a mix of talent in storytelling and improv. Additionally, the GM will need to manage the spotlight so that all players are allowed a reasonable chance to participate and play. The game is most fun when the GM is almost invisible, only felt through successful harmonization of the players and the styles and themes of the fictional world.

Harmonization is achieved by the actions of the GM through the third layer. It has four phases of play that the GM takes the players through linearly, though the players, like musicians in a band, actually signal when they're ready for the next phase.

1. **Seek** - In this phase, the game is most like a sandbox game. While seeking and healing kinks, the players try anything that looks reasonable to test out the skills of their new characters. Healing anomalies and eliminating Cheaters is on their minds, but they'll have a very limited idea on how to complete these tasks in your unique world with all its idiosyncrasies. When they find and eliminate all the kinks, they are ready for the next phase.
2. **Learn** - Players in this phase are in the process of constructing their characters' identities and learning about your world. When all the character build points are distributed and frozen, they should be ready for the next phase ...but use your judgment as GM. It's not just about evolving their characters! They're learning how to best use their resources to compete in your world.
3. **Do** - By this point, the PCs have everything they need to take on the Cheaters. Every world has its own unique set of challenges that the PCs will need to conform to in order to be successful, and Cheaters should exemplify these challenges and truly test the PCs. Challenges includes the location of warps in relation to the Cheaters, since they will power PCs through the encounter! PCs move to the next phase when the Cheaters are all defeated.
4. **Master** - PCs enjoy the spoils of victory and tie up loose ends. They can meet and thank NPCs who helped them along their journey and complete any unresolved issues, such as by unlocking more achievements (see below). A new campaign may be begun at this point.

The final fourth layer is not strictly necessary but adds a little spice to the game, to give it added dimension. The GM defines Achievements well in advance of when the players begin the campaign. The achievements can be in line with the goals of the game, or they may be entirely unrelated. For example, one achievement may be to collect all anomalous rips in a particular zone, and another may be to save a family from a burning building that the GM intends to bring up randomly, to keep the PCs on their toes. The list of achievements should be available to the PCs but can definitely be cryptic, so that the PCs may not be able to figure out what the achievement is until after they acquire it. Rewards should be small but fulfilling, such as giving one-time bonuses or revealing information that deepens the plot. For example, you might reveal that one of the Cheaters got into time travel because of the death of a loved one. This wouldn't be pivotal to the game but it will allow the players to reconsider their actions in a new light.

WHO IS "ZERO-POINT POSSE" BUILT FOR?

The game is for anyone who feels in their gut that tabletop roleplaying games offer a chance at.. something that just can't be found in a wargame, first-person shooter, or even a MMORPG. The kind of wild adventure written about in books and splashed across the screen in movies. *How to become an epic hero?* I believe this game offers that opportunity!

Good luck and great gaming!