

# The Game of Skill

"This is a game that reads your mind, recreates where you lived, and asks you to defend yourself with whatever you can think of, literally. It's pretty cool sounding, and we hope you enjoy your Hour." - Whomp, Lead Programmer, Kirin Games Manufacture

The Game of Skill is an ambitious game project by [Kirin Games Manufacture](#). The goals of this game are to read a player's thoughts and to generate content based upon their memories for a shared or solo gaming experience. Funded and supported by [Tamahagane Corporation](#)'s entertainment subdivision [TET](#), it is bought to players of all stripes using the powerful [Virtual Collective Experience](#) platform. In VCE terms, it is a Realm that generates a Landscape for every match that is played, with player rewards and experience carrying over from game to game.

## Terminology

- **Player** - A Player, without which there can be no game.
- **Home** - The Player's base of operations, which is created when the Player first logs in.
- **Neighbourhood** - A name for a group of players who play together frequently.
- **Host** - The Player who is hosting the game, and influencing the look and feel of the game most.
- **Nightmare** - An enemy that is generated based upon the fears of the Players. Nightmares never spawn inside a Home.
- **The Hour** - The name given to a play session.
- **Creation Table** - The most useful item in a Player's inventory. Called the CT or Table by Players.
- **Scenario** - A framework upon which assets are placed that will influence the look and feel of The Hour being played.
- **Amalgam** - An amalgamation of all of the Player's Nightmares, serves as the end boss for The Hour.
- **Fade Out** - What happens to a Player who runs out of Life and are not revived by another Player.

## Game and Area Generation

First, the new Player is asked to think about their Home, and think about it in detail. Then they are asked to think about their neighbourhood in general, and roughly where everything was, building a map around that place. The Player is then asked what frightens them. If they don't answer, something will be fabricated based upon thoughts, and this may not be as pleasant as the Player's response. The imagery of their Nightmares is what the Player will be fighting against.

Visually, the game simplifies the look and feel of reality to something a little more exaggerated and cartoonish, since Kirin found that generating realistic assets and Nightmares made the game highly unsettling towards playtesters, and helped promote creativity.

All games go for one hour, which is called The Hour. Kirin Games Manufacture advises against making rounds go for longer. In practice, a full round usually goes for one hour and five minutes. All play happens in real time.

Time	Name	Events
0:00	Game Start	Once all tables are placed, Players are given two minutes to get ready using what's around them, and turning items into the environment into Rage, Defiance and Creativity to reshape at their behest.
2:00	First Wave	The first wave of Nightmares arrives. Generally easy to deal with as long as you don't box yourself into a corner.
10:00	Second Wave	The second wave arrives. The occasional enemy with a ranged attack will appear.
20:00	Third Wave	The third wave arrives. Enemies with ranged attacks start to become worryingly common.
30:00	Halfway Break	Players are given a five minute break. All Nightmares Disappear.
35:00	Fourth Wave	Fourth wave arrives. Larger, meaner enemies begin to show up that are capable of handily destroying defences.
48:00	Fifth Wave	Fifth Wave arrives. Those large enemies? There's more. Bring your big guns!
55:00	Final Countdown	The Amalgam Nightmare is released. No respawning beyond this point.
60:00	Overtime	If the Players have not yet destroyed the Amalgam or Faded Out, the game continues

## Personal Mechanics

### Making and Breaking

Every Player will start with a Creation Table, and they need to put it down somewhere. Once all Tables are placed, the round begins after a countdown. The Creation Table serves as a means to an end on creating new weaponry, defences and using your new found abilities. The table can be moved around mid game, and if it is destroyed, it can be rebuilt free of charge.

Items made with the Creation Table can be broken down to receive half of the Rage, Defiance and Creativity that was used to make it.

### Statistics

**Life** - Represented by a Heart, your Life is how much punishment you can take from your Nightmares before you fade, and the session comes to a close if your Hour in the game does not close the session. This can be restored by creating healing solutions, or finding healing items in your neighbourhood like food, water or medicine. It is possible to be rescued by another Player before you completely fade out. You can also self-revive and keep playing by spending Awesome, otherwise you're out of the game.

All Players start with a maximum of 320 Life points, and it increments in values of 40 for each Level Up, to a maximum of 720 at Level 10. Health can be further increased with the use of Creation items.

**Ammunition** - A general, catch-all term for what fuels weapons, magic and tools. It is interchangeable between all weapons and items. For example, one person could be wielding a Wizard's staff they created

and flinging fireballs that cost 10 Ammo each, while someone else is using a pistol that only costs 2 Ammo with each shot, while someone else is using a Medicine Gun that uses 20 Ammo to heal 40 health a pop. Melee weapons, if they have any special functions, will use Ammo for those special attacks, but otherwise do not require Ammo to use since that'd defeat the purpose.

All Players start with a maximum of 160 Ammo points, and it increments in values of 20 for each Level Up, to a maximum of 360 at Level 10. Ammo can be further increased with the use of Creation items.

**Rage** - Gained from destroying Nightmares and getting angry. Rage is used to assist in creating offensive items, such as swords, clubs, spears, guns, deadly magic spells, turrets, sentries and traps. The more Rage was put into it, the more powerful the weapon will be and the better the materials will be - and the more trouble you attract and ammo it uses!

All Players start with a maximum of 100 Rage points, and it increments in values of 10 for each Level Up, to a maximum of 200 at Level 10.

**Defiance** - Gained from destroying Nightmares and getting defensive. Defiance is used to assist in creating defensive items, such as body armour, physical shields, energy shields, and walls of varying materials, starting with wood and glass, then stone, concrete, metal, and Adamantium. This attracts less attention from Nightmares than creating Weapons, but something will still come to challenge those defences...

All Players start with a maximum of 100 Defiance points, and it increments in values of 10 for each Level Up, to a maximum of 200 at Level 10.

**Creativity** - Gained from destroying Nightmares and thinking hard. This serves as a catch-all and 'duct tape' solution to most problems. You can substitute a point of Rage or Defiance for 3 points of Creativity in a pinch. Creativity is mostly used to make personal equipment and armour that will influence your Life and Ammunition counts as well as assist with movement, light, sound and healing instead of attack or defence, making it good for utility purposes.

All Players start with a maximum of 300 Creativity points, and it increments in values of 30 for each Level Up, to a maximum of 600 at Level 10.

Point Conversion Table	
Creativity to Defiance	3:1
Creativity to Rage	3:1
Creativity to Life	4:1
Creativity to Ammo	2:1
Awesome to Creativity	1:20

**Experience** - Gained from learning about what's around you. Experience serves as a way of permanently increasing your Health and Ammo permanently, and carry capacity for Rage, Defiance and Creativity, and allowing you to build bigger and better items with those new-found storages. More experience means more enemies to deal with, and Players can intentionally start a game on low experience and work their way back up if they feel like it. Players start at Level 1, and can level up to Level 10.

Level Up Algorithm					
Level	1	2	3	4	5
Total Experience Required	0	55	144	377	987
Level	6	7	8	9	10
Total Experience Required	2584	6765	10946	17711	28657

**Legend** - Gained from completing an Hour successfully. This allow you to carry items you created across from previous sessions by using the point-cost of the item to bring it over - but in doing so, the game will be harder to begin with since you're expected to cope using it!

**Awesome** - Gained from doing things that amaze other Players. This is granted sparingly, since it requires other Players to have witnessed the moment and to have agreed that what took place was Awesome, based upon biological responses. Awesome can be used to customise personal appearance, or to make radical changes to your Home.

## Nightmare Types

For the ease of procedural generation and artificial intelligence, The Game of Skill tries to sort out Nightmares into these broad categories. There are probably plenty more, but these are the most common ones to appear in a game. Without any pre-loaded user input, they appear to be grey skinned, androgynous humanoids without facial features, unless otherwise specified.

- Walker - All they do is walk or climb towards you and attempt to hurt you with whatever appendage is handy. Usually humanoid, weak, and worryingly numerous.
- Grabber - Similar to the Walker but they speed up once they see a target. They can grab onto and slow down a Player.
- Crawler - Small and creepy, these things are weak individually, but surprise Players with their fast movement and ambushes.
- Spook - Somewhat difficult to see, thanks to their camouflage, they try to sneak up on players from behind, but are vulnerable in a stand-up fight.
- Brute - Big and unsubtle, they are capable of destroying walls if they're left unchecked.
- Kamikaze - Rushes towards Players in an attempt to destroy themselves, any defences and the Players in the blast. Easy to spot, easier to hear and easier still to use for enemy friendly fire.
- Lobber - Hurls damaging projectiles at a distance in an arc, and runs away from anything that tries to engage it in Melee.
- Rocketeer - Fires slow moving projectiles at Players. They are immune to each other's projectiles.
- Shielder - Serves as a meat shield for other Nightmares to protect from Player attacks. Vulnerable only from the back or with overwhelming force.
- Mechanic - Erects Defences and Countermeasures for the Nightmares. If they aren't eliminated in a hurry, they become highly problematic, and drop lots of spare Creativity and Defiance.
- Floater - A flying, spherical type of Nightmare that launches slow projectiles, and attempts to chew players within reach.
- Hand - Large hands that attempt to grab Players and pull them away from from the fight, or separate them from other Players.

## Themed/Pre-Packaged Scenarios

Themed and Pre-Packaged Scenarios serve less as standalone maps, and more as frameworks wherein everything that is read from the Player and created is placed according to a certain setup. This also influences what the Nightmares will look like, and the general look and feel of the game. Players are invited to create their own scenarios, and Kirin Games Manufacture will review entries.

### Welcome to the Neighbourhood

In this 'Scenario', the Player wakes up in their house and is taught the basics of how to play The Game of Skill in a safe environment by introducing the Player to the use of the Creation Table, and how to use Rage, Defiance and Creativity to build things, finally giving them some Nightmares to fight against. This is meant for a single Player, but it can readily adapt to groups.

### Treehouses

This Scenario takes place in a forest, starts by counting how many Players there are, and generating their Home in the large branches of a large tree for each of them, connected by some rudimentary walkways. The Nightmares will come from above and below rather than evenly, so keeping your wits about you is essential. It's quite a long way down and it'll surely fade you, but if you can build a way down, you're happy to fight there! The insides of each tree are hollow, and connect to your Home. Be prepared to fight from within if you're not careful!

### Dungeon Crawl

Strike the earth! Be prepared to get a source of light as quickly as you can, because this mode takes place deep underground, with your Homes now re-purposed into ruins as you navigate through sprawling caverns, cross gaping chasms and abandoned ruins and mines.

### War!

All of the Player's Homes are lined up, and they have a stretch of road between them and a battlefield where the Nightmares will start pouring in, and from there alone. Be prepared to build, dig, blast and weather hordes of Nightmares. This Scenario can also be configured to go in a Ring, adding extra challenge as Players get a fight from all sides.

War! also has a PVP mode where players can fight against other players in teams, or in a no-holds-barred deathmatch.

## High Rise

The 'Modern' variant of Treehouses, High Rise takes place in an apartment complex or commercial office building, with each Player's Home being the penthouse. There is added difficulty in that the interiors of the building can hide all sorts of nasty surprises - and good loot if you're willing to be adventurous.

## Neighbourhood Watch (Yamataian)

This Government-Sponsored mode gives Players access to Real-World power armour, military equipment and weaponry as they defend their home town from Mishhuvurthyar invaders of all stripes. This Yamataian home initiative takes place in some pleasant suburbia that's under threat from the Mishhu.

## Neighbourhood Watch (Nepleslian)

This Nepleslian-ised mode gives Players access to Real-World power armour, military equipment and weaponry as they defend their home town from Mishhuvurthyar invaders of all stripes. The Nepleslian version takes place in Funky City, offering a more cramped, claustrophobic and loot-heavy experience since spare guns can be found just about everywhere.

## What You Can't See...

Instead of the usual 'Kill Everything that Moves' that's typical of The Game of Skill, you start hopelessly outnumbered and you have little in the way of spare Rage, Defiance and Creativity. You are not rewarded as much for attacking enemies head on as opposed to avoiding them and outwitting them while you try to navigate your nightmarish Neighbourhood with the friends of your choice. If you manage to survive for the Hour, you will be immensely rewarded.

## Creative Mode

In this mode, Players build and create to their heart's content, and have few constraints or hassles from Nightmares unless they wish to bring some in. This is a good place to test building and combat strategies, fraternise or test out modifications to the game in a safe, controlled environment.

However, items made and any experience earned do not carry over to normal, risky play.

Kirin have gone on record to say that Creative Mode's laxness and laid back approach make it no different to Tamahagane's other Realms and Landscapes that are better suited for friendly relations, and implore players to check those out too.

# Example of Play

<b>Players</b>	Alice	Bob	Carol	Dave
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Alice, Bob, Carol and Dave log into the Lobby. Since Alice is the Host, she has first pick of a Scenario, if any. She decides to pick Treehouses.

Having played before, The Game of Skill reads Alice, Bob and Carol's previous games and imports their Homes and Nightmares easily. Dave has not played before, so the game asks him about his home, neighbourhood and his fears, in that order, consensually reading his mind and constructing the assets for him and showing them to him. Now that all players have assets generated (usually takes a minute or two), they are placed within the framework of the Scenario.

The Players now find themselves in their Homes amongst treetops in a square configuration with a nexus of walkways in the middle of them. They converge towards the centre nexus of walkways and look at each other and discuss a plan before they place their Tables. Using Legend points, Bob has bought a [Nail Bat] with him from a previous game. All players are granted small measures of Rage, Defiance and Creativity to begin with.

Carol states that their first priority should be making the walkways more convenient, the others agree, and are granted some Creativity for coming up with an idea and agreeing with it. Dave wonders if there should be any safety measures in case players fall, and suggests using large net. The other players seem sceptical, but Dave is confident with his idea and is granted Creativity. Bob and Alice state that they're content to handle defence, and head back to their Homes to place their Tables. Carol and Dave split up and place their Tables too.

The Hour begins! Carol uses her gathered Creativity to create ladders, and uses some of it to substitute as Defiance so she can build walls that will work as floors. She runs back out and places them down while the others get ready. Alice constructs a [Pistol] using some Rage, while Bob is happy to hang onto his [Nail Bat], and instead crafts [Concealable Vest] and [Plank Shield] using Defiance. Dave, meanwhile is wondering what exactly to make, and comes up with [Magic Wand] using Rage and [Wizard Hat] using Creativity to boost his Ammo storage level. He also constructs a handful of [Rope Ladder]s and a [Grappling Hook].

About a minute and a half has gone by in this time, and the players emerge with their created equipment, stating their roles: Alice is fighting in range, Bob is fighting in melee while Carol is building and Dave gets his bearings, serving as a jack of all trades. They watch the countdown to 2:00, and they brace themselves for the first wave...

## Player Equipment & Sample Items

Players can wear things on the following locations: Head, Face, Back, Body, Arms, Hands, Feet, Two Rings, Two Trinkets. They also have an inventory that stores 36 items of any shape and size. Items that can be stacked are stacked in orders of 64 before another space is needed.

Items can also be left outside in the open, but they will be vulnerable to Nightmare attacks, collateral

damage or theft. To obtain an item from one's inventory, they simply have to think about it and it will be in their hands, ready to use, wield or wear.

Players can readily wield two items for each hand, keeping the spare item on their back or hips. Solutions made with Creativity can allow you to carry more readily available items, perhaps at the cost of other wear spaces. A common set up is that the Right hand has a sword and a pistol that they can swap between in a hurry, and the Left hand has a shield and a utility item of some sort. Some unorthodox items such as Walls can be weaponised in a pinch...

ITEM TEMPLATE									
Name	Type	R: Rage Cost	D: Defiance Cost	C: Creativity Cost	Total Cost				
Description									
Special Qualities									
Baseball Bat	Club, 1h	R: 4	D: 0	C: 0	4				
A baseball bat found nearby. Batter up!									
Handgun	Gun, pistol	R: 12	D: 0	C: 0	12				
A small-calibre handgun meant for self defence.									
1 Ammo to Fire									
Wooden Wall	Wall, 6ft by 6ft	R: 0	D: 1	C: 0	1				
A wall made of hardwood.									
Stone Wall	Wall, 6ft by 6ft	R: 0	D: 4	C: 0	4				
A wall made of fitted cobblestone.									
Concealable Vest	Armour, Body	R: 0	D: 12	C: 0	12				
Civilian grade body armour, meant to be worn under clothing.									
Cyber Arms	Armour, Hands	R: 20	D: 12	C: 9	41				
A pair of armoured arms that slip over yours and assist with strength and defence									
1 Ammo per second to activate Smash! mode for extra melee damage.									
Healing Grenade	Bomb	R: 10	D: 0	C: 40	50				
Yes, it <i>heals</i> people.									
Restores 80 Life to all players caught in the blast.									
Mindy	Armour, Whole Body	R: 150	D: 120	C: 60	330				
A top-end Yamataian Power Armour.									
1 Ammo per second to activate Aether Blade.									
12 Ammo per second to fire Shoulder Cannon.									
20 Ammo per second to fire Shoulder Missiles.									
8 Ammo and 5 Creativity to use Countermeasures.									
1 Creativity per second to fly.									

## OOC Influences

These are mostly thematic influences, although I'd say Homestuck has the most direct influence on the



general game mechanics. One day, I do want to make a game just like this. It'll be worth it. - **Luca!**

- Killing Floor - Frantic Horde Mode gameplay.
- Homestuck's Sburb - The ability for the game to read your mind and use it to create assets
- Minecraft - Crafting, Creation, Exploration, Making and Breaking
- Epic's Fortnite - Very similar, contemporary example
- Saints Row 2 - Extensive Self/Character Customisation
- Calvinball - Very loose rules
- Silent Hill - Your Nightmares attacking you
- Borderlands - Presentation style, and random item generation
- A Dream I had on 1/6/11 that I wrote about

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