



CHANNEL 4 THE PLAYERS

★★ Being a Good Player ★★

Before we get to the *CAH*-specific material, let's go over some advice that would apply to any roleplaying game. You know – common courtesy type of stuff.

Participate

We may sound like Captain Obvious here, but participating goes beyond just sitting at the table and half-listening while you text your aunt and wait for your turn to do something. Participating means actively being a part of the story as it unfolds. This generally requires your undivided attention... unless, of course, you break your tortilla chip off into the cheese dip and have to rescue it with a larger, sturdier chip. Some things are just unavoidable.

So, yeah, it's okay to briefly divert your attention to deal with a situation that arises (the spilled soda isn't going to clean itself up, nor is the die that went careening off the table and across the floor going to find itself). For the most part, though, you should be an active participant, not just a lump who happens to be at the table.

A good player is one who uses his character to make the game an even better experience for the entire group than it already is. If you don't participate, you can't achieve that goal.

Share the Limelight

It's understandable that you're excited about playing and want your character to be in the thick of the action. You *should* be. Otherwise, why bother playing the game at all. Grabbing the spotlight and letting your character strut his stuff is not only acceptable, it's outright expected. Don't be timid about it.



Kargorr: Game Masters shouldn't be so namby-pamby! If a player pulls a portable trans-space communicator – or whatever you call them here – during the game, the GM should threaten to destroy him and follow through with it should the insignificant worm persist! I've no patience for disrespect!

However, you need to know when to graciously hand that spotlight over to the other characters and let them have their airtime as well. If you hog all the glory, your fellow players may grow resentful of your behavior or at the very least become disenchanted with the game as a result. You may even get beamed upside the head with a die or two.

Leaping heroically into the limelight is a big part of what roleplaying is all about, but keep in mind that it's a shared activity and nobody likes sitting by the sidelines and watching while one player has all the fun.



Kargorr: The heroes don't need any limelight! They're dull, boring and lacking color! The spotlight belongs to the real stars of the show...



Sarah: ... you're going to say, "the villains," aren't you?



Kargorr: Ummm... maybe.



Sarah: There's no "maybe" to it, buster. You were gonna say "the villains" and you know it. You're so predictable.



Kargorr: I am *not* predictable! For your information, I was going to say, ummm... uhhhh... "the villains' pets." Yes, that's it, their pets.

Be Patient

Cartoon Action Hour is designed to play fast, but there will almost certainly be times in which you'll find yourself waiting around while something else is going on. Perhaps the GM has to look up a rule. Or maybe the player characters have split up and the GM has to cut back and forth between the groups. Whatever the case may be, there will be some waiting involved.

Our advice ties into the "Participate" section we discussed a short while ago. Don't whip out your tablet or turn to the video game console to shoot the heck out of polygonal bad guys. Listen to what's going on and be patient. After all, in most cases, the stuff that's happening will likely be tied into your character's situation sooner or later, so it's probably wise to keep up with it.

Respect the GM's Authority

While it's true that roleplaying games are collaborative in nature, a ship needs but one captain... and the captain of this ship is unquestioningly the Game Master. Her word is the final word on anything that goes on in the game. If there's a rules dispute, the GM makes the call. If the players start bickering, the GM sets things straight. If a player is cheating, the GM puts her foot down. Whatever the GM says, goes. Period.

That said, the GM shouldn't be a despot, unwilling to listen to reason. If you feel that something isn't right, politely bring it up to her so that it can be discussed in a civilized manner. Just be an adult, state your case, hash things out and accept the GM's final decision. You may not like the decision, but discretion is the better part of valor. Perhaps it can be discussed further after the game session is over.

Avoid Being a Troublemaker

Some players get a kick out of trying to derail the game. Don't be one of those players. We're not suggesting that you should follow along a linear path laid out by the GM. Far from it. It's okay to forge your own path by doing things the GM didn't count on. In fact, it's *better* than okay, because it shows that you're actively participating. But when you purposely take a course of action that will totally throw the game out of whack, just for the sake of irritating the GM and your fellow players, you should check yourself.

It's all about intention. Going your own way can really enhance everyone's fun, making for an exciting episode... but doing so solely for the purpose of watching the whole thing burst into flames is just being a jerk. Being a jerk is bad. Avoid it like the plague.



Cartoon Action Hour is all about emulating the retro-toon genre. The rules are designed to facilitate that, but true emulation can only be achieved if all the players get into the spirit of things. You don't have to be a retro-toon expert to do it either. Just peruse this section (as well as the "About Retro-Toons" write-up, beginning on page 12) and you'll have enough information to run with. Watching an episode or three of a retro-toon couldn't hurt though.

So, how can you embrace the genre? We're glad you asked.

Ham It Up

Characters in the retro-toons tended to be a bit over the top in their actions. Don't be afraid to go for the gusto and play it to the hilt. Speak in an exaggerated voice! Mimic sound effects! Use overdramatic body language!

You may feel silly at first because, well, it *is* silly... but, as ol' Hamlet proclaimed, the play's the thing. Be entertaining at all costs and be fearless in doing so. This kind of overacting tends to be infectious, so if your fellow players are reluctant at first, they will likely follow your lead.

Put the Story First

The entire group's top priority should be to have fun while collaboratively crafting a retro-toon story. In fact, it should probably be the group's *only* priority. What else is there? Characters don't die in *Cartoon Action Hour*, so surviving can't be a priority. It's not a competitive game, so winning can't be a priority either. What about kicking butt so you can improve your character? Nope. Beating the tar out of enemies won't help you bolster your character's game stats, so that's right out the window, too. What's left then? That's right – creating a satisfying story with your friends.

Sometimes, putting the story first can place your character in peril. But again, death isn't something your character needs to worry about, so who cares if he's in peril? If it adds something of value to the story, then you should seriously go for it. For example, if the GM mentions that a rectangular section of the floor in the villain's lair is slightly discolored, you'll no doubt be aware that it's a trap door. Should you avoid that peculiar rectangle? Perish the thought! Have your character step right onto it! Doing so not only makes for a fun predicament for your character, it will also probably net you a point of Oomph as well!