Bones

A Role-Playing game by Alex Hartford

Abstract

- *Motion Picture Role-playing.*
  - A series of short (1-3 session) games.
  - Small groups. 1-3 players per game.
  - Cinematic, consequential, and focused. Every scene matters!
  - Archetypal characters. Recognizable tone.

Why *Motion Picture Role-Playing*?

- Short games…
  - can be truly consequential.
  - are all about the characters and their decisions, not about progression or numbers.
  - let us explore a whole variety of stories!
  - force us to really focus on what matters.

- Small groups…
  - Allow for a more intimate tone.
  - Let everyone explore interesting facets of their characters and the story in a short time!

Premise

Action-Adventure Films

- **Fast-paced.**
- **Archetypal.**
- **Pure fun!**
- **90-180 min. range.**

- *Nausicaa*
- *Mulan*
- *Shuna's Journey*
- *The Incredibles*

Historical Fiction

- **Characters come closer to our own lives than in fantasy.**

- **Grounded violence. Serious consequences.**

- **Elevates the mundane to a higher realm!**

- Polanski's *Macbeth*

- *Yojimbo*

- *Seven Samurai*

Sword and Sorcery

- **Just a touch of the fantastic.**
- **Larger than life characters, heroic feats.**
- **Still keeping to the salt-of-the-earth, grounded core.**

- *Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser*
- *Conan, the Barbarian*
- *Elric of Melnibone*
- *Dark Souls*

The Game

Core Ideas

The game is **lethal**. Violence is real!

When you get hurt, you take **wounds**, which are often consequential. Whether or not you participate in violence is a meaningful choice.

Characters are really **simple**: just a set of five stats, a couple talents (things you're good at), and one unique ability.

Not much mechanical **Progression**.

Equipment matters and often creates dilemmas.

In a limited capacity, **Fate** can be influenced by the players at the table.
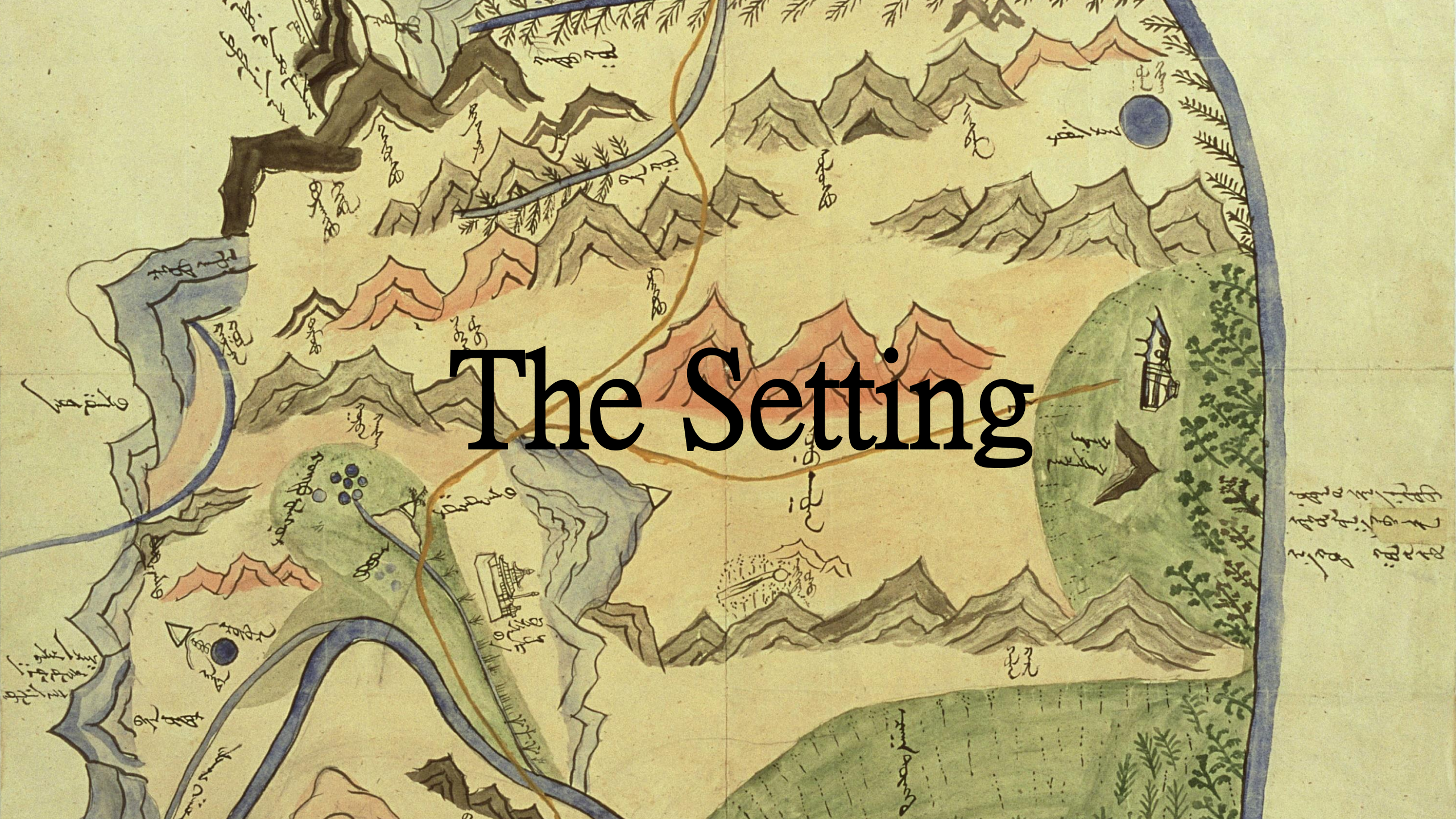
How does the setting work?

The games take place in a common world, all around the same time.

Characters who you play or meet in one game might appear in another.

We might do the "Sequel" to one game, with some returning and some new characters.

The games occur throughout the setting, in various locations with a variety of states and circumstances.

Prior to any given game, you'll get a document illustrating all you need to know about your character's knowledge of the local area, and you'll build up intuition over time.

Medieval Fiction

The games take place in a "Medieval" setting. We're talking...

- Most people live in squalor, with few possessions. Disease is prevalent.

- War. Castles. Kingdoms and Lordships. Horses. Longbows, chain mail, swords and spears. A little before crossbows, firearms, cannons.

- Vast lands are still untouched, uncontrolled wilderness. Many are controlled by regional bandits.

- The world outside of your civilization is mostly unknown.

- The vast majority of people have not left their homes on a journey in their entire life. Many only know the outside world through stories from travelers.

A compressed world

The game has analogues for the following cultures:

- **Medieval Scotland (c.1200)**

- **Golden-age Arabia (c. 1200)**

- **Sengoku Japan (c. 1400)**

- **Yuan Imperial China / Mongolia (c. 1300)**

This way, we can tell stories in any of these analogues, depending on the tale we're excited about.

Feel free to research these periods of history for inspiration on your characters, and the kinds of tales we want to tell about them.

Details you ought to know

- Magic is real, but it's extremely limited, arcane, rare, and has few adherents. Kind of like how magic works in our world (whether or not you believe in the stuff).

- Many believe in Gods of various form. Many would claim to have seen miracles. Many believe in an afterlife.

- There aren't different "species," like in Tolkien, but there are very different cultures of people with different biological differences. Like in our world, but a little accentuated.

- There's some different animals, some mythological.

- The cosmos are the same. Sun, moon, 365-day years.

Discussion