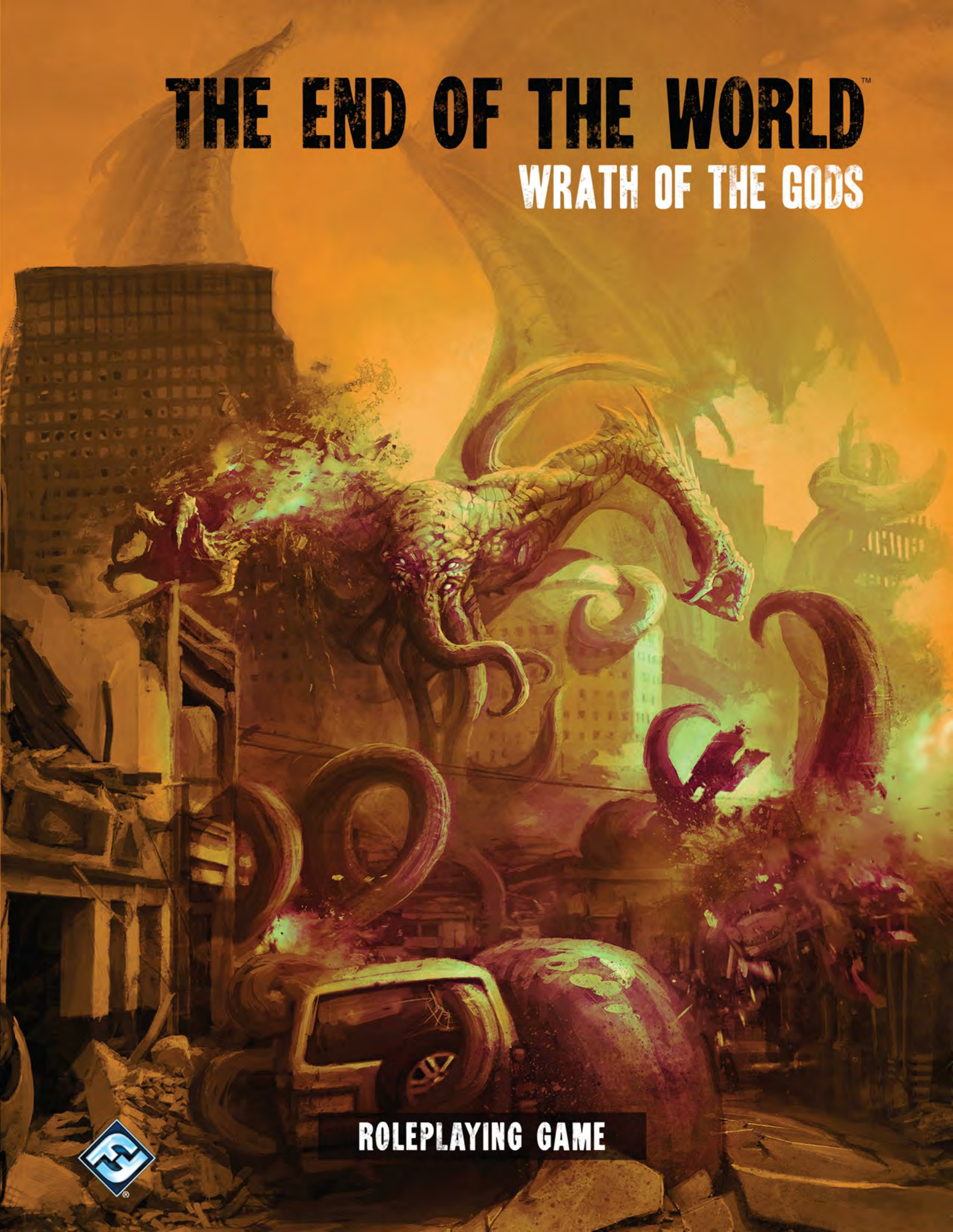


THE END OF THE WORLD™

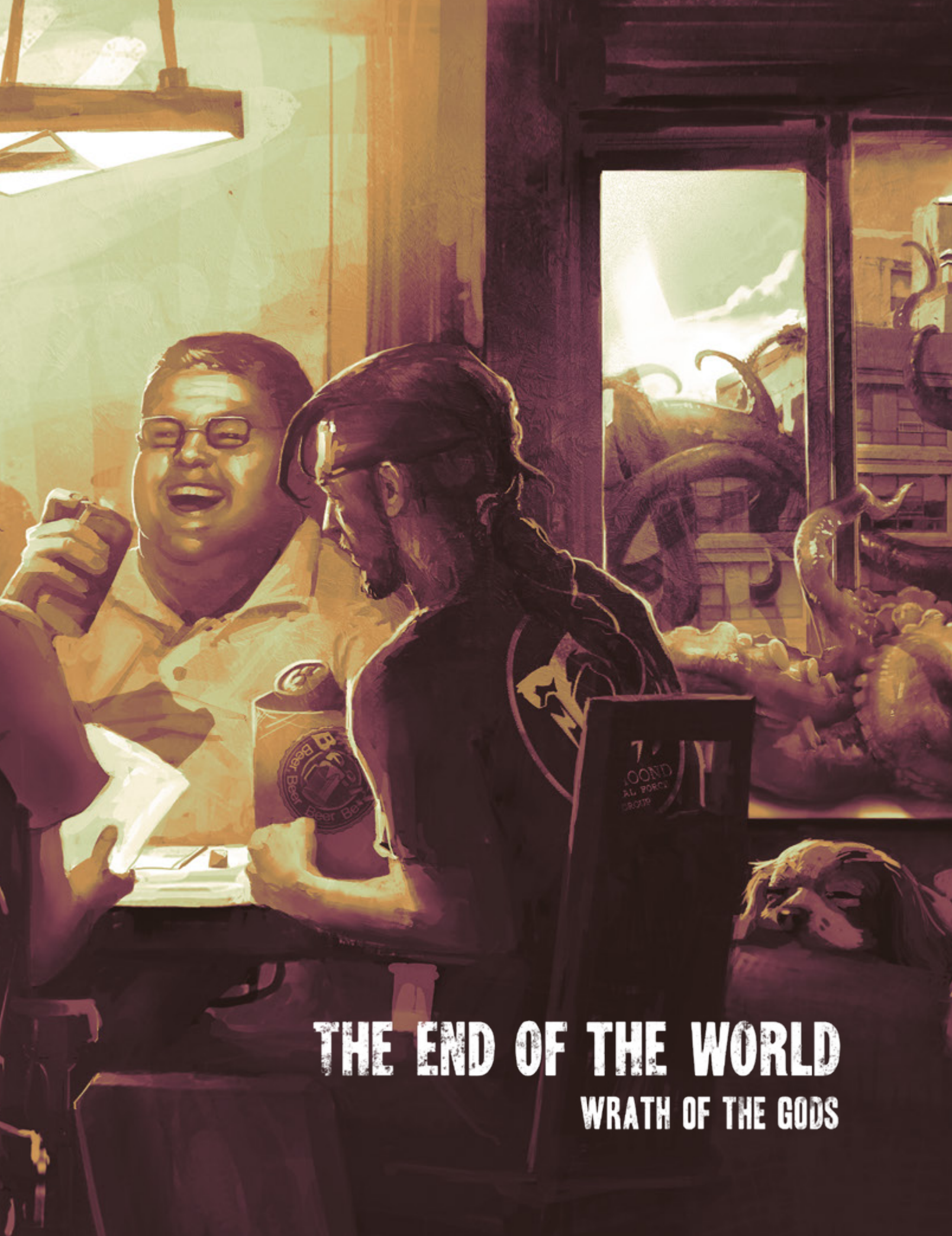
WRATH OF THE GODS



ROLEPLAYING GAME







THE END OF THE WORLD

WRATH OF THE GODS

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www.FantasyFlightGames.com

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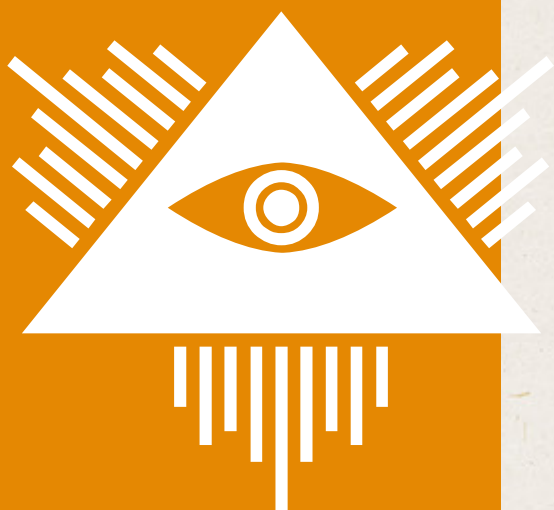
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INTRODUCTION





"And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."

—Revelation of John 6:8

We get pretty into it when we're gaming. No cellphones at the table—that's one of our rules. So, we didn't exactly notice how dark it had gotten outside. Like, really dark.

"Guys, it's, like, really dark outside," says Nate. He's the perceptive one of the group.

"Yeah... it's called night," says Laura, rolling some dice. She's the sarcastic one.

"No, I mean... where's the moon?" Nate stands up and moves to the window, peering out. "Is it... snowing?"

I let Laura know that her roll is a success and then call a five-minute break. After all, we've been gaming all night. The pizza ran out hours ago, and the chips are getting to dangerously low levels. Danny shakes an empty chip bag, as if he knows what I'm thinking.

"I think it's past Nate's bedtime," says Laura, grinning. "He's losing it. It doesn't snow in the middle of June." The smile falls from her face as she steps up to the window and sees that it is, in fact, snowing.

We all gather by the windows, peering out into the gloom. Nate's right: it's the darkest night I've ever seen, but the streetlights catch falling snow. Maybe a foot in the last few hours.

Suddenly there's a flash, and it's like I'm in a dream. A really vivid dream. I'm no longer in my living room, but on the street a few houses down. I see my house, and the front door is broken to pieces. I hear heavy footsteps behind me—really heavy. I don't want to know, but I turn anyway. And I see it, illuminated by the streetlight. Over ten feet tall, mottled skin, a misshapen, twisted face. I'm frozen in terror as it brings a club down toward my skull, and then everything goes black.

I snap out of it and look around. From the looks on their faces, I know it wasn't just me who had some sort of vision. A vision of my own death. We're all silent for a few minutes. Everyone is in shock. Danny's eyes are moist; Laura is trembling.

"Wait. Did—did that just happen to you guys, too?" Nate, the perceptive one.

"Oh my God, I'm going to die," Maria gasps. More silence.

"But not anytime soon, right?" says Nate. The lucky bastard.

I shake my head, trying to clear it, and then I see something big. Moving between my neighbors' backyards. Something big, and hunched, and ugly. It had been there a moment ago, but I thought it was part of the house, or its shadow.

Danny stumbles back into the table, spilling dice on the floor.

Across the street, the neighbor's car suddenly flips through the air, end over end, smashing into a car parked on the curb. We can just barely see the monster in the shadows of the streetlight, but we can hear its roar all too clearly.

We all back away from the window, mouths hanging open in fear. Danny turns and bolts through the kitchen to the back door. Maria screams his name, I think, and he stops. But not because of her. He backs slowly away from the door, staring at the window. There's a face, watching him through the glass. A dead face, dried and shriveled, two red points of light shining.

The knob turns, but it's locked. Danny keeps backing away, but the glass shatters and wood splinters as a battle axe cleaves through the door. Danny screams and runs back toward the front, and we all scramble for the door. I unlock it and throw it open, and we spill out into the snow as the dead thing hacks the back door apart and lumbers into the house.

"What the hell was that?" Laura screams as we shut the door behind us. "A freaking zombie?"

"What kind of zombie uses an axe?" observes Nate. "Nah, it has to be a wight, or a draugr, or something."

Shivering, we crunch through the snow to my car. I reach in my pocket—and realize the keys are back in the house. I look back just as the front door of the house splinters, an axe hacking through it from within.

"Oh, no," I say. Everyone looks at me, faces falling.

"Run," I say. And we do.

After a block, I look back at my house. The front door has been smashed in. I don't see any sign of the undead warrior. Then, I hear heavy footsteps in the snow behind me, and cavernous breathing. I don't want to, but I turn and look up at it. It raises its club, and as it brings it down toward me, I wonder if this is irony. Then I don't think anything at all.

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME to **WRATH OF THE GODS**. By picking up this book, you've doomed yourself and everyone you know to a horrible end. But don't worry—it's all in good fun. **WRATH OF THE GODS** is a roleplaying game in which you and your friends try to survive the end of the world at the hands of gods, monsters, and Mother Nature herself. Unlike other games, **WRATH OF THE GODS** has players portray not mighty heroes or dangerous outlaws, but themselves! Likewise, the locations and other characters they encounter during the game are largely based on people and places they know in real life. So, in a game of **WRATH OF THE GODS**, the players portray themselves trying to survive, running and fighting their way through familiar streets as supernatural nightmares topple the world around them. An easy-to-learn, flexible, and narrative-focused rule set propels the action, keeping the focus on the story and on the players' actions without bogging things down in unnecessary bookkeeping.

If you've ever wondered how you and your friends would survive the apocalypse, keep reading and find out!

WHAT IS AN RPG?

Although millions of words have been spent debating the answer to that question (mostly on Internet forums), for our purposes a roleplaying game, or RPG, is a shared storytelling experience in which a group of players builds a narrative by taking on the roles of characters in a fictionalized situation. A set of rules helps the players to determine the success of their various actions and decisions (and hopefully helps them avoid the kinds of arguments they got into while playing pretend as kids). In addition to rules and a setting, an RPG has three key elements: some players (three to five is usually a good number), a Game Master, and a scenario.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THE END OF THE WORLD?

WRATH OF THE GODS is the second in a series of roleplaying games called **THE END OF THE WORLD**. Each game in the series presents a stand-alone play experience, but together they share a set of simple, narrative rules and the titular theme. Each book in the series explores a different, exciting way the world of humans might come to an end. This second book deals with deities, gods, monsters, and other beings and events out of myth, legend, and religions from around the world. Subsequent books will cover different threats, and like this one, each will explore multiple scenarios involving various takes on the danger.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

In an RPG, most players create a Player Character, also known as a PC, to control during the game. The PCs are the protagonists of the story and the players' primary means by which to influence its events. PCs each have a set of numbers, called characteristics, that represent their relative strengths and weaknesses, and determine their likelihood to succeed at a given task. Most games would mention at this point that PCs are given their own fictional backstories and motivations, but in **THE END OF THE WORLD**, the PCs are based on the players themselves! Obviously, getting into the head of, well, yourself should come more naturally than contemplating the mind-set of a century-old dwarven warrior-priest.

Like the characters in any good horror movie, the PCs are not the first people to die in **WRATH OF THE GODS**. But they also might not all survive. It is the end of the world, after all.

THE GAME MASTER

One person in the group must assume the vaunted mantle of Game Master, or GM, rather than create a Player Character. Although the GM is taking part in the game, we make a distinction between the GM and players, because the GM is running the game and not just playing it. The GM describes the world, narrates the story, presents obstacles and challenges for the PCs, and portrays all the story's other characters (known as Non-Player Characters, or NPCs). The GM is also responsible for applying the rules of the game and making a decision when a question about the rules arises.

Being the GM comes with more responsibility, but it can also be very rewarding. Further, in this game, it means you get to describe all kinds of horrible things happening to your friends without it being "weird."

SCENARIOS

Obviously, a roleplaying game isn't going to be very exciting if the PCs don't do anything. And while PCs do have a tendency to cause trouble, it's generally best if the GM is prepared with some sort of situation with which to challenge them. A game scenario is like a movie's story: it describes what is happening and the sorts of problems and enemies facing the protagonists. While other games often feature adventures in which the PCs attempt to achieve some noteworthy goal, this is not the focus of **THE END OF THE WORLD**. Instead, the PCs are simply trying to survive to see another day.



This book features five scenarios describing different ways gods and beings of myth and legend might bring about the end of the world. These scenarios include all the information the GM needs regarding what those beings are, what they do, and how their arrival destroys the world, but the GM needs to fill in the details about people and places, since the game takes place wherever the players happen to be. In addition to these scenarios, GMs can come up with their own takes on the fury of the gods to really keep players on their toes.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME DIFFERENT?

THE END OF THE WORLD is different from other RPGs you may have played for a few reasons. Possibly the most unique aspect of the game is the nature of the Player Characters. Rather than being heroic (or anti-heroic) characters with special skills and abilities based on a sci-fi or fantasy setting or a genre of fiction, the PCs in **THE END OF THE WORLD** are actually based on the players. In effect, the PCs are not only the players' avatars in the game world: they *are* the players, or at least fictionalized versions. And the game world isn't a far-off land or alternate universe: it's wherever the players really live. The events of the game unfold in the players' town or city, with the GM describing the destruction wrought by the apocalypse.

Because of its theme, **THE END OF THE WORLD** is intended for shorter, more defined play experiences than many RPGs, which often assume long-running campaigns or sweeping story arcs. Depending on your group's preferences and play style, you could wrap up an apocalyptic scenario over the course of two or three sessions, or even a single night. Of course, the game can go on for as long as it needs to, and it could last much longer if everyone enjoys living through the apocalypse and the following years in detail—and the PCs live that long.

Whereas RPGs often focus on some goal or mission, be it saving the world from supervillains or just acquiring a lot of treasure, **THE END OF THE WORLD** is really about putting the PCs in a difficult situation and seeing how they deal with it. They're not going to be stopping the apocalypse—the PCs are regular people, and the best they can hope for is to be among the few to survive.

THE END OF THE WORLD features a fast, narrative rule set to keep the players engaged and the story moving. While tactical, detailed combat works great for some games, that's not the focus here. You don't want to get into a protracted back-and-forth fight with a draugr—you want to shoot or bash it in the head and keep moving. If you get stuck in close with a troll, you've probably already lost.

The same goes for the other actions PCs might attempt. We know more or less what we're capable of, so with PCs representing the players, a quick roll is all it takes to determine whether they succeed at a task and what the outcome is. Also, PCs in this game aren't powerful heroes: they can't be hit with swords and bullets and lose some arbitrary life points, with no other effects. PCs get worn down, not just from injuries in fights, but also from the stress and strain of dealing with the events of the apocalypse and even with their fellow survivors. The cumulative effects of stress and trauma help to reinforce the grim reality of being there when the world ends, and they have a significant impact on the ongoing story. PCs with a lot of injuries or stress might decide it's better to hole up and wait for help rather than try to make it to some other destination.

Players use the same characters for all five scenarios—after all, they're playing themselves. Each scenario presents a different take on the apocalypse, making for five very different game experiences. In effect, each scenario hits the reset button and changes reality. This puts the players in the unusual situation of experiencing a

similar situation, but with different details. This keeps things fresh without requiring the players to learn new rules or a new setting, or even to create new characters. Of course, the PCs, like the players, are going to be familiar with the idea of beings out of myth and legend, and even the end of the world as presented in those stories. But they don't immediately know what kind of story they find themselves in. Figuring out what gods are wreaking havoc on the world and seeking a way to avoid it presents a great opportunity for players to use their own knowledge of the genre without "cheating."

GETTING STARTED

We know you're anxious to start playing, but first things first. The Game Master—probably whoever bought this book—needs to become familiar with its contents. In particular, the GM should read **Chapter I: Playing the Game** and **Chapter II: Running the Game** (for obvious reasons). In addition, the GM should completely read whichever scenario will be played first. **WRATH OF THE GODS** includes five different, unrelated scenarios. These can be played in any order, so it's not necessary for the GM to read them all before the first game session. The first few pages of **Chapter III: Scenarios** provide an overview of the different scenarios and the myths and legends presented in each, which can help the GM decide which one to play first. Of course, it doesn't hurt to read them all first if the GM has time; one advantage of this is that bits and pieces from different scenarios can be mixed and matched if the GM wishes.

The GM should be familiar with the rules but doesn't have to memorize them before playing. It's not a bad idea for the players to read the rules as well, but it's not necessary. By no means, though, should the players read **Chapter II: Running the Game** or **Chapter III: Scenarios**. A big part of the players' fun is figuring out what kind of apocalypse their PCs are going to experience, and looking at the scenarios would ruin that. So, if you're a player, do not read the scenarios! That would spoil everything. If you're the GM, read the scenarios all you want.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

WRATH OF THE GODS is divided into three chapters. (It also includes lots of pictures so you don't get bored.) The GM should become familiar with the whole book, or at least the rules and the first scenario to be run, but players absolutely should not look at **Chapter II: Running the Game** or **Chapter III: Scenarios** (especially not the scenarios).

CHAPTER I: PLAYING THE GAME

This chapter describes the rules and core mechanics of the game, including everything the players and GM need to know to resolve actions, fight monsters (or run away), and track the consequences of wounds and stress. It also explains how to create characters, including their characteristics, features, and equipment.

CHAPTER II: RUNNING THE GAME

The second chapter is specifically for the GM. It includes plenty of useful advice on running **WRATH OF THE GODS**, including how to tailor the game to your players and town, pace the story and encounters, use the rules to enhance the story, and adjudicate rules questions (and anything not covered by the rules).

CHAPTER III: THE SCENARIOS

The final chapter presents five different scenarios in which gods and monsters of legend bring about the end of the world. The scenarios present different takes on the idea of the end of the world as we know it—and what happens after. Each one features a different collection of myths and legends, from the return of the Mayan feathered snake-god Quetzalcoatl, to the Norse Ragnarök, to the Revelation of John, to the esoteric modern mythologies first created by H. P. Lovecraft. The scenarios each include all the information the GM needs about the stories that inspired them, what beings and creatures are involved in the apocalypse, and how things escalate

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

You'll need the following to play **WRATH OF THE GODS**:

- ☞ This book (check!).
- ☞ At least two other people (NO gods allowed).
- ☞ Three or four hours set aside to play (or more, if the world really has ended and you have the time).
- ☞ A handful of six-sided dice of two different colors (or sizes, as long as you can tell them apart).
- ☞ Some paper, pencils, and erasers (ink is a bit too permanent on the character sheet).
- ☞ Snacks (mead, though thematically appropriate for one of the scenarios, is only allowed if you are of legal drinking age).

Snazzy-looking character sheets and other play aids are not necessary, but they sure are fun. You can photocopy them from the back of this book or download them from the Fantasy Flight Games website (www.FantasyFlightGames.com). Maps of your town are available at your nearest convenience store. Although not necessary to play this game, a map will be very handy when the world actually does end and your GPS device stops working.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PLAY?

once they first appear. Each scenario presents new surprises and challenges for players. Playing them all allows the players to see how different survival strategies work out and to explore different parts of their world during and after the apocalypse.

WHY THE GODS?

Why **WRATH OF THE GODS**? On a practical level, the apocalypse as brought about by beings of human mythology is a scenario that everyone is at least somewhat familiar with. Many such tales have been passed down through storytelling, books, poems, and, more recently, through movies, television, and even comic books. The end of the world, or a change in the state of the world so drastic as to seem like the end of days, is a subject that many mythologies and legends tackle. While such stories rarely focus on the fates of individual survivors, the events themselves are so extraordinary that they kindle the imagination and send a thrill of terror through the listener—a perfect setup for a roleplaying game, particularly one in which the players play as themselves. There's a good chance your players have even spent some time wondering how they might fare in the face of rampaging frost giants or vengeful fallen angels. Their knowledge of cultural folklore and religions could just save their characters' lives.

Omnipotent, immortal, sometimes petty, and always beyond understanding, The gods are the perfect manifestation of the end of the world. Whatever scares you, whatever you think could destroy the world, it's represented

through one set of myths or another. For everything from conflicts between two world powers, to environmental disasters, to misunderstandings across cultural boundaries, there's a metaphor to be found in eschatological scenarios of the world's myths. In many ways, the gods of the world's mythologies embody all the worst aspects of humanity pushed to eleven: self-concerned, merciless, and wrathful. It's not hard to relate to the survivors in a story about the end of the world. They are among the only rational people left on the planet. Yet they are surrounded by beings so far beyond mortal understanding as to seem like insanity made flesh. If the PCs are not careful, they may lose their free will. They may even be tempted to just give in and do as the gods say. They are gods, after all!

Why the gods? Mortality is our ultimate fear, and the very existence of the gods mocks us for it. They are truly eternal: that which we can never achieve. Just as we yearn to be masters of our own realities, they care nothing for the limits of time and space. They are what we imagine we could be, if we had unlimited power and no ticking clock of mortality. Further, as far as metaphors go, could anything be more shocking than being confronted with the fur-clad, hammer-wielding symbol of all things rowdy, violent, and warlike in the human spirit? Whether such a god is incorporated for heightened adventure or shocking humor, players get to play fictionalized version of themselves dealing with the best and worst parts of a flesh-and-blood manifestation of the gestalt human psyche.

And most importantly, gods and monsters are, if nothing else, epic!

THE GODS ARE (NOT) ANGRY

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

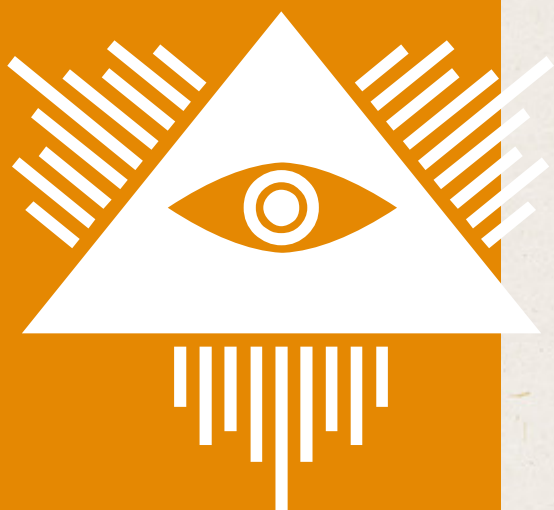
It should go without saying that the events of **WRATH OF THE GODS** are fictitious. This is a game, and it's meant purely for fun. Of course, a resemblance to real people is not a coincidence in this case, which can blur the lines in a way other games don't. Before playing, it's a good idea to talk with the other players about expectations for the game, to make sure no one is upset by events described during play. If some players aren't comfortable with detailed descriptions of people they know being harmed by angry gods or monsters, leave it vague. If someone in your group feels strongly about the subject matter of one of the scenarios, such that it would be awkward or unenjoyable to play, choose another one. If someone wants to play a more fictionalized version of themselves than the others, that's fine. The events of an apocalypse are pretty horrifying if taken literally, so don't be afraid to approach them in a lighthearted, even comical way, if that's what your group prefers. The important thing is that everyone has fun, and the PCs all have at least a fighting chance to survive.

With the exception of the Cthulhu mythos, the folklore and religions presented in this book have been (or are) central to the spiritual life of one group or another at one point in history (now is history, too). However, in this game, they are presented in a form more consistent with their depiction in popular media. They are offered for the sake of storytelling and an evening of fun, and they are not intended as accurate representations of actual spiritual or existential contemplation or exploration.



PLAYING THE GAME





CHAPTER I

*“...an axe age, a sword age
—shields are riven—
a wind age, a wolf age,
before the world goes headlong...”*

—Völuspá, stanza 45

PLAYING THE GAME

WELCOME TO **WRATH OF THE GODS**! As a player, you can find everything you need to know to play the game in this chapter. If you are the Game Master, you should familiarize yourself with this chapter and also read **Chapter II: Running the Game**, starting on page 38.

In **WRATH OF THE GODS**, you play as yourself as you attempt to survive in an apocalyptic world ravaged by the gods. As a player, you control the actions of your

character (you). You listen to the narrative presented by the Game Master (GM) and indicate how you react to the events as they unfold, rolling dice to determine how well you perform at the various challenges you face. In the end, shaping the story in **WRATH OF THE GODS** is a collaborative process, in which you and the other players work with the GM to create the most thrilling, horrifying, and entertaining end of the world possible.

PERFORMING TASKS

WHenever you attempt a task in **WRATH OF THE GODS** that has some chance of failure or of causing stress or injury to yourself, you must make a test. A test involves rolling several six-sided dice and interpreting the results to see whether you succeed at the task and if you suffer any stress as a result of your actions.

The GM decides when you need to make a test, though you should feel free to suggest one when you think it would be appropriate. In general, tests should be reserved for important or exciting moments, when your

success or failure matters to the story or to your character. Note that the same task might require a test in one context but not in another. For example, if you are lifting heavy boxes one day at work, whether or not you move all the boxes successfully is unlikely to have a significant effect on the story, so you would not make a test. However, if you are hefting a comatose friend stricken catatonic with terror at the sight of Cthulhu while being chased by a posse of Deep Ones, how quickly you pick him up suddenly matters a lot more, and you will likely need to make a test.

THE TEST

Tests are designed to be quick, easy, and fun. They allow you to roll the dice, integrate the results into the story, and continue on with your narrative. Once you have determined what task you are trying to accomplish, the test takes three steps:

- The GM determines the characteristic appropriate for the test.
- You assemble a pool of positive and negative dice.
- You roll the dice, and after all factors have been accounted for, if at least one positive die has a result equal to or lower than the target characteristic, the task succeeds.

Once the test is finished, the GM narrates the outcome of your actions based on the results of the roll. The test can also have effects beyond simple success or failure, depending on what you are attempting. See the following sections for full details on each of the three steps.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THE DICE

Tests in **WRATH OF THE GODS** require you to roll two different types of six-sided dice (or d6s): positive dice and negative dice. To roll for a test at the table, you will need several d6s of two different colors. Contrasting colors, one to represent "positive" and the other to represent "negative," are recommended, but you may use whatever color d6s you have on hand.

STEP 1: DETERMINE THE TASK

When the GM calls for you to make a test, you typically have some idea of what you are trying to do. This might be attempting to jump between two crumbling buildings, hacking into a secured computer, talking down a hostile survivor, or any number of other things. Before the dice are rolled, you should specify exactly what it is you are attempting, so that the GM has a clear picture of what you are doing.

Once you have specified your activity, the GM decides which of your six characteristics (see page 21) most appropriately applies to the task.

STEP 2: ASSEMBLE THE DICE POOL

For every task you attempt, you always start with a dice pool comprising a single positive die. You and the GM then add a number of positive and negative dice to the pool, based on several factors.

Positive dice represent training or circumstances that can help you complete a task. Adding positive dice greatly increases your chance of success and helps you avoid suffering stress from negative complications. The following elements can add positive dice to the pool:

- **Positive Features:** Each positive feature on your character sheet that could help you perform the task adds a single positive die to the pool. Usually, this feature shares a category with the characteristic being used for the test. However, if the GM allows it, you may use applicable features from other categories as well.
- **Equipment:** Each piece of readily available equipment that can help you with the task adds a single positive die to the pool.
- **Assistance:** Each additional character who assists you with the task adds a single positive die to the pool.
- **Situational Benefits:** Each environmental effect present that could make the task easier also adds a positive die to the pool.

Negative dice represent personal weaknesses or unfortunate circumstances that make the task more difficult or dangerous to complete. Negative dice have a chance of canceling positive dice results after rolling, and they can cause a character to suffer stress from attempting the task. The following elements can add negative dice to the pool:

- **Task Danger and Difficulty:** The innate danger or difficulty of the task can add one or more negative dice, depending on what you are attempting. The higher the task's probability of causing you physical, mental, or social stress, the more negative dice are added. (See page 44 for more specific guidance on adding negative dice due to danger or difficulty.)
- **Negative Features:** Each negative feature on your character sheet that could hamper you in performing the task adds a single negative die to the pool. As with positive features, a negative feature likely shares a category with the characteristic being used for the test. However, features from other categories can add negative dice if they are applicable to the task.
- **Traumas:** Each trauma that currently affects your character and shares a category with the characteristic used for the test adds a single negative die to the pool.
- **Situational Hindrances:** Each environmental effect present that could make the task more difficult or stressful also adds a negative die to the pool.

Many different factors can add positive or negative dice to a pool. You are encouraged to come up with creative reasons to add additional dice, but the GM is the final arbiter on whether or not a die may be added (see page 44 for guidance on GMs' management of dice pools).

STEP 3: ROLL AND RESOLVE

Once the dice are assembled, roll the entire pool and resolve the results. The first step in resolving the pool is to remove matching negative and positive dice. Once you remove these dice, you then determine whether the test succeeded and how much stress you suffer for having performed it.

To remove dice from the pool, look for any negative die that have the same result as a positive die. If any negative die result matches the number on a positive die, remove both dice from the pool. A negative die can remove only a single matching positive die. For example, if the pool has two positive dice, each with a result of “3,” and only one negative die with a “3” result, the negative “3” and one positive “3” are removed, leaving one positive “3” remaining in the pool.

Once all matching pairs of negative and positive results have been removed from the pool, if any of the remaining positive dice have a result that is equal to or lower than your characteristic chosen for the test, the task succeeds. Otherwise, the task fails.

In some cases, you or the GM might want to know how well you succeeded at your task. In these instances, you can count the total number of successes you scored on your test. Each positive die left at the end of the test with a result equal to or lower than the chosen characteristic counts as one success. The number of successes is primarily used to resolve attacks and opposed tests, but it can be used in any instance in which you are curious about just how well you performed at a task.

In addition to determining whether or not a character succeeds at a task, a test also indicates how much stress is suffered as a result of the attempt. Upon concluding a test, the character suffers a number of stress points equal to the number of negative dice remaining in the pool. (See **Stress**, on page 30). This stress is suffered in the category matching the characteristic used for the test. Note that the stress is equal to the number of dice—the results on those dice have no bearing on the amount of stress suffered.

EXAMPLE 🌟

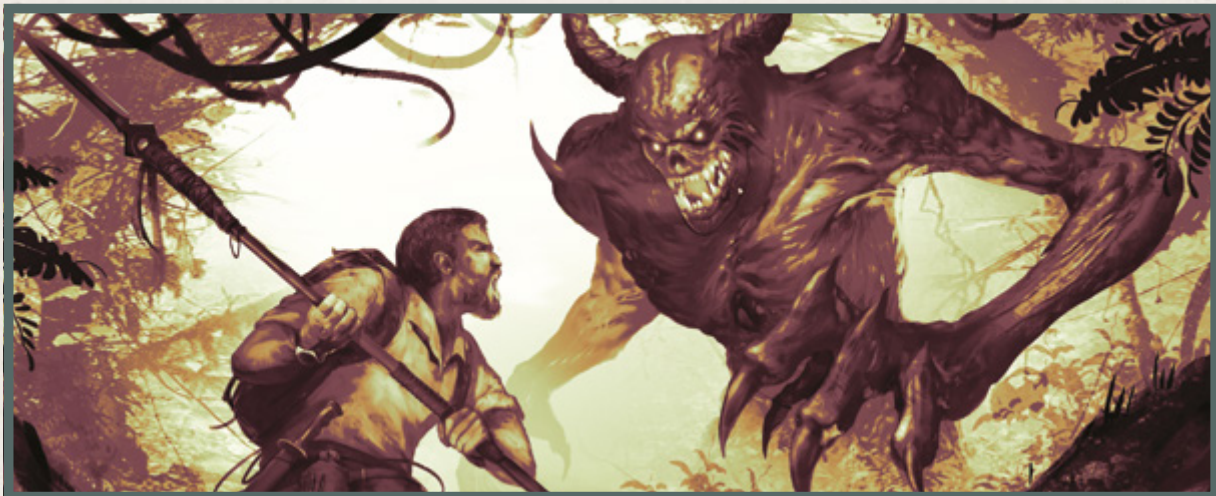
The group, fleeing from several marauding trolls, is seeking higher ground. Finding a fire escape with its lower ladder raised, Jenneke attempts to climb the adjacent wall and lower the ladder to her friends quickly, before the trolls reach the group. George, the GM, has Jenneke make a Dexterity test to climb the wall. Jenneke starts with the single positive die and then adds two additional positive dice: one for her Rock Climber feature and another for the rough brick of the wall, which provides ample handholds and footholds. Then, the GM adds two negative dice to the pool: one for the innate difficulty of the climb and the other for the pressure Jenneke feels as the trolls close in.

Jenneke rolls the dice, getting “2,” “2,” and “6” on her positive dice, and “2” and “5” on her negative dice. She removes the negative “2” along with one of the matching positive “2” results. Jenneke has a Dexterity characteristic of 4, so the one remaining positive “2” in her final pool means Jenneke succeeds at the test and lowers the ladder! However, the remaining uncanceled negative die indicates that Jenneke takes a single physical stress point due to her frantic climb, thanks to the pressure caused by the approaching trolls.

PUSHING YOURSELF

When attempting a task, you can push yourself beyond your normal limits, increasing your chance of success but also exposing yourself to increased risk. If you choose to push yourself when performing a test, add one positive die and one negative die to the pool before rolling. You may do this only once per test.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION





OPPOSED TESTS

Opposed tests occur when the task you are trying to perform is directly opposed by another character—usually an NPC controlled by the GM. An opposed test can be used for any task in which there are two or more competitors, from an arm-wrestling contest to a competition for someone's affections.

To perform an opposed test, both you and the other character make the appropriate test, as outlined on page 18, and whoever scores the greater number of successes wins the challenge. If the result is a tie, whoever has the higher value in the characteristic used for the test wins. If it is still a tie, or if you both fail the test, the contest is a draw. (If there absolutely must be a winner, the GM can have you both reroll the test until there is a victor, ignoring any stress indicated by the rerolled tests.)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

On occasion, opposed tests may be made between three or even more characters. All participants make the appropriate test, and the character with the highest result is the winner.

EXAMPLE 🎲

A group of soldiers has been ordered to open fire on the Mayan warriors guarding a temple of Quetzalcoatl. Thomas knows that the Mayans are not the enemy and tries to convince the soldiers not to attack. George, the GM, calls for Thomas to make an opposed test against the soldiers' commanding officer using Charisma (a characteristic in which Thomas has only a 2). George lets Thomas add a positive die to his pool for his Sempiternal feature (gained because Thomas served as a Marine), as he tries to appeal to the soldiers. However, George adds a negative die to Thomas's pool because of the general commotion going on around the scene.

The commanding officer, who has a Charisma of 3, adds two positive dice to his pool: one because of the tense stand-off between the soldiers and the Mayan warriors, and the other because he holds rank over the soldiers. However, the officer also gets one negative die due to the commotion.

Thomas and the GM roll their dice. Thomas rolls a positive "5" and "6" and a negative "5," canceling out any stress, but failing the test. The officer rolls a positive "3," "3," and "4" and a negative "5," suffering one stress but getting two successes. With two more successes than Thomas, the officer succeeds, and a bloody battle ensues.

CREATING CHARACTERS

THE very first thing your group should do when you sit down to play **WRATH OF THE GODS** is create characters. Character creation is a collaborative process that can be just as much fun as playing the game itself!

The premise behind **WRATH OF THE GODS** is that you are playing yourself, thrust into these imaginary scenarios and forced to contend with the horrors of the end times. The process outlined in this section allows you to work with your friends to create an accurate portrayal of yourself in the game. If at any point you don't know what to write down on your sheet, feel free to ask everyone else at the table. They are sure to have some good suggestions!

The character creation process is broken into four steps. First, your group gets together and takes turns voting on each other's characteristics. Then, after the voting, each of you will break off and decide on your personal features, record any equipment you are currently carrying, and write down any traumas you are currently affected by *and* feel comfortable mentioning and including as part of the game.

Once all of these steps are finished, you are ready to take on the **WRATH OF THE GODS**!

STEP 1: DETERMINE CHARACTERISTICS

Your characteristics are the basic building blocks of your character. They are numerical representations of your natural abilities, measured on a scale of 1 to 5. You have six different characteristics—one “offensive” characteristic and one “defensive” characteristic in each of the following three categories.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Some groups may wish to play **WRATH OF THE GODS** as fictional characters instead of versions of themselves. This is totally fine and can result in a completely different game experience. Playing as fictional characters gives you the opportunity to explore the apocalypse from a totally new perspective. You could play as military personnel, as politicians, or just as fictional characters from the town in which you live.

It is recommended that everyone in the group play the same way—either all making fictional characters or all playing as themselves. Your group should sit down together before the first session of play and decide what kind of characters you would like to use. Making this key decision beforehand allows for a more cohesive game experience, and makes the GM's job much easier.

If you decide to play as fictional characters, steps 1, 3, and 4 of character creation are done a bit differently. First, before the group votes on your character's characteristics in step 1, you will have to explain your character concept to the group so players know what they are voting on. Second, during steps 3 and 4, you will have to be creative and come up with your character's equipment and traumas yourself. Try to be as true to your character concept as possible—your accountant probably wouldn't be carrying a chainsaw around the office!

PHYSICAL

-  **Dexterity (offensive):** Dexterity is your coordination and general motor skills. Balance, speed, and grace are all governed by Dexterity.
-  **Vitality (defensive):** Vitality is your physical strength and toughness. It determines elements of your character ranging from how much weight you can lift to how well you resist disease and toxins.

MENTAL

-  **Logic (offensive):** Logic is your awareness of your surroundings and ability to think on your feet. If you are hacking into a secure computer system or noticing an ambush, Logic is the characteristic you are using.
-  **Willpower (defensive):** Willpower represents your memory and mental resilience. Everything from resisting the horrors of the world to recalling specific information from years ago uses Willpower.

SOCIAL

-  **Charisma (offensive):** Charisma is your general demeanor and social skills. It governs how easily you can use words and actions to sway others, whether through careful negotiation or harsh threats.
-  **Empathy (defensive):** Empathy is your ability to understand and sympathize with others. From determining whether someone is lying to predicting an adversary's next move, it can be very useful.

FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

To determine your characteristics, first you spend a number of points to set them at the values you think most appropriately represent you (or the character you are playing). Then, the rest of the players at the table all vote on how well they believe the characteristic values you chose in each of the three categories represent you. Based on the results of the vote, you increase or decrease your characteristics and adjust the number of features you will receive in their corresponding categories during the next step of character creation.

DISTRIBUTE POINTS

You start with a score of 1 in each of your six characteristics and ten points to distribute among them to increase their value. Each point distributed to a characteristic raises it by one. No characteristic, however, can be raised to a score higher than 5. Remember, you are trying to create an accurate representation of your own abilities. If you exaggerate your abilities in a particular area, you are likely to get voted down in that category.

VOTE

Once all the players have distributed their points, they take turns voting on each other's characteristics. To vote, each player will need one positive die and one negative die (see **The Dice**, page 18), and the group will need a bag or box in which to secretly place the dice for the vote.

One at a time, the players present their characters to be voted on. Each character undergoes three voting rounds, one for each of the three categories. When it is your turn, read off the values you chose for the two characteristics in your first category. Then, the rest of the players should pass around the bag, placing dice into it based on their votes:

- ☉ **Positive Die:** One of the two characteristics in the category should be raised.
- ☹ **Negative Die:** One of the two characteristics should be lowered.
- ☉ **Both Dice:** The two characteristics should stay the same.

Once all of the votes have been collected, mix up the dice and dump them out on the table. Count up the total number of positive and negative dice. If there are more positive dice, raise one of your characteristics in that category by one point (without raising a characteristic above 5). If there are more negative dice, lower one of your characteristics in that category by one point (without lowering a characteristic below 1). If there are an equal number of positive and negative dice, leave your characteristics in that category as they are.

Once the votes are tallied, collect the rest of the dice secretly, and then redistribute them for the next vote. Make sure to record whether the group voted to raise or lower that category or keep it the same, as the result of that vote will affect how many features you receive in that category in step 2. Repeat the process for your other two categories.

STEP 2: CHOOSE FEATURES

Once you have determined your characteristics, you need to choose your features for each category. Features represent important aspects of your character and can be far more detailed or specific than a general characteristic assigned a specific numeral. Each feature is a word or phrase describing a strength, weakness, or eccentricity that affects you in a particular category.

There are two different types of features: positive and negative. Positive features represent strengths or special skills that can aid you, while negative features represent specific areas of weakness that may hinder you. For more information on features, as well as specific examples, see pages 25 and 26.

At character creation, you start with one positive and one negative feature in each of your three categories. Then, based on whether the group chose to raise or lower one of your characteristics in a category, you either lose a feature or gain an additional feature in that category:

- ☉ **If the group voted to raise a characteristic:** Either add an additional negative feature in this category, or remove your positive feature in this category.
- ☹ **If the group voted to lower a characteristic:** Either add an additional positive feature in this category, or remove your negative feature in this category.

Once you know how many negative and positive features you have in each category, you can decide exactly what those features will be, using the examples on pages 25 and 26 for guidance. There are no formal limits on what your features may be; they can be as varied and different as your imagination allows. However, if you are playing yourself, you should try to keep them true to your actual strengths and weaknesses. All features are subject to the GM's approval; if you are unsure about how they can apply to your character, you should review them with the GM during the process.

STEP 3: RECORD EQUIPMENT

Now that all of the intangible details of your character are on paper, it's time to record the tangible facts that could affect your survival. First, you have to record all of the equipment you currently have with you. Since you are playing yourself and the apocalypse is starting immediately, look around you: this is what you've got!

In the equipment section of your character sheet, record any important items you have on your person or very close to you *right now*. Make sure not to leave out the details, either. How much battery does your cell phone have left? How much money is in your wallet right now? Do you have a replacement for that pair of contacts you're wearing? Any and all of these details can (and probably will) come up.

Maintaining supplies and outfitting oneself during the apocalypse is a hallmark of the survival horror genre. Depending on what the GM has in store, what you have and how clever you are at putting it to use can be the difference between life and a gruesome death.

For more information on equipment and how it's used, see pages 27 through 29.

STEP 4: RECORD TRAUMAS

The last step in creating your character is to record any traumas you currently have that could affect you in the coming apocalypse. Traumas are physical, mental, or social "wounds" that will influence your performance but can be healed over time. Use only those traumas you feel comfortable discussing with other players and including as part of the game. GMs should make it clear to all players that they are not expected to include traumas they prefer to keep private or that would spoil their enjoyment of the game. For more information on traumas, and for specific examples of traumas, see page 32.

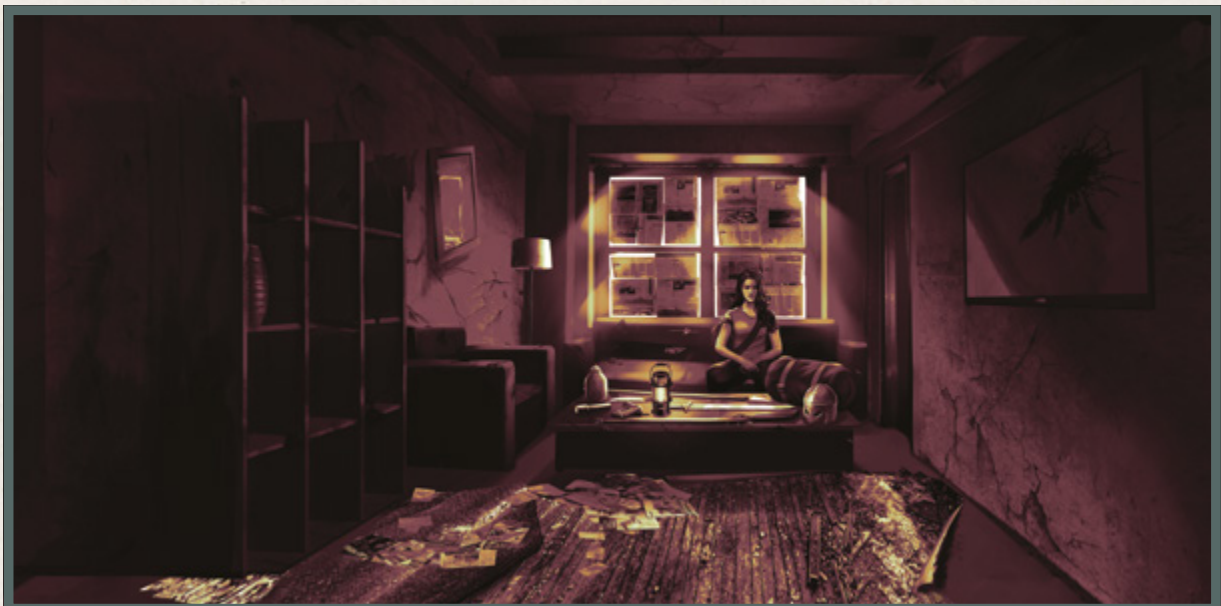
Do you have a twisted ankle you are still recovering from? Are you exhausted from too many late-night shifts at work? Did you just suffer a bad breakup with your significant other? Any of these things could be represented as traumas you start with at the beginning of the game.

The traumas you choose to start with should reflect real-world afflictions that currently affect you. You can start with up to one trauma in each of your three categories. Each of these starting traumas has a severity of 2 (unless, in a special circumstance, you and the GM decide another value is more appropriate).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Traumas in the game system represent the sorts of physical and psychological dangers that characters face during the horrors of **THE END OF THE WORLD**. Remember that the aim of **WRATH OF THE GODS** is to play a fictional version of oneself during an extreme situation for the sake of a fun couple of evenings. To this end, players and GMs should never feel compelled to divulge any personal information they wish to leave out of the game. Indeed, physical and mental trauma can be a sensitive issue for many people and should always be treated with respect.

PERSONAL INFORMATION



THE CHARACTER SHEET

YOUR character sheet allows you to record and track everything you need to know about your character during the game: physical and personality traits, strengths and weaknesses, stresses and injuries, and so on. It's a good idea to use a pencil (rather than a pen) when writing on your character sheet—you never know what might change about your character as you struggle to survive the apocalypse!

A blank copy of this sheet can be found at the back of the book on page 144 or at www.FantasyFlightGames.com.

CATEGORIES

All of the character aspects outlined below contain elements that fall into one of three categories: physical, mental, or social. Each of these categories has a corresponding column on the character sheet. Whenever you acquire a skill, become stressed, or sustain an injury, it is classified under one of these three categories and is recorded in the appropriate column. If you are unsure which category is appropriate, discuss it with your GM.

1 CHARACTERISTICS (PAGE 21)

Characteristics are numerical representations of your natural abilities. Each one has a descriptive name and is assigned a number between 1 and 5. You have six different characteristics: one “offensive” characteristic and one “defensive” characteristic in each of the three categories. When you perform a task related to a specific characteristic, your characteristic determines how likely you are to succeed.

2 FEATURES (PAGE 25)

Features represent your specific strengths and weaknesses beyond your raw characteristics. Each feature, which can be either positive or negative, is a word or phrase describing a strength, weakness, or eccentricity of the character that can affect the character's day-to-day life. When recording features, mark a “+” in front of positive features and a “-” in front of negative ones to note the difference.

3 STRESS (PAGE 30)

Stress is a numerical representation of the strain your character has undergone due to physical, mental, and social trials. Your stress is tracked on three “stress tracks,” one for each of the three categories. Each stress track consists of nine boxes divided into three tiers of three. When you undergo a certain amount of stress, represented by stress points, you fill in an equal number of boxes, starting with the first tier, proceeding up to the second once all three boxes in the first are full, and so on.

4 TRAUMAS (PAGE 32)

Traumas represent the tangible repercussions of sustaining too much stress. They are physical, mental, or social “wounds” that affect your actions and take time to heal.

Each trauma has two parts: a word or phrase naming it and a severity. The name of a trauma describes its effects, such as “Broken Ankle” (a physical trauma) or “Paranoia” (a social one). The severity, a number between 1 and 3, is tracked in the three boxes next to the name.

5 EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES (PAGE 27)

This section allows you to keep a list of all the useful items you (and thus your character) have readily available. You can record specific pieces of equipment under the categories in which they are most likely to help you (for example, a book on survival techniques would go under the mental category). However, equipment tends to be pretty flexible in its use. The category under which a piece of gear is recorded should have no bearing on how you choose to use it.

CHARACTER SHEET

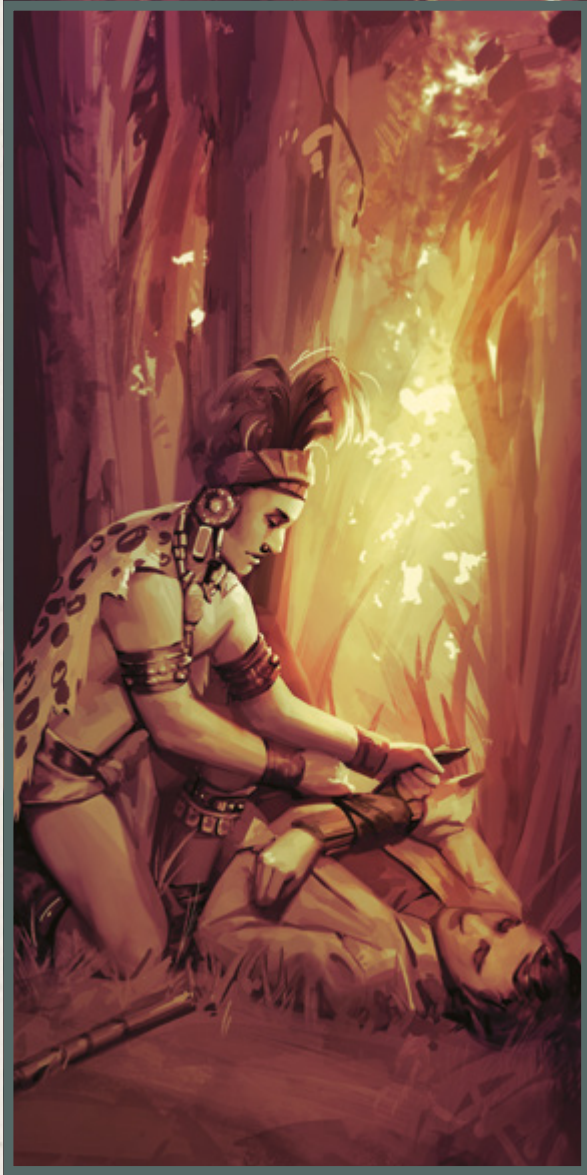
THE END OF THE WORLD

NAME: _____

1	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	SOCIAL
DEXTERITY VITALITY 	LOGIC WILLPOWER 	CHARISMA EMPATHY 	
2	FEATURES	FEATURES	FEATURES
3	STRESS	STRESS	STRESS
4	TRAUMAS		
5	EQUIPMENT		

FEATURES

CHARACTERS are far more than a simple array of numbers defining their abilities. While characteristics exist to set the foundation for a character, features build upon that foundation and make each character truly unique. Features define a character's strengths, weaknesses, and eccentricities. They are not predetermined rules chosen from a list, but unique elements of your character that you define. The only limit to features is your own imagination.



Each feature falls into one of the three categories and is a short word or phrase describing an aspect of yourself. Not only do features describe something about you as a character, but they can affect how well you do on tests. There are two types of features: positive features that help you by adding positive dice to tests (recorded with a "+" before the feature name), and negative features that hinder you by adding negative dice to tests (recorded with a "-" before the feature name).

POSITIVE FEATURES

Positive features represent natural strengths, specialized training, or unique abilities you might have in the related category. These indicate more than just being very strong, smart, or charismatic: they are specialized edges that set you apart from your peers.

Whenever you make a test in the same category as a positive feature, that positive feature can add a positive die to your test if it could help you better perform the task. Feel free to discuss with the GM how you feel your positive feature can help you complete the task or avoid unnecessary stress from performing it. For instance, if you chose Distance Runner as a physical feature, you would gain an extra positive die when making tests to do such things as outrunning a pursuing pack of ravenous wolves, enduring the climb up a ruined building, or performing any other act of endurance.

When choosing your positive features, think about what sets you apart from the other players at the table. What skills, strengths, or abilities do you have that make you special? **Table 1: Positive Feature Examples** offers a list of positive features to use as inspiration when creating your own features. Do not feel restricted to the features suggested here; simply use them as a jumping-off point as you work with your GM and the other players to create features perfect for you.

TABLE 1: POSITIVE FEATURE EXAMPLES

PHYSICAL FEATURES	MENTAL FEATURES	SOCIAL FEATURES
DISTANCE RUNNER	HUMAN CALCULATOR	ALWAYS SMILING
WEIGHT LIFTER	TIRELESS READER	SNAPPY DRESSER
VERY FLEXIBLE	NURSING DEGREE	EXCELLENT LIAR
MARTIAL ARTIST	EAGLE SCOUT	WHEELER AND DEALER
CRACK SHOT	WELL-READ	NATURAL LEADER
IRON STOMACH	WORLD TRAVELER	EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE



NEGATIVE FEATURES

Negative features, on the other hand, represent your weaknesses, insecurities, or detrimental quirks in a given category. As with positive features, these indicate more than just being out of shape or uncomfortable in social situations: these are traits and idiosyncrasies unique to you. Your negative features should represent singular challenges you face in your day-to-day life.

Whenever you make a test in the same category as a negative feature, that negative feature adds a negative die to your test if it could hurt your chance of succeeding or cause additional stress. Usually, when you perform a test, the GM will ask you what your negative features are in the category being used for the test. Once you list them, you and the GM can discuss whether or not they could affect your performance on that test. For instance, if you have Terrible Liar as a social feature, you get a negative die added to your pool when making tests to deceive other characters.

When choosing your negative features, think about what unique challenges you face compared to the other players at the table. What weaknesses, phobias, or quirks do you struggle with? As with traumas, use only those negative features you don't mind disclosing to players and

including in the game. If it would spoil your ability to enjoy the game, there is no need to use it as a feature. **Table 2: Negative Feature Examples** presents a list of negative features to use as inspiration when determining your own features. Do not feel restricted to the features suggested here; simply use them as a jumping-off point as you decide upon features appropriate to you.

TABLE 2: NEGATIVE FEATURE EXAMPLES

PHYSICAL FEATURES	MENTAL FEATURES	SOCIAL FEATURES
ALLERGIES	AVOIDS MATH	ANXIETY
SEDENTARY	NO SENSE OF DIRECTION	TOO HONEST
BAD BACK	EASILY BORED	SHORT TEMPER
VERY NEARSIGHTED	PRONE TO DISTRACTION	EASILY PRESSURED
INJURED EARDRUM	EASILY SURPRISED	TERRIBLE LIAR
WEAK STOMACH	COMPULSION	MISANTHROPE

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

As the world starts to collapse around you, the items you have with you may become critical to your survival. Things once commonplace in your daily life take on a new importance as travel becomes dangerous and access to replacements can no longer be taken for granted. As distribution breaks down and resources get increasingly scarce, people may become willing to kill over nothing more than a can of food or a gallon of gasoline.

You can track the equipment you are carrying in the equipment section of your character sheet. If any of your items could realistically help with a test you are performing, you may add a positive die to the pool for their assistance. Possessions beyond those you carry are allowed in the game. While you should keep track of these and their locations, do so on a piece of scratch paper or the back of your character sheet; you should reserve the equipment section of your character sheet for items you have with you, where they are easily accessible for help with tests.

This section goes over some recommendations for common gear that is fairly likely to be found in a game of **WRATH OF THE GODS**. It also covers some additional rules for handling the effects of weapons and armor.

GEAR

The possibilities for gear you might end up using in **WRATH OF THE GODS** are nearly endless. Things quickly packed up from your own home, items scavenged from abandoned stores, valuables stolen from other survivors—nearly anything can become useful when you're struggling to survive the end times. You are encouraged to find creative uses for any gear you find on your journey. You will need all the help (and positive dice) you can get!

Despite the nearly infinite variety of items you may end up using during the apocalypse, certain items are seen more often than others. Whether equipment most people carry on them every day (such as cell phones) or items that become more necessary as the world ends (such as medical supplies), many common items are carried by a majority of survivor groups. In fact, acquiring these critical items could end up being a significant driving force for you early in the game.

Table 3: Common Gear offers suggestions on different pieces of common gear a group of survivors might end up needing or using. It also recommends the category

TABLE 3: COMMON GEAR

GEAR	HELPFUL CATEGORY	SUGGESTED USES
CELL PHONE	SOCIAL	COMMUNICATING LONG DISTANCE (BEFORE THE CELL NETWORKS GO DOWN)
WALKIE-TALKIES	SOCIAL	COMMUNICATING LONG DISTANCE (AFTER THE CELL NETWORKS GO DOWN)
FIRST AID KIT	PHYSICAL	HEALING PHYSICAL TRAUMAS
FICTION BOOK	MENTAL	HEALING MENTAL TRAUMAS
TEXTBOOK	MENTAL	PERFORMING SPECIFIC MENTAL TASKS, DEPENDING ON THE BOOK
JEWELRY	SOCIAL	TRADING FOR SUPPLIES OR INFORMATION
PLAYING CARDS	MENTAL/SOCIAL	TO EASE TENSE SOCIAL SITUATIONS OR RELIEVE MENTAL STRAIN
LIGHTER	PHYSICAL	STARTING A FIRE OR SPOTTING THINGS IN THE DARK
POCKETKNIFE	PHYSICAL	MANY DIFFERENT PHYSICAL TASKS, ALSO USED AS A WEAPON IN A CONFLICT
WATER BOTTLE	PHYSICAL	STORING AND TRANSPORTING WATER
IODINE	PHYSICAL	PURIFY WATER (ELIMINATE NEED TO MAKE TEST TO RESIST CONTAMINANTS)
ROPE	PHYSICAL	CLIMBING RUINED BUILDINGS, SECURING SUPPLIES OR CAPTIVES
FLASHLIGHT	PHYSICAL	SPOTTING THINGS IN THE DARK

each piece of gear would likely be most helpful in, as well as different tasks it could specifically benefit. Don't feel restricted to the gear or uses suggested here; simply use them as a jumping-off point. Any and all uses of supplies you find on your journey are encouraged—do whatever you need to do to survive.

NOT ALL GEAR IS CREATED EQUAL

Two pieces of gear might perform very similar functions, but one could be significantly better at it than the other. For instance, everyday adhesive bandages help wounds heal faster by protecting them from exposure, but rolls of gauze and disinfectant would be significantly better. In these cases, the GM may decide that the superior piece of gear can add two positive dice to the dice pool instead of just one.

CARRYING CAPACITY

Depending on how lucky you are in **WRATH OF THE GODS**, you can quickly accumulate a large quantity of resources as you scavenge for supplies. However, you are only human; you have a limit as to how much stuff you can bring with you, especially on your immediate person.

There are no strict rules regarding exactly how much different items weigh or how hard they are to carry, but you and the GM should work together to decide how much gear you can keep on yourself at one time. As a rough guideline, average humans can comfortably carry up to a third of their body weight in an appropriate backpack or bag.

WEAPONS

Protecting yourself is an important part of staying alive in **WRATH OF THE GODS**. As such, even the most peaceful characters often find themselves carrying a weapon just in case. Because weapons have such an impact on your performance in combat, and because combat incidents can be important and tense moments in the game, weapons have some additional rules beyond those for other pieces of gear. A weapon contributes two things when you use it to attack an NPC or PC: it modifies your dice pool in some way, and it changes the amount of stress you deal to your opponent with your attack. (See **Attacking**, page 36).

Much like normal pieces of gear, weapons, which make attacks much more effective, can add positive dice to your dice pool. However, using certain weapons can be much more difficult or dangerous than simply using your fists. To reflect this, not all weapons add a positive die to your pool—some add no dice at all, and others can even add negative dice.

While some weapons are more difficult to use, they can be more effective at harming your opponent. Each weapon has a damage value. This value is a positive or negative number that alters the amount of stress you deal to opponents when you attack them (see **Attacking**, page 36). Positive numbers increase the stress dealt to the target by the corresponding amount, while negative numbers reduce the stress dealt (to a minimum of 0).

Table 4: Weapons, on page 29, lists a number of recommendations for various weapons you might acquire. These are simple and general recommendations for entire categories of weapons. If you or the GM feel that a specific object or weapon doesn't fit into one of these categories, you can give it whatever stats you and the GM agree on. (Though, as a general rule, a weapon should never add more than two dice of either type or more than +4 damage.)

TRACKING SMALL DETAILS

Depending on what kind of campaign your GM wants to run, you may need to track more information about your gear than simply whether or not you have it. Once the power grid goes out, things such as the battery life of electronics you carry with you become very important, and tracking such elements can really add to the game. Other things, such as unspoiled food and potable water, are necessary to track in almost any game of **WRATH OF THE GODS**, as such resources become very scarce. Some common things the GM may have you track are:

- ☛ Number of replaceable batteries remaining
- ☛ Battery life on electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, etc.)
- ☛ Total gasoline left in car
- ☛ Amount of drinkable water
- ☛ Amount of edible food
- ☛ Matches/lighter fluid remaining
- ☛ Units of ammunition in weapon and carried

Such items can be tracked in different ways. Items that get used up slowly and are tracked session-to-session should have quantities recorded in writing; items likely to be useful for only a few hours can be tracked by other means, such as spare dice or counters.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TABLE 4: WEAPONS

TYPE OF WEAPON	EXAMPLES	ADDED DICE	DAMAGE
SMALL-BLADED MELEE	POCKETKNIFE, KITCHEN KNIFE	1 POSITIVE DIE	+2
LARGE-BLADED MELEE	MACHETE, HEDGE CLIPPERS	2 POSITIVE DICE	+3
SMALL IMPROVISED MELEE	BEER BOTTLE, TIRE IRON	N/A	+1
LARGE IMPROVISED MELEE	CRICKET BAT, CHAINSAW	1 NEGATIVE DIE	+4
THROWN OBJECT	ROCK, TOASTER, MISTLETOE DART	N/A	-1
PISTOL	GLOCK 19, M1911	1 POSITIVE DIE	+3
SHOTGUN	REMINGTON 12 GAUGE	N/A	+4
SINGLE-SHOT RIFLE	AMERICAN LONG RIFLE, RUGER NO. 1	2 POSITIVE DICE	+4
AUTOMATIC RIFLE	M4, AK-47	1 NEGATIVE DIE	+5

WEAPON RANGES

From the reach of a bloody baseball bat to the trajectory of a thrown brick to the firing distance of a high-powered rifle, weapons have a variety of ranges. Further, elements ranging from wind to visibility can factor into how far a weapon's reach extends in any given situation. Because of the narrative nature of combat in **WRATH OF THE GODS**, weapon ranges aren't specified in the game. Whether or not your weapon has range to a target depends on the situation you are in and is up to the GM. However, as general guidance, here are some average ranges of different types of weapons:

-  **Pistol:** 50 meters
-  **Shotgun:** 35 meters
-  **Single-Shot Rifle:** 1,000 meters
-  **Automatic Rifle:** 400 meters

If you attempt to make a shot far beyond the average range of your weapon, the GM may add a negative die to your pool to reflect the increased difficulty. On the other hand, if you are making an incredibly short-range shot, the GM may add a positive die to reflect the ease of the shot.

ARMOR

While very few people will find themselves wearing any form of armor when they become aware the world is ending, armor can quickly become necessary to survival. Armor might not be actual medieval armor or bullet-proof vests, but simply heavy, protective clothing that will help guard you against the dangers you face every day. When you are wearing any armor sturdy enough to protect you from physical harm, it adds a bonus to your physical resistance value (see **Resistance**, page 31). This bonus is usually pretty small but can make a huge difference in the long run. **Table 5: Armor** lists some examples of different armor types and the resistance bonuses they provide.

TABLE 5: ARMOR

RESISTANCE BONUS	EXAMPLES
+0	REGULAR CLOTHING
+1	FIREFIGHTER'S SUIT, BULLETPROOF VEST
+2	FULL BULLETPROOF ARMOR, RIOT GEAR, FULL MEDIEVAL ARMOR

STRESS, DEATH, AND TRAUMAS

As you weather the threats and challenges of the apocalypse, you will be pushed to your breaking point. You will be injured, insulted, and brought to the brink of insanity. To reflect this constant strain and danger to your body, mind, and spirit, you suffer stress and traumas. Stress represents the damage you accumulate on a day-to-day basis from everything you do, while traumas represent the tangible repercussions and permanent effects of that damage.

Stress and traumas are tracked separately for your three different categories, reflecting the detrimental effects on the three different parts of yourself.

STRESS

Stress represents the damage and strain you undergo on a day-to-day basis in your three categories. Physical stress represents cuts and bruises, twisted ankles, broken bones, and any other physical damage. Mental stress represents psychological strain, shock from traumatic events, and general damage to your mental health. Lastly, social stress represents anxiety, damage to your trust in others, and an increasingly bitter attitude toward the world. That being said, stress is very much an abstract measure of these effects; it doesn't represent any single injury as much as the building repercussions from multiple small events.

Stress is tracked numerically in a set of boxes called the stress track. Whenever you acquire points of stress, you fill in that many boxes in the stress track in the appropriate category. The more stress you endure in a category, the more resistance you build up against further stress. However, if you ever completely fill up a stress track in a single category, you run the risk of dying or sustaining an extreme trauma.

THE STRESS TRACK

All stress is tallied on one of the three stress tracks in your three categories. Each stress track consists of nine boxes, which are divided into three tiers of three boxes each. Whenever you take points of stress, fill in an equal number of boxes on the stress track in the appropriate category, starting with the boxes in the first tier, proceeding up to the second once all three boxes in the first are full, and so on.

If all nine boxes in a category are full, you immediately die or experience a serious trauma (see **Death**, page 31).

SUSTAINING STRESS

Stress comes from two primary sources: performing difficult or dangerous tests, and experiencing traumatic events.

Whenever you make a test, you gain a number of stress points equal to the number of negative dice left in the pool. This stress is taken in the category matching that of the characteristic used for the test, and it represents the general strain or damage resulting from performing the task. Perhaps the weight you were attempting to lift caused you to pull a muscle, or hours spent studying have completely stressed you out, or the sleazebag you were dealing with really got under your skin.

The other main causes of stress are traumatic events brought about by outside sources. Examples include being attacked by an opponent with a weapon, witnessing a horrifying sight, or being betrayed by a trusted friend. When such an event occurs, you immediately take points of stress. This value could be determined by the game rules (such as during attacks), or it could be dictated by the GM based on



the situation. (GMs: see page 45 for guidance on choosing stress amounts.) Regardless of what source deals you stress, reduce the amount you receive by your resistance in that category before you record the stress on the stress track.

RECOVERING FROM STRESS

In general, stress cannot be readily healed. Stress is an abstract level representing the damage you have accumulated from the adversity you have faced. To reduce accumulated stress, you first need to diagnose the problem and realize how it is affecting you. By spending a short time analyzing how it has affected you, you can convert your stress into a trauma. This removes your stress from that track, but gives you a trauma in the same category. Traumas can hurt your performance by adding negative dice to tasks you attempt. However, they can also be cured over time. See **Traumas**, on page 32, for further information.

RESISTANCE

As you accumulate stress in a category, you become more inured to the related dangers. Someone whose sanity has been tested by witnessing death over and over no longer recoils as quickly at the sight of a corpse. Someone who has been betrayed by comrade after comrade is no longer surprised when betrayed again. After a person has been beaten into submission, another hit is just a drop in the bucket. This is represented by resistance.

Whenever you are dealt stress from any source, you reduce the amount of stress you receive by your resistance in the matching category. Your resistance is equal to the number of tiers in the matching stress track that have all three boxes filled in. Thus, if you have three or more points of stress in a category, you have one point of resistance; if you have six or more points of stress in a category, you have two points of resistance.

Other things, such as armor, can provide additional resistance in specific categories (see page 29).

EXAMPLE

Martin is having a bad day. He has accumulated 7 physical stress after having been ambushed by a grizzly bear, and he is now running for his life. He finds himself cornered on the edge of a canal embankment, and he decides to jump rather than face his ferocious pursuer. He lands hard, suffering 3 physical stress from the impact. However, he already has two tiers of his physical stress track filled in due to his 7 stress, and so has two points of resistance. He subtracts his 2 resistance from the stress sustained, reducing it to just 1. Now at 8 physical stress, Martin is injured after the fall, but still alive!

DEATH

Death is common in **WRATH OF THE GODS**. People perish all around you as you struggle to survive. But for the purposes of playing the game, “death” doesn’t refer strictly to complete, physical death. Instead, it refers to several different ways your character can be retired from play. When you sustain enough stress to fill a stress track, you die, but the kind of death you undergo depends on which category of stress causes you to die:

-  **Physical:** This is normal, physical death. Your heart stops beating, and you die.
-  **Mental:** You are driven into irreversible insanity. Your mind is gone.
-  **Social:** You fall into an inescapable catatonic state. Your faith in humanity has utterly failed.

Even your death is part of the ongoing narrative. However you end up being removed from the game, make it your own. Tailor it to your character and whatever caused you to suffer that last bit of fatal stress. Deaths should be dramatic, unique, and memorable moments.

But while deaths are important, you are a main character in the story, and you have a chance to cling to life, even at the end. Whenever you completely fill a stress track, you don’t necessarily have to die but can try to cling to life by making a test using the defensive stat from the category in which you suffered the stress. If you succeed at the test, you are still removed from play in the way appropriate to the category in which you acquired the stress, but you are removed only temporarily. You immediately take a severity 3 trauma in the matching category and remove all stress from the top two tiers of the maxed-out stress track, leaving the three boxes in tier 1 filled in. You remain removed from play until the end of the current encounter—either unconscious, insane, or unresponsive—but then you return once you have had a chance to collect yourself.

If you already have three traumas (of any severity level) in the category and cannot take on additional traumas, you cannot cling to life, and you have no choice but to die.

OVERFLOW STRESS

It is not uncommon for a single source to deal enough stress to complete a stress track and “overflow” it, inflicting more stress than there are boxes left to fill in. If you cling to life and have overflow stress, that overflow stress is recorded on your stress track after you remove the stress from the top two tiers. You do not apply your resistance to this overflow stress, since your resistance was already applied to the stress when it was originally dealt.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TRAUMAS

While stress is a simple, numerical representation of the strain and damage you have sustained, traumas represent the tangible repercussions of that stress after it has built up. By taking some time to analyze the effects the stress has had on your body, mind, and spirit, you can convert that stress into a trauma. This removes the stress from your stress track, but introduces a narrative effect that will weigh on you as you try to recover from it.

Each trauma has two parts: a word or phrase naming it, and a severity. The name of the trauma describes its effects on you. For example, “Broken Ankle” describes a physical trauma that leaves you limping, and “Paranoid” indicates social trauma that causes you to trust no one. A trauma’s severity, on the other hand, is a number between one and three, tracked in that trauma’s three boxes, which are filled in from left to right. When you remove your stress to acquire a trauma, that trauma’s severity is equal to the number of tiers in the stress track that had any boxes filled in. The trauma’s severity determines just how hard that trauma will be to heal.

Traumas act a lot like negative features (see **Negative Features**, page 26). Whenever you make a test that could reasonably be hindered by trauma, you add a negative die to that test. Particularly severe traumas can add even more negative dice, at the GM’s discretion.

You can never have more than three traumas (of any severity level) in a category at once. If you ever suffer a fourth trauma in a category, you immediately die without any chance to cling to life (see **Death**, on page 31).

ACQUIRING TRAUMAS

There are two ways to acquire a trauma. Usually, you acquire one by converting your stress into a trauma, which relieves your stress and helps you start to recover from the damage you’ve taken. Alternatively, certain special enemies can cause you to automatically undergo a specific trauma.

To convert your stress into a trauma, you have to have at least five minutes of downtime to spend analyzing how your stress has affected you. This process could take the form of looking over your wounds after a battle to see what is hurt, meditating on the mental strain you’ve been under, or confronting your trust issues. You can do this whenever you want, as long as you have the time. You can choose to remove your stress early and often, building up a large number of small traumas that are easy to heal but weigh on you. Alternatively, you can ignore your injuries, avoiding immediate setbacks but risking their becoming even more severe before you have a chance to start dealing with them.

After spending the five minutes to look yourself over, you remove all of the stress in a single category. You then record a single trauma in that category with a severity equal to the number of tiers in that stress track that had any boxes filled in. Next, you determine the exact nature of the trauma and how it will affect you. This should be based on its severity and how you received the points of stress that were removed. If you sustained the stress due to falling out of a building, perhaps it results in a “Broken Leg” trauma. Or if you suffered the stress from witnessing your best friend die in front of you, maybe it induces a “Can’t Make Friends” trauma.

Table 6: Trauma Examples presents a list of traumas to use as inspiration when deciding what the nature of your trauma is. Do not feel restricted to the traumas suggested here; simply use them as a jumping-off point as you work with your GM to devise a trauma appropriate to your situation and character.

TABLE 6: TRAUMA EXAMPLES

SEVERITY	PHYSICAL TRAUMAS	MENTAL TRAUMAS	SOCIAL TRAUMAS
1	TWISTED ANKLE, FIRST-DEGREE BURN, INFECTED WOUND, SICKNESS, BLURRY VISION	FEAR OF THE SUPERNATURAL, PREOCCUPATION, FORGETFULNESS, ACTIVE DENIAL	INDIFFERENCE, DISLIKE OF A PARTICULAR TYPE OF PERSON, UNEASE, WARY AROUND PEOPLE
2	BROKEN ANKLE, SECOND-DEGREE BURN, FESTERING WOUND, FEVER, PARTIAL BLINDNESS	DREAD OF THE SUPERNATURAL, FIXATION, MEMORY LOSS, DENIAL	APATHY, HATRED OF A PARTICULAR TYPE OF PERSON, ANXIETY, DISTRUSTFUL OF PEOPLE
3	BROKEN LEG, THIRD-DEGREE BURN, GANGRENOUS WOUND, SEVERE FLU, BLINDNESS	PHOBIA OF THE SUPERNATURAL, OBSESSION, AMNESIA, DELUSIONS	DISASSOCIATION FROM REALITY, RESPONDS WITH RAGE TO PARTICULAR TYPE OF PERSON, PANIC, PARANOID OF OTHERS



RECOVERING FROM TRAUMAS

Fortunately, most traumas can be healed over time. How you go about healing your trauma depends on what category the trauma is in and its exact nature as determined when it was incurred. The treatment might be first aid and medicine for a physical trauma, relaxation and personal reflection for a mental trauma, or the help of people close to you for a social trauma. The amount of time the treatment takes depends on the severity of the trauma, and whether or not it succeeds is determined by a test.

When you decide to begin treating one of your traumas, specify to the GM what measures you are taking to do so. You then must undergo the treatment for the amount of time specified for a trauma of that severity, as listed below (required treatment time is also marked in the severity boxes on the official character sheet):

- ☼ **Severity 1:** One day
- ☼ **Severity 2:** One week
- ☼ **Severity 3:** One month

This time doesn't need to be one hundred percent committed to curing the trauma; you can do other things while you recuperate as long as they don't directly interfere with the treatment or make the trauma worse. For example, treating a broken leg might involve some form of cast or splint and refraining from putting too much weight on the leg for a month. This treatment wouldn't be interrupted by going about your daily life, but it would if you removed the cast or tried to run on that leg.

Once the entire treatment time has elapsed, you must make a test to see if the treatment succeeded. This test uses the defensive characteristic from the same category as the trauma (Vitality for physical, Willpower for mental, or Empathy for social). As with any test, this test gains positive and negative dice from any circumstances affecting the treatment. For example, positive dice

can be added due to helpful equipment or the assistance of allies, and negative dice due to interruptions or complications of the treatment.

If the test succeeds, reduce the severity of the trauma by one. If this reduces the severity of a trauma to zero, the trauma is healed and can be removed from your character sheet. If the test fails, or if the trauma still has a severity, you can continue treatment until the trauma is fully removed. At the GM's discretion, when the severity of a trauma is reduced due to treatment, you can alter the nature of the trauma based on the in-progress healing. This may mean changing your "Broken Leg" trauma to a "Weak Leg" trauma as the healing progresses, or reducing your "Acrophobia" to a simple "Fear of Heights" to indicate that it is now a bit less severe.

PERMANENT EFFECTS OF TRAUMAS

Some traumas, such as losing a limb, can never be fully healed. The wound can heal over, and you can adapt to the disability, but your limb will never grow back. In extreme situations such as this, the GM may decide to add a negative feature to your character as the result of a specific trauma. For example, if you were to lose your arm, you could gain both a "Lost Arm" trauma and a "Lost Arm" negative feature. Over time, you could recover from the "Lost Arm" trauma, healing the wound fully, but you would never recover fully from the "Lost Arm" negative feature.

The GM should reserve the addition of negative features from an injury for truly exceptional circumstances.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CONFLICT

MOST scenes in **WRATH OF THE GODS** will play out narratively, with the GM narrating the story and calling on various PCs in your group to make tests as you decide to perform different tasks. However, surviving in the apocalypse can often be tense, and you might quickly find yourself in conflict with hostile characters or thrown into a dangerous circumstance in which every second counts. In these situations, it's helpful to have a bit more structure to the storytelling, guaranteeing that everyone in the scene gets a chance to contribute to the story and that all their actions time out evenly and fairly.

TIMING

As soon as a conflict (or any time-sensitive action scene) breaks out, the normal flow of the narrative stops, and the game enters “structured time.” In structured time, the game unfolds in a series of rounds. During each round, each character involved in the scene gets to take one turn. Once all characters have taken their turns, the next round starts. This continues until the action has concluded. Each round represents about ten seconds of in-game time, with all of the characters acting simultaneously during those ten seconds.

Whether your group or the opposing group goes first is determined by which group has initiative at the start of the combat.

DETERMINING INITIATIVE

If two or more opposing groups of characters are involved in a conflict, the order in which they get to take their turns each round can mean the difference between life and death. The first thing the GM must determine when the game enters structured time is which group has initiative—in other words, what order the groups will be acting in.

This initiative order is determined based on the circumstances that started the conflict. Whichever group “got the jump” on the other—or has a general advantage—acts first. If you and the other PCs end negotiations with another group of survivors by attacking them, you will have the initiative and will get to act first. However, if you are ambushed by a particularly quiet group of baboons, they will have initiative over you.

Once the GM has determined the order in which the various groups involved in the scene are acting, each character and NPC takes a turn. The characters in the first group can each take their turn in any order they choose (keeping in mind that each character can only take one turn per round). Once they have all finished their turns, the next group takes its turns, and so on.

TAKING TURNS

When it is your group's time to act in a round, you and your group members each take one turn. These turns can be taken in any order your group decides based on the situation, but each character must complete their turn before the next can go.

During your turn, you have approximately ten seconds (in game) to attempt whatever you want to do. This is usually enough time to move around a bit and then attempt a single task. In general, you have enough time in a turn to attempt no more than a single task that requires some form of test. If you describe to the GM what you want to do with your turn, and it seems like it would require more than a single test, it is likely something that needs to be broken into multiple turns. For more guidance on exactly what you can fit into your turn, along with recommendations on how to handle several common tasks, see the **Tasks** section, on page 34.

Once you describe what you are doing with your turn, including any movements, and you make whatever test might be required, the GM narrates the results of your actions based on the outcome of your test and any other details relevant to the situation. Then, your turn is over.

STANDOFF

While who has the initiative in most situations is usually fairly obvious, there are some instances in which everything explodes into chaos at once, and it isn't apparent which group should go before the other. In these cases, the GM can call for an opposed Dexterity test (see **Opposed Tests**, page 20). One member of each group is nominated to take the test. This represents that character taking the lead in the situation, guiding fellow group members in the group's response to the ensuing combat. The GM then determines the order in which the groups act based on their representatives' performance on the test, with the winner of the test going first.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TASKS

As a general guideline, when you attempt tasks during a single turn of structured time, you can accomplish two things. First, you can do one minor task, usually movement-based. This might be ducking behind cover, backing away from your enemy, closing a door, or any number of other contextual actions. This minor task should be something that can be accomplished in a couple of seconds, should not require your full attention, and should be something that you would reasonably succeed at the majority of the time.



Second, you can attempt one major task. This is something that requires the majority of your attention and some amount of skill or luck to pull off. The most common example of a major task in combat is attacking an opponent. Because this action is so common, and because it can take many forms, there are specific rules for performing attacks; these are outlined in **Attacking**, on page 36. However, attacking is only one of an infinite number of things you can attempt to do during your turn. **Other Example Tasks**, on page 37, goes over several other common tasks that you might want to perform during your turn and offers recommendations on how the GM could handle them.

MOVEMENT AND POSITIONING

Most of the moving you do during a turn in an action scene doesn't require a test, and it can be performed in addition to whatever major task you are attempting to accomplish. This might mean slowly walking while you fire your gun, running up to your target before attacking, or just moving from room to room in an abandoned building. Usually, for this kind of minor maneuvering, an average character can move about twenty meters through an open area. However, the GM may decide that you cannot move as far due to environmental effects such as darkness, weather, or unstable footing.

On top of simply moving from one place to another, this minor task on your turn can also include one additional small, incidental thing you may want to do. Some suggestions include:

- ☛ Ducking into cover
- ☛ Pulling out a piece of gear
- ☛ Opening or closing a door
- ☛ Dropping prone or standing up
- ☛ Speaking to other characters

While a lot of movement during conflict can be handled as minor tasks, occasions may arise when you want to dedicate your full attention and energy to sprinting as fast as you can. In these instances, the simple act of moving that quickly through a tense situation requires a Vitality test and takes your full attention for your turn. On a success, an average character can move about sixty meters through an open area. On a failure, the GM can make you come up short (forty meters or less), receive physical stress, or even trip and fall, depending on the situation.

ATTACKING

The end times are by no means peaceful. For better or worse, when confronted with supernatural horrors from the underworld, it is human nature to react violently, either toward the horrors themselves or toward fellow human beings in the frenzy of flight.

Probably the most common task you will attempt during conflict is attacking adversaries. Whether you are throwing a brick, shooting a gun, or swinging your fists, attacks are resolved using the same base rules—though they can be modified by the GM to fit the situation.

When you make a physical attack against another character, you roll a Dexterity test. You add positive and negative dice to this test just as with any other test; these can be due to features, environmental effects, cover, or any other effects. However, instead of adding the usual single positive die for having a piece of equipment, weapons add different types and numbers of dice based on how easy they are to wield (see **Weapons**, page 28).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NON-PHYSICAL ATTACKS

The rules presented here for making an attack don't necessarily apply just to physical attacks. In certain circumstances, the GM may have you make similar rolls when you are mentally or socially "attacking" your target, such as when you are interrogating a prisoner or arguing with a rival. In these cases, follow the same rules outlined here for making an attack, but use the offensive stat from the appropriate category (Logic for mental or Charisma for social), and deal the resulting stress to the target's matching category. Obviously, physical weapons don't affect such a roll in the same way they affect physical attacks, but otherwise the test works in the same way.

If a Dexterity test to attack succeeds, your target immediately gains a number of points of physical stress equal to the total number of successes you scored on the test. This can be further modified by the weapon you are using. The stress suffered by your target follows all the normal rules for sustaining stress, such as being reduced by resistance (see **Sustaining Stress**, page 30).

To make an attack roll in the first place, you must be able to perform the attack. This means being physically capable of pulling it off, being aware of your target, and being in range with your intended method of attack. If the GM allows it, you might sometimes be able to attempt an attack even if you don't meet all of these conditions, but with extra negative dice added to your pool to represent the additional challenge. Examples include wildly swinging in a pitch-black room or firing at a noise you heard in the bushes.

EXAMPLE 🌟

The group is cornered by a gang of hybrid Deep Ones in a basement the gang has been looting. Jenneke pulls out the pistol she lifted from the sporting goods store and starts firing to cover her friends' escape. She adds three positive dice to her pool: one for the pistol, one for her Crack Shot feature, and one for being at nearly point-blank range. Then, George (the GM) adds one negative die to her pool for the darkness in the basement.

Jenneke rolls the dice, getting a "2," "3," "4," and "5" on her positive dice, and a "2" on her negative die. With her excellent Dexterity of 4, she is left with 2 successes and no stress after canceling the "2" results from her pool. She then adds +3 to her total successes, thanks to her pistol, dealing 5 total physical stress to the closest Deep One.



OTHER EXAMPLE TASKS

The possibilities for things you might attempt to do during one of your turns are nearly endless. You should work with the GM to decide exactly how to resolve whatever task you want to attempt, choosing the most pertinent characteristic to use and adding positive and negative dice to the pool as appropriate. **Table 7: Example Tasks** offers a few recommendations on how to handle common tasks that you might want to try. However, these are just suggestions, and they can be changed to fit whatever scenario you find yourself in.

Any trying action performed during structured time can be resolved with a task. During the course of the apocalypse, the characters are likely to face all manner of trials and hardships, especially while under the stress of imminent attack from the various supernatural forces wreaking havoc on Earth. For more information and guidance on adjudicating and interpreting tests during tasks, see **Running Tests**, on page 44.

TABLE 7: EXAMPLE TASKS

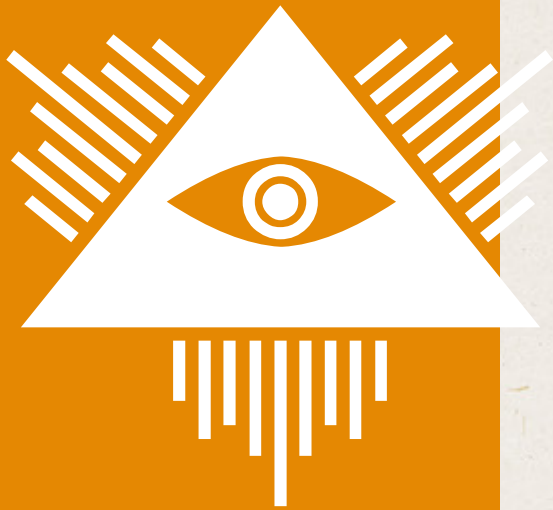
TASK	RELEVANT CHARACTERISTIC	ADDS POSITIVE DICE	ADDS NEGATIVE DICE
CLIMBING, JUMPING, OR TUMBLING	DEXTERITY	ROPE, SOFT LANDING	SLIPPERY SURFACE, BEING UNDER ATTACK
HIDING FROM THE ENEMY	DEXTERITY OR LOGIC	DARKNESS, CONCEALING TERRAIN	BRIGHT LIGHT, IN DIRECT SIGHT OF ENEMY
SPRINTING (MOVING MORE THAN 20 METERS IN ONE TURN)	VITALITY	RUNNING DOWNHILL, RUNNING FOR YOUR LIFE	RUNNING UPHILL, SLIPPERY GROUND
PICKING LOCK	LOGIC	SIMPLE LOCK, LOCK-PICKING TOOLS	DIFFICULT LOCK, BEING UNDER ATTACK
COERCING ENEMY INTO SURRENDER	CHARISMA	YOU HAVE ADVANTAGE IN FIGHT, ENEMY HAS A REASON TO LIVE	ENEMY HAS ADVANTAGE IN FIGHT, ENEMY IS BEYOND REASON
TALKING ENEMY DOWN	EMPATHY	YOU HAVEN'T YET KILLED ANY OF THEM, YOU PUT AWAY YOUR WEAPON	ENEMY HATES YOU, ALLIES ARE ACTIVELY FIGHTING THE ENEMY



RUNNING THE GAME

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CHAPTER II

"The end is near. I hear a noise at the door, as of some immense slippery body lumbering against it. It shall not find me. God, that hand! The window! The window!"

—The testament of an unnamed morphine addict

RUNNING THE GAME

THIS section of **WRATH OF THE GODS** is all about being the Game Master (or GM). If you are the GM, your job is a bit different from that of the other players. It's your job to run the game, narrating the story as it unfolds, playing the roles of all Non-Player Characters

(NPCs), and deciding on the outcomes of the players' tests and actions. The basic role of the GM is outlined in the **Introduction** (see page 10), but this chapter goes into greater detail, offering guidance on how best to use the resources and adjudicate the rules provided in this book.

STORY STRUCTURE

As Game Master, your primary goal in a game of **WRATH OF THE GODS** is to tell a story together with your players. This story might be anything from a hyper-realistic simulation of life during the apocalypse to a farcical romp through a world gone mad, but it is a story nonetheless. Your job is to convey this story in a fun and interesting way and to involve your players by giving them meaningful actions to perform and choices to make as they work their way through the narrative.

The encounters the Player Characters (PCs) undergo link together to form the overall narrative of the game. This could take place over the course of anything from a single session to a long, multi-session campaign.

ENCOUNTERS

In a roleplaying game, the action is broken up into individual segments called "encounters." An encounter is the equivalent of a scene from a book or movie—one segment of action that progresses the story or adds context in some way. Encounters can last anywhere from a couple of minutes to many hours, and they usually focus on the characters' attempts to accomplish a specific objective. It is up to you to determine when one encounter ends and another begins, which usually happens organically with little fanfare.

As a general guide, encounters tend to fall into one of four categories: social, exploration, survival, or downtime.

SOCIAL

Social encounters involve the PCs talking back and forth with other characters, who are usually NPCs that you control. As the conversation unfolds, both sides might need to make various tests using their social or mental characteristics to achieve their desired result in the conversation. Social encounters usually end with either the conversations wrapping up amicably and both groups moving on, or the conversations going wrong and transitioning into combat!

EXPLORATION

During exploration encounters, the PCs navigate their environment, scout new locations, or search for supplies. Typically in encounters like this, you describe the area around the PCs and then allow them to make decisions on how to proceed. You then narrate the results of the PCs' actions, redescribing the area as their actions affect it or revealing new, previously unexplored locations as their endeavors take them onward.

SURVIVAL

Survival encounters include any time-sensitive encounters in which the PCs are in danger. They may be engaging in combat with hostile characters, surviving environmental effects such as treacherous weather or fire, or dealing with any number of other threats. These encounters are usually played out using structured time (see **Conflict**, page 34), with the PCs taking turns to resolve the action moment by moment as it occurs.

DOWNTIME

Between the desperate struggles for survival, intense arguments, and careful exploration, there are often lulls in the action. Downtime encompasses all of these lulls, from traveling cross-country for several days to resting for a few minutes after an intense moment. These are situations that have little to no significance to the overall plot; you can cover them with simply a few quick statements summarizing the passing of time. Downtime is when the PCs can worry about things like converting their stress into traumas (see **Acquiring Traumas**, page 32) or healing their traumas over time (see **Recovering from Traumas**, page 33).

NARRATIVE

As you link together encounters over the course of the game, you form an ongoing narrative: a story of the PCs' struggle for survival. This can be one of the most difficult tasks for you as a GM, but also one of the most rewarding. It requires you to balance planning ahead against adjusting on the fly to your PCs' actions. Usually, it is best to help the PCs set several concrete goals for their survival that feel appropriate to the scenario they are facing. You can then plan around these goals, using the locations provided in this book and others of your own creation to set the scene for the various encounters.

THE BEGINNING

How you start a game of **WRATH OF THE GODS** sets the tone for your entire campaign. Will you open with the world being thrown into complete chaos, or will you have supernatural forces slowly consume the world over the course of days? However you decide to unfold the given scenario, you still need to start the game in a way that brings the PCs together for the ensuing action. For this, it is recommended that you have your story begin at the very gaming table you and your players are all sitting at. You can open the story with the game you are currently playing being interrupted (inside the story) by the first news of the coming apocalypse.

Starting the game in this way allows you not only to begin with the PCs together in one location, but also to more easily determine the PCs' initial states. What stuff do they have on or with them right now? That's their equipment. Are any of them currently experiencing the effects of a trauma? If the trauma isn't private and the player is comfortable including it, make sure it gets recorded on the character sheet!

SETTING GOALS

As the world begins to end, everything is thrown into chaos. To keep their heads straight, and to help drive the story forward, it's good if your PCs have some concrete goals they want to accomplish. While goals can vary wildly from group to group, scenario to scenario, and location to location,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Starting the apocalypse at the gaming table leaves one loose end for you to deal with: you're there, too. You don't want to have to deal with controlling yourself as a Player Character as well as managing the story for all the other players. Besides, keeping your character around can create a conflict of interest.

So how do you deal with this issue? Well, there's a pretty easy solution...but you might not like it. Most characters in movies about the end of the world are skeptical of the severity of the situation until they witness its brutality first hand. What better way to introduce the apocalypse to your players than with yourself? A giant cougar could ambush the group and take a big bite out of your jugular vein. Or you could come to the session wild-eyed and spluttering in terror about the unspeakable, tentacular horror that haunts your dreams. When you inevitably succumb to madness and attack Player Characters while shouting "Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn!" it will be up to the PCs to deal with you. Alternatively, you could always just have your character quickly leave to find a loved one when the news of the apocalypse hits, but where's the fun in that?

WHAT ABOUT ME?



tion, there are several overarching needs that most groups must work to fulfill in games of **WRATH OF THE GODS**:

- ☛ **Acquire Weapons:** Once the first mythical creatures and gods appear, weapons beyond a frying pan become a necessity. The first outing to a sporting goods store or a relative's house to find guns can be the most dangerous, since most of the PCs won't be armed yet.
- ☛ **Gather Food and Medicine:** Everyone has to eat. Scavenging food, water, and medicine is usually the primary motivation at the beginning of a game. Finding renewable sources of these things is a good goal later on. You can create new driving forces for the PCs by depleting one of these resources or having a PC fall ill mid-game.
- ☛ **Establish a Safe House:** With the world gone to hell, perhaps literally, finding someplace safe to stay, even if only temporary, is a necessity. Properly outfitting a location for more long-term use is a good objective for an ongoing game.
- ☛ **Find Long-Term Safety:** Ultimately, the PCs will want to find a permanent solution for their survival—a goal beyond that of escaping death each day. Depending on the scenario, a solution might be to start a community amid the rubble of civilization, or to find a military base that is still functional. Goals like these are good for campaigns in which the PCs have survived the initial pandemonium of the apocalypse and must now look to the future.

When your group is first thrown into the events of the apocalypse, many group members will likely gravitate toward these objectives, and those who don't can be pushed in that direction with some subtle use of NPCs or story events. That being said, there is no "right" or "wrong" way to play **WRATH OF THE GODS**; you and your players can set whatever goals you want. The goals presented here are simply the ones most prevalent in most apocalyptic stories.

USING LOCATIONS

Each scenario in this book delineates a series of locations to help you in setting up encounters for that scenario. Each location is presented as an example of a type of area your PCs might find themselves in while playing the game. These location descriptions are left generic enough that they can be adapted to your area of the world. For example, in the **That Is Not Dead...** scenario, one of the locations is a mainland town; this can easily be adapted to represent whatever local town your PCs find themselves in within your game.

Each location presented here includes a description of what that place is like as well as a list of ideas for events and encounters your PCs might have while there. Each of these ideas is just a jumping-off point that may lead to an entire small adventure in itself. Let your PCs react to whatever comes their way and make decisions on their own. They will often get themselves into plenty of trouble without a lot of encouragement from you.

TRACKING TOOLS

Since the need for resources such as weapons, food, water, and medicine is a primary driving force behind the PCs' goals, it is important that you track and use these resources to motivate them. You can track them using whatever method works best for you, from tokens or spare dice to scratch paper. Additionally, you can have individual players track their characters' personal resources (such as batteries or bullets) themselves. For more information on keeping a handle on such items, see **Tracking Small Details**, page 28.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

RUNNING TESTS

LUCKILY, coming up with the outcomes of choices and actions the PCs make throughout the game isn't all up to you. The game mechanics determine whether characters succeed or fail at what they attempt through the use of tests (see **The Test**, page 18); all you need to do is decide what each of those successes and failures entail. Quick and simple, tests give you an easy way to represent characters' attempts at various tasks and to determine their outcomes.

The key to using tests effectively in your story is timing. Overwhelming your PCs with too many tests bogs down the game and makes individual outcomes less meaningful, while never requiring tests makes the PCs feel powerless and detached from the game. The key is to have characters make tests whenever the success or failure of an action they are attempting will contribute something meaningful or interesting to the story.

What test to choose for a given task requires some creative interpretation. Think about what the character is trying to accomplish and which of the six characteristics (see **Step 1: Determine Characteristics**, page 21) would help the most with that task. If you are having trouble deciding, consider these two questions: Is the task physical, mental, or social? Is the action aggressive or defensive? If you are stuck between two different options, ask the players. They are sure to have a preference!

WHEN TO ADD POSITIVE DICE

Positive dice are added to a test's dice pool to represent any circumstances that could be helpful to the character making the test (see **Step 2: Assemble the Dice Pool**, page 18). When a PC performs a test, you will rarely have to suggest reasons to add positive dice—players will look for every edge they can get to succeed! Often, you will have to make a judgment call as to whether or not a proposed factor should contribute a die or not.

Use positive dice to reward planning ahead and creative thinking. If a player devises a really clever plan or does a great job acting in character, reward that player with an extra positive die to encourage good roleplaying in the future.

One common source of positive dice is assistance. Are the PCs having trouble finishing off an angry troll? Instead of them all attacking the troll separately, recommend they team up for a single attack, each assisting PC adding an additional positive die. Are draugr not threatening your armored PCs anymore? Roll a single attack for a group of draugr, adding an additional positive die for each draugr in the horde. Feel free to impose common-sense limits on assistance, however. Only characters who could realistically assist should add positive dice to a test.

WHEN TO ADD NEGATIVE DICE

Negative dice are added to a test's dice pool to represent any circumstances making the task more difficult or dangerous for the character to perform (see **Step 2: Assemble the Dice Pool**, page 18). Players are less likely to jump at the chance to offer reasons for adding negative dice to their pools; you will often have to add all the negative dice to a pool yourself. The primary reasons for adding negative dice to a pool are the character's related negative features and traumas, as well as the innate difficulty of the task.

When players perform a test, they are unlikely to suggest adding negative dice to their pool due to their features or traumas. As such, it's good practice to ask them what their negative features and traumas in the test's category are as the player is assembling the pool. This way, you can ensure you aren't forgetting anything, and you can prompt the players to handle tracking their own characters' particular traumas and features on their own.

Once you have added all the negative dice appropriate to the character's features and traumas, you should add any dice indicated by the difficulty of the task. Difficulty can be affected by environmental conditions or hazards, or it may simply reflect a task's inherent challenge. In general, this should be somewhere between one and three dice, depending on the nature of the task. See **Table 8: Difficulties** for suggestions on setting task difficulties.

DIFFICULTY WITHOUT STRESS

On occasion, a PC may attempt a task that is incredibly difficult, but wouldn't cause a dangerous amount of stress to perform. In these cases, instead of adding a large number of negative dice to the pool, you can require the PC to generate a certain number of successes on their roll to succeed (see **Step 3: Roll and Resolve**, page 19).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PACING NEGATIVE DICE

Since negative dice commonly result in a character's suffering stress, they are a great way to manage tension over the course of a game. Keep an eye on your PCs' stress tracks and use them to guide you in adding negative dice to their pools. If you want to increase the tension, start adding more negative dice to tests until the PCs have a decent amount of stress. If, on the other hand, you want to give your PCs a break, dial back on the number of negative dice so they don't max out their stress tracks.

TABLE 8: DIFFICULTIES

ADDED NEGATIVE DICE	DIFFICULTY	EXAMPLES
0	SIMPLE: NO CHANCE OF CAUSING STRESS OR INJURY TO THE CHARACTER	RUNNING THROUGH AN OPEN FIELD, PLAYING A FRIENDLY GAME OF CARDS, BARGAINING WITH A MERCHANT
1	EASY: DAY-TO-DAY STRESSFUL TASKS	LIFTING A HEAVY OBSTACLE, PICKING A LOCKED DOOR, LYING TO SOMEONE YOU KNOW
2	HARD: REQUIRES THE CHARACTER TO PUSH BEYOND NORMAL CAPABILITIES	HOLDING A DOOR CLOSED AGAINST A TROLL, HACKING INTO A COMPUTER, COERCING A PRISONER
3	DAUNTING: VERY STRESSFUL, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF CAUSING ONGOING INJURY OR STRAIN	JUMPING OFF THE ROOF OF A BUILDING, DEFUSING A LIVE BOMB, NEGOTIATING WITH HOSTILE SURVIVORS HOLDING YOUR FRIENDS HOSTAGE
4+	INCREDIBLY DANGEROUS: ALMOST CERTAIN TO CAUSE SOME FORM OF ONGOING DAMAGE TO THE CHARACTER	CLIMBING THROUGH A BURNING BUILDING, WITNESSING YOUR ONLY FRIEND GET TORN LIMB FROM LIMB, LEADING A SMALL FORCE AGAINST CTHULHU ITSELF

Keep in mind that as a stress track fills up, the character increases resistance to further stress (see **Resistance**, page 31). This means that once a character has 6+ stress in a category, it takes being dealt 3 stress to add even one more point to the character's stress track. If you want a character with a resistance this high to feel pressured by a scenario's tests, you need to add at least three negative dice to the pool.

DETERMINING RESULTS

The full rules for resolving the mechanical results of a test are presented on page 19, but interpreting the outcome can go far beyond simply tallying up successes and stress. The results of a dice pool roll are a great storytelling opportunity, giving you lots of resources to help you craft a creative outcome. Each die is added to the pool for a reason; similarly, the result of each die can have a purpose in the story as the pool is resolved.

For example, say a player adds a positive die to the pool for a Dexterity test, thanks to her Gymnastic Training

feature, but then adds a negative die due to a "Twisted Ankle" trauma she is suffering from. Then, when the task is resolved, you remove a matching negative and positive die. Remembering that dice were added for both of those reasons, you can narrate the action, explaining as the dice are removed that the character manages to use her gymnastic training to stay off her bad ankle, avoiding the stress it would have caused.

While it's realistically very difficult to track or remember which die was added for what reason, you can still use the results to tell an interesting story based on the factors that fed into the pool in the first place. It doesn't matter that the dice canceled in the above example probably weren't the specific ones added for those particular reasons, just that *some* dice were added to the pool for those reasons. By narrating the action in this way, you make the different factors that added dice feel more meaningful, and you paint a more intricate and narrative picture of the action.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The horrible things that survivors of the apocalypse have to do and witness to survive often push at their sanity. Depending on the type of game you want to run, the mental stability of your PCs could be an integral part of the game experience, particularly in the **That Is Not Dead...** scenario. When having PCs make tests to withstand the horrors they see around them, use the Willpower characteristic. These tests should often have quite a few negative dice added to represent the mental strain of dealing with these issues, and even if a PC remains composed, the experience can still cause some serious mental damage.

Since PCs suffer longer-term stress or trauma due to the experience either way, their success or failure on the test determines only their immediate reaction to the events they've witnessed. With a success, PCs manage to withhold their reactions and keep calm for the moment despite the mental strain. With a failure, however, a PC might immediately run screaming, collapse into a quivering ball, or vomit in fear. In instances of mortal terror such as this, it is okay to narrate some involuntary actions the PC is taking, as temporary loss of control can be one of the results.

TESTING INSANITY

MANAGING NPCs

WHEN you act as the Game Master, one of the greatest tools at your disposal is the cast of Non-Player Characters (NPCs) you can create and control. NPCs are any characters in the story that aren't controlled by one of the players. They could be other friendly survivors, hostile monsters, or even the gods themselves. You decide their actions, act out everything they say and do, and track their characteristics and other stats.

NPC PROFILES

NPCs follow all the same rules as Player Characters, for the most part. They have characteristics, features, and equipment, and they can suffer stress. However, the majority of NPCs in **WRATH OF THE GODS** don't need to be tracked at the same level of detail as a PC. Most of them only matter for an encounter or two and then are never seen again. Because of this, most NPCs don't need a full character sheet like a PC; instead, they are represented via a profile indicating all of their relevant characteristics, features, equipment, and so on. Each scenario provides profiles for NPCs relevant to that setting. When you use these NPCs, you can reference their profiles in the book for their relevant stats and record any stress they suffer on a piece of scratch paper.

NPC SPECIAL ABILITIES

The NPC profiles provided in the scenarios in this book differ in one major way from Player Character profiles: many list special abilities that change the way the game rules work for the corresponding NPCs. These special abilities are unavailable to PCs and set those NPCs apart, often demonstrating their unique, supernatural nature. Some NPCs are able to ignore certain types of stress, while others cause characters they hit in combat to automatically suffer custom traumas that afflict the characters in unique ways.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

When reading through **Wrath of the Gods**, it may seem strange that we spend so much time talking about Characters and NPCs, but we never mention monsters. In a game that includes creatures such as frost giants, Star Spawn, murderous baboons, and infernal demons, it may seem strange that there is no mention of monsters and how to handle them. The reason for this is very simple. Monsters are NPCs. Every being the players encounter in a **Wrath of the Gods** scenario is a character in the story, played by the GM. So the Deep Ones dragging coastal villagers into the depths are NPCs. That troll that is devouring your neighbors is a particularly bloodthirsty NPC. Even the feathered snake, Quetzalcoatl himself, is an NPC, albeit an extremely powerful one.

As far as the rules are concerned, "NPC" encompasses any person, character, animal, beast, monster, or god that the PCs might encounter during the events of a campaign.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

Over the course of most games of **WRATH OF THE GODS**, you will likely create or develop several NPCs that are more important than the other supporting characters the PCs interact with. For these individuals, you may decide that you want to track their stats with more detail than that for an average NPC. You can treat these key characters like PCs, making full character sheets for each (instead of using a single profile for multiple NPCs of the same type) and tracking everything about them individually. This can really help them stand apart over the course of the game, reinforcing their importance to the story.

Each special ability outlines exactly what the NPC can do differently and how it affects the rules. If a special ability contradicts something stated in the rules for the game, the ability's text takes precedent for that character.

NPCS AND TRAUMAS

To simplify the amount of tracking you have to do during the game, it is recommended that you don't keep track of traumas for less important NPCs. There is no reason to know whether or not a Cthulhu cultist a PC just took down has a broken leg or not. Once the cultist is out of the way, it is no longer important to the story. When these minor NPCs fill up one of their stress tracks, don't allow them to "cling to life" (see **Death**, page 31). Instead, just have them die.

BUT WHAT ABOUT MONSTERS?

THE CAMPAIGN

WHEN your group sits down to play **WRATH OF THE GODS**, it's good to have a plan as to how long you want to have the story continue. Is this going to be a quick diversion or an ongoing commitment? You can tell a short story in a single session of play, or you can unfold a whole narrative across a campaign of many sessions in which your characters grow and evolve. Whichever you decide, it is good to go in with a rough idea of how long you want your campaign to last, so that you (and your players) can plan accordingly.

CAMPAIGN LENGTH

The flexibility of **WRATH OF THE GODS** allows you to play any type of campaign you want. It is perfect for impromptu, single-session games on a rainy day or at a convention, but it also supports groups that want to stick with their characters over the course of a long, epic narrative.

In general, the lengths of campaigns you can run with **WRATH OF THE GODS** are broken into three categories:

- **Single-Session:** Also known as "one-shots," these are stories that last for a single session. They usually deal only with surviving the initial disaster and immediate aftermath. Single-session games can often end with many of the PCs dying in dramatic fashion.
- **Multi-Session:** Usually taking between two and four sessions, multi-session campaigns let you tell a complete story arc with a definitive end. One great way to run multi-session campaigns is to run one or two of the sessions using one of the **Apocalypse** sections of **Chapter III: Scenarios** and then run the other one or two sessions with a **Post-Apocalypse** section. You can have a substantial amount of game-world time pass between the two sections of the campaign, allowing you and your group to explore how your characters change over that time as they struggle to endure in the post-apocalyptic world.
- **Ongoing Survival:** Ongoing survival campaigns last five or more sessions, and they often don't have a predetermined endpoint. In these campaigns, your PCs are challenged with surviving long-term in the end times, starting with the initial signs of the coming cataclysm and going from there. These campaigns usually transition naturally from the **Apocalypse** sections into the **Post-Apocalypse** sections of **Chapter III: Scenarios**, with the PCs facing ongoing challenges to endure the end times.

Whatever the length of your campaign is, make sure to let your players know ahead of time. Players who think they are playing in a one-shot will make very different decisions than players who want to keep their characters alive for an ongoing campaign.

ADVANCING CHARACTERS

Over the course of a campaign, the PCs grow and change. They gain new skills and abilities, but they also suffer setbacks and losses. To reflect this evolution of their characters, each session of an ongoing campaign should end with a discussion of how the group thinks each character has changed over the course of that day's play.

For each Player Character, the group discusses and decides on two features that best represent the PC's performance that session, one positive and one negative. These can link back to specific anecdotes from the session, but they should be expressed as general features, like the ones chosen during character creation (see **Step 2: Choose Features**, page 22). For example, the group might suggest that the character showed good leadership that session and decide on the Great Leader positive feature, or it might note that the character collapsed during a tense situation and decide on the Buckles Under Pressure negative feature. These don't need to be features the PC already has, but they can be. If the group can't decide between two different options, a vote can be held either secretly (using dice, as in **Step 1: Determine Characteristics**, on page 21) or publicly with a show of hands. You, as the GM, decide any ties.

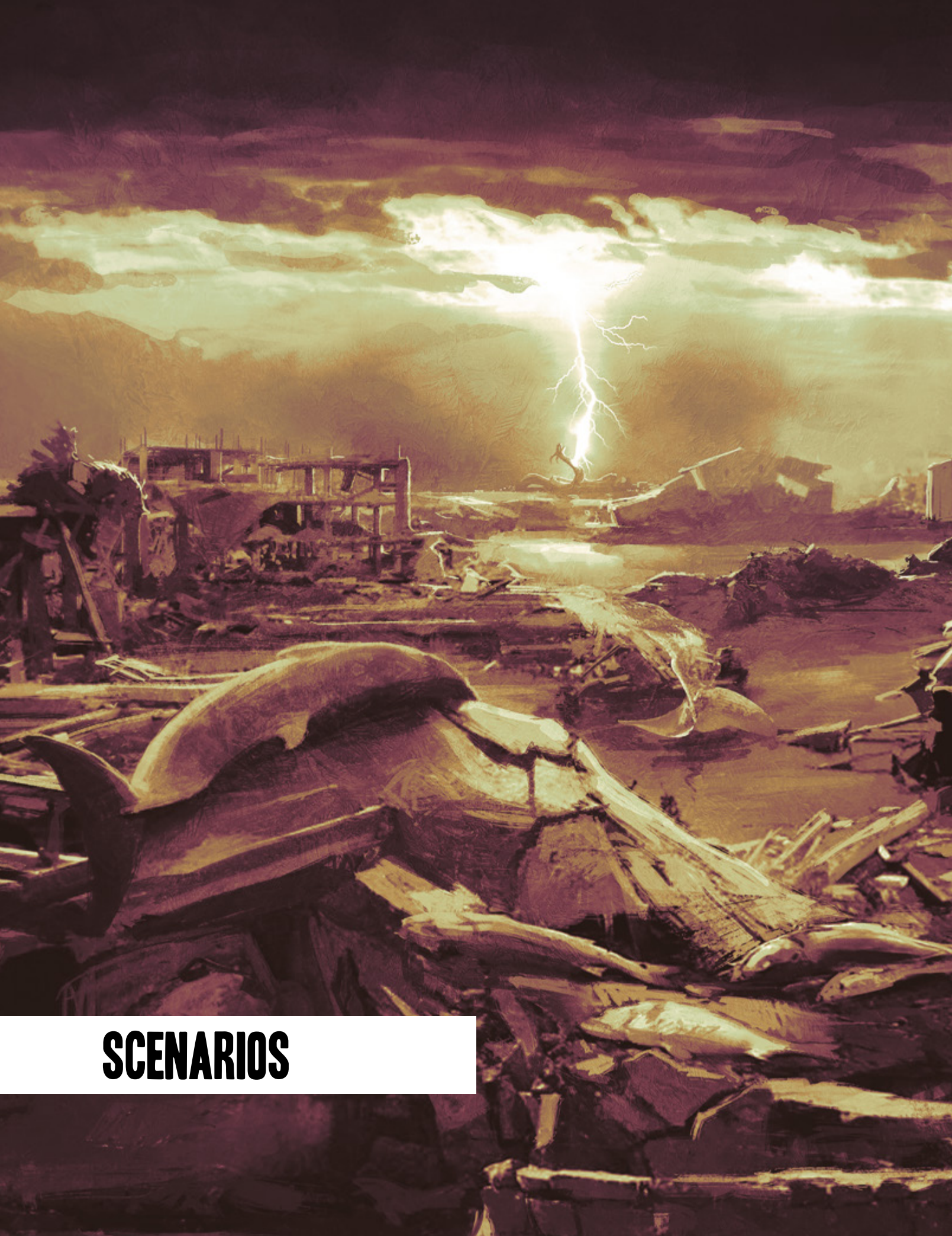
Once the group has decided on one or two features that best represent that PC's performance, the player in question changes the PC's character sheet accordingly:

- **If the PC doesn't have the feature:** The player adds the feature to the PC's character sheet, marking it negative or positive, as appropriate.
- **If the PC already has the feature:** The player chooses one of the characteristics in the corresponding category, adding 1 to the characteristic if the feature is positive, or subtracting 1 if the feature is negative. This change cannot lower a characteristic below 1 or increase a characteristic above 5. If adding or subtracting would do so, then the characteristic remains the same.

CHARACTER DEATH

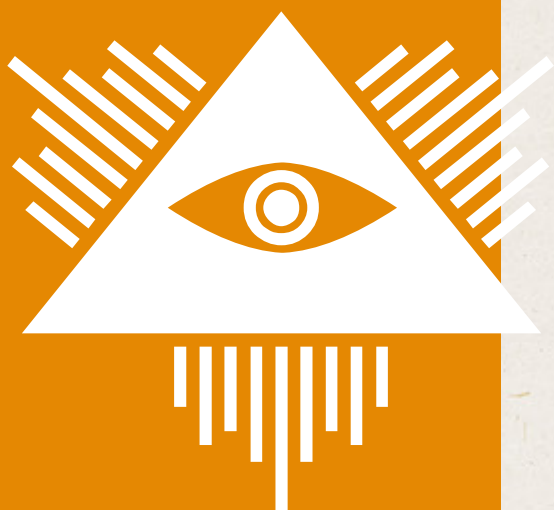
With PCs representing fictional versions of the players, it can be a tricky thing when a PC dies. Is that player just out of the game? There are a couple ways the GM can deal with this: In multi-session campaigns, it is recommended that the player create a new character based on a fictional persona (see page 21). In shorter campaigns, creating a whole new character will probably take too long. In these cases, keep the player engaged by having them help you out with GMing—rolling dice for the enemies and even playing the part of key NPCs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



SCENARIOS





CHAPTER III

"Magnificent Quetzalcoatl, Lord of the East, Ehecatl, the Master of Wind, Tlahuizcalpantecuhli, God of the Star of Dawn, usher in a new era, a new aeon, a time of ending."

—Notes in the journal of archaeologist and cultural anthropologist Björn Helgeson

SCENARIOS

OVER the years, the theme of the apocalypse at the hands of a higher power has been played out in film, television, literature, and graphic novels. Simultaneously, the post-apocalypse has become one of the most well-known subgenres of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Of course, this phenomenon is by no means unique to the modern day. The end of the world is a topic much discussed in historical sources. Religious texts the world over, throughout history, have speculated about our extinction event—about the end of life as we know it.

Five apocalyptic scenarios are detailed in the pages that follow. Each scenario covers the events of the apocalypse and the days, weeks, months, and years to come,

each brought about by the forces behind one of the world's mythologies, religions, or philosophies. Timelines that provide details of the broader events of each scenario, as well as lists of locations and NPCs, give the GM the tools to lay the groundwork for the players.

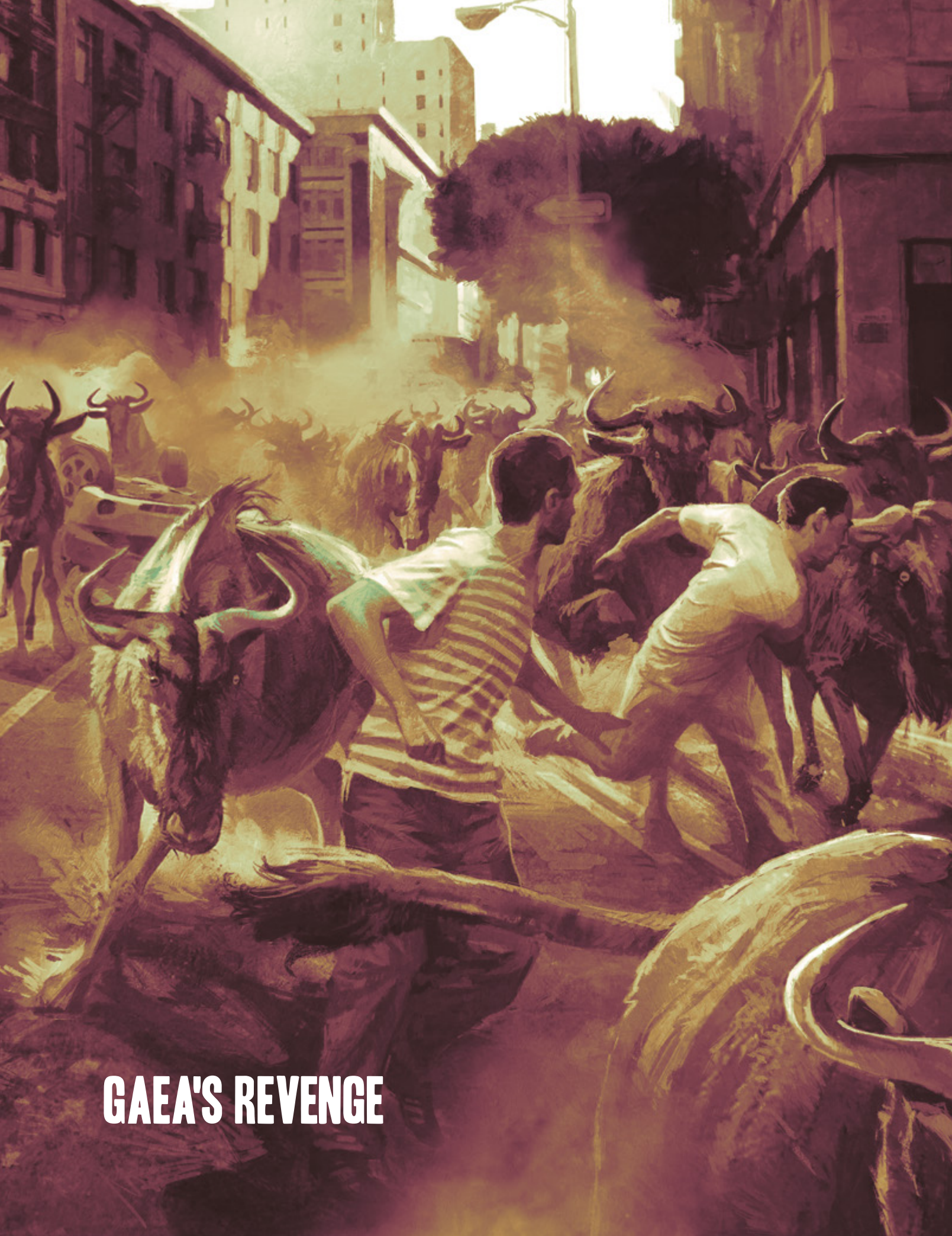
Each apocalypse scenario is followed by a scenario dedicated to the state of the world in the post-apocalypse, after the human race has suffered at the hands of the gods, narrowly escaping its final fate. Post-apocalypse locations and NPCs offer a framework upon which GMs can build stories that take place in the aftermath of the end of the world.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Horror movies use a number of tried-and-true approaches to build tension and suspense: fake scares, ominous noises, and—of course—the musical score. Although some of these translate well to roleplaying games, others do not. For instance, although many GMs play appropriate background music during their games, it's unlikely that you can time a sudden crescendo with a surprising event in-game (except as a happy coincidence). Another problem is that many of the classic tricks rely on the characters' ignorance of the threat facing them. So, while a character in a movie who sees a slimy-skinned, bulging-eyed mutant from that creepy coastal hamlet might mistake it for a sick person, a player is likely to catch on that it's a pawn of the Deep Ones as soon as the GM mentions a seaweed smell; the pale, clammy skin; or other such features. Even if darkness or some other cause obscures details, players are likely to figure it out from the slightest clue, especially if they know what sort of scenario they are playing in.

Of course, it's often necessary in RPGs to separate player knowledge from character knowledge. And doing this can result in the "right" behavior from PCs, even if the players know better. However, this doesn't always work, especially for **WRATH OF THE GODS**. After all, the players are portraying fictionalized versions of themselves and, depending on the scenario you've chosen, it's more than likely that players will be familiar with the details of a given mythology. As such, they probably should reach some conclusions as to what they're facing much faster than a character in a movie would. Of course, this shouldn't make things any less terrifying.

IT WORKED IN THE MOVIE!



GAEA'S REVENGE

GAEA'S REVENGE

APOCALYPSE



They say there was no warning, but that's not entirely true. We had plenty of severe weather events and other occurrences in the years leading up to it; we just chose to ignore them and go on with business as usual. Yeah, I recycled; I bought organic sometimes. But I didn't worry about where my paper came from, or what sorts of pollutants the factory that made my sneakers put out. It didn't seem like my problem. What was I supposed to do, as one person?

Sure, we all knew on some level that there would be consequences, but we figured it would fall on the next generation, or the one after that. We thought we could do anything we wanted, that the status quo was fine, that nature couldn't fight back—that we were in charge. Turns out we were very, very wrong.

IN **Gaea's Revenge**, the Player Characters—along with everyone else—are caught in the middle of cataclysmic events, as the natural world finally fights back against humanity's countless years of abuse. After years of warnings in the form of freak storms, climate changes, and epidemics, all of nature's many seemingly disparate systems unite to repel the one species that destroys its environment instead of existing within it: humankind. Of course, that sounds absurd—there's no intelligent force behind nature. There has to be a logical explanation for the earthquakes, tornadoes, and rampant animal attacks. Right?

What makes this apocalypse so horrifying is (at least in part) that the danger is not from any single source. The entire natural world seems to be doing its best to destroy human civilization—and humans. Animals are turning bizarrely, intensely violent—everything from household pets to zoo animals to pigeons on the street. This is bad enough, but it's only the start. Plants grow at impossible rates, smothering people in their homes and demolishing buildings, and storms of unprecedented scope devastate cities around the globe. Even the very ground itself is an enemy, as tectonic activity causes off-the-scale earthquakes and brings new volcanoes bursting into existence.

There's nothing for the PCs to do except try to stay alive. You can't fight all of nature, and killing Fido isn't going to do much good when every nearby dog, cat, gerbil, bee—you get the idea—wants you dead.

People want a logical explanation, but there just isn't one to be had. Of course, "experts" of all kinds are quick to throw out their own ideas, but it doesn't take long for communication to break down. With legitimate experts and authorities unable to communicate, there's not much hope for a coordinated response—as if there were any way to fight back against all of nature.

Gives a whole new meaning to the notion of surviving a hostile environment, doesn't it?

THE EXPERIENCE

In this scenario, the Player Characters must try to survive the unfettered wrath of the natural world. Confusion is rampant, as events defy all expectations and explanation. With the authorities just as perplexed and unprepared as everyone else, the PCs can rely only on themselves.

There is no stopping what's happening—the best the PCs can hope for is simple survival. This is no simple task, though, with everything from house pets to insects to the very weather set on humanity's destruction.

Animals of all kinds, from house pets to vermin, are overcome with hostility, ferociously attacking humans, even their own former masters. Meanwhile, plants turn on us, growing with impossible rapidity to envelop homes, shatter roads, and bring buildings tumbling down. But even that is nothing next to the devastation from unprecedented storms and tectonic activity, from which no one is safe.

Although there is no way for the PCs to know what is really happening, it should certainly appear that nature is doing everything it can to destroy human civilization. Of course, this sounds ridiculous to most people, who are not willing to assign an intent and consciousness to nature. Then again, most people are too busy trying to stay alive to ponder the reasons behind the chaos.

WHAT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS SEE

How the PCs experience the events of this apocalypse depends on where they live, or at least where they are at the onset. Whether through a intelligence or as the reaction of some global immune system, the natural world seeks to eradicate modern human civilization. Consequently, centers of population and sites of technological advancement are targeted first. Cities suffer the worst. While smaller towns and rural areas suffer less from concentrated storms and disasters, they must still contend with out-of-control foliage and murderous animals. While PCs in rural areas might be spared the worst of the weather events, they might face even greater challenges from animals and plants, both of which are likely to be more prevalent.

The first sign of something amiss is strange and horrifying behavior in the local animals. It begins with a few cases of domestic and wild animals attacking people without provocation. Soon, all animals become hostile to humans, viciously attacking at any opportunity. Even insects and normally docile animals are affected. Swarms of bees sting victims beyond recognition, while hordes of ants strip flesh from bones. Everything—from squirrels to cows, housecats to pigeons—attacks without warning or reason. Even man's best friend is not immune. For many people, the psychological horror of their beloved pets betraying them violently is too much to cope with.

While distracted by the vicious animal attacks, humanity fails to notice inexplicable changes taking place in the flora of the world. But it soon becomes impossible to avoid recognizing that plants of all kinds, from grass to flowers to trees, are growing impossibly fast, and in ways that cause the most damage possible to property—and people.

As animals of all kinds continue their rampage and plants grow out of control, natural disasters of unprecedented scope spring up around the world. Massive tsunamis level coastal communities and island nations, as earthquakes bring entire cities toppling down. Volcanoes long thought dormant erupt, and fissures open in the very Earth to swallow up civilization.

Cities and smaller towns are hit hardest, including key facilities such as police stations and hospitals. Trees, vines, packs of animals, and even tectonic and storm activity seem to target these locations, leaving them unable to assist the populace. Research institutions, factories, and other symbols of progress and technology come under attack. Everything from military bases to libraries face coordinated attacks from numerous types of animals, rapidly growing plant life, and weather and geological events. It appears as though some intelligent force is directing these attacks, as impossible as it seems. Of course, as communications fail, the PCs might not realize the targeted nature of the attacks at first. As time goes on, and they see the extent of the damage and talk with other survivors, it should become clear that some sentience is behind the destruction.

WORLD'S SCARIEST ANIMAL ATTACKS

The first signs of Mother Nature's fury come from animals, and so the PCs' first clue that something is wrong should probably come from animals as well. Their first hint of the impending challenges might originate from their own pets or from animals in the neighborhood. A neighbor's dog might turn aggressive, or some small wild animal, such as a squirrel or bird. Even if the PCs are in an apartment many floors from the ground, there are animals around, unseen, from rats to insects. These normally invisible pests emerge and attack, while birds attempt to enter however possible.

Not all animals experience these drastic changes in behavior simultaneously. Although it eventually affects all of them, the changes take place over time, seemingly at random. The PCs might encounter a single killer animal, with no other signs something is amiss for several hours, or they might run into a few such animals individually and quickly realize that these attacks are no mere coincidence. The PCs might find fighting back difficult, distasteful, or both. Many might prefer to escape the situation rather than kill or incapacitate the animal.

Of course, one vicious animal, while frightening and dangerous for the unprepared, is unlikely to overwhelm a group of PCs. But that one animal is just one of many, and more are certain to show up very soon. Even more horrifying, they seem to coordinate their activities. Birds peck at windows to crack glass, while raccoons manipulate knobs to open doors. Animals surround homes and other buildings, ensuring no one escapes. If the PCs happen to be outside when a coordinated animal attack begins, or if they leave the relative safety of a structure, they are in for a real challenge. Even a vehicle provides little protection, as animals are willing to sacrifice themselves to bring a vehicle to a crashing halt.

FLUFFY, NO!

ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION

People get very attached to their pets, and some players might not be comfortable with the decision to kill or be killed by their beloved furry companions. As with family and loved ones, GMs should be aware of these attachments, and accommodate players accordingly. The important thing, after all, is not to have a "realistic" end-of-the-world experience, but for everyone to have fun. If this means glossing over certain details, or even having some animals remain miraculously immune to the effects of nature's murderous call, that's perfectly fine. The type of animals the PCs encounter depends on where they are, of course. However, a zoo or even an exotic pet store in the general area could lead to unexpected encounters, from tarantulas and foul-mouthed parrots to elephants trampling cars. Cows, horses, and other farm animals are plentiful in rural areas, but they soon also make their way into cities, drawn to centers of civilization.

REVERSE HERBICIDE

Within hours of the local animal life becoming utterly hostile to humans, the plants follow suit. Everything from grass to trees grows impossibly fast, with drastic consequences. Ivy and shrubs cover buildings, blocking entrances, while roots break through roadways, preventing travel. The expanding roots crack foundations and new growths erupt through floorboards, destroying any shelter homes provide and bringing some crashing down. In offices, potted plants smother workers and prevent escape. The unchecked growth brings telephone poles tumbling down, severs underground power and data cables, and ruptures water and gas lines.

In addition to cutting off communications and resources, and leaving homes and other buildings completely uninhabitable, the massive plants and ceaseless growth makes travel difficult or impossible. Along most roadways, enormous roots erupt through the ground, shattering the roads' surfaces in the process and splitting water mains. Bridges, overpasses, and tunnels come crashing down as trees or vines grow through them; even grasses force themselves through cracks to break up bridge bases and tunnel walls. Train tracks fare no better, and airport runways are soon impassable. While helicopters remain usable a bit longer, vicious flocks of suicidal birds make them less than safe.

Even getting around on foot is made difficult and hazardous, as the entire landscape around the PCs quickly transforms, overtaken by the wilderness. Trees completely block some streets, and everywhere undergrowth and overgrowth begins to obscure and shift the human-built terrain. Then, as geologic upheaval begins, things change even more drastically.

Growing at a preposterous rate, many plants reach sizes never before seen. Vines entangle skyscrapers, while trees grow large enough to absorb and crush entire neighborhood blocks.

Although the plants grow impossibly fast, it still takes a few days for the worst damage to occur. The rate of growth is inconsistent, as well. While some plants grow quickly enough to smother sleeping people or block exits within mere minutes, others take many hours or days to pose a true danger. The GM should feel free to vary this to keep the players on their toes and the game interesting. A vine might even shoot out and entangle a character's leg, although such "moving" plants should be rare.

NOT-SO-NATURAL DISASTERS

Within the first day, storms, earthquakes, and other "natural" disasters begin to wrack countries around the world. How quickly the PCs are hit depends on how urban their location is, as these events primarily target cities and other sites of civilization. Of course, the PCs can still be affected by earthquakes, hurricanes, and other events if they are close to a major city, or even a military base or research lab.

The form these disasters take depends on the PCs' location. At least at first, disasters should be appropriate to the area—hurricanes on the East Coast, earthquakes on the West Coast, tornadoes inland, etc. However, these are no ordinary natural disasters. Particularly as events progress (and sooner, if the PCs are fortunate enough to live in a place where natural disasters don't normally occur, or if the GM just prefers it), disasters of a decidedly inexplicable and unfitting type occur. Scale-shattering earthquakes might occur anywhere, while devastating twisters spring up without warning in the middle of Manhattan, and massive tidal waves erupt from the Gulf of Mexico.

These events, particularly those expected for the region, occur with unprecedented and devastating ferocity. Earthquakes open great fissures, dividing cities into multiple tiers and swallowing buses whole. Tornadoes hurl cars into buildings and propel small shards of glass and even sand at lethal speeds. Tidal waves and tsunamis reach farther inland than ever thought possible, washing away entire towns and drowning communities.

Long-dormant volcanoes around the world erupt. Even more horrifying, as the very tectonic plates work to destroy civilization with earthquakes on an unprecedented scale, new volcanoes come into existence. As circumstances grow increasingly dire, lava-spewing mounds erupt from the Earth in the most unexpected of places, and fractures in the crust expose rivers of magma running far too close to the surface.

Regardless of the season during which the game begins, severe weather events of all kinds, both those appropriate to the season and environment, and others that are completely illogical, wrack the area (and everywhere else, for that matter). Tornadoes, thunderstorms—even blizzards—all strike without warning, and the weather changes from moment to moment.

DO NOT ADJUST YOUR SET

Turning on the TV or going online soon confirms that these incidents are not restricted to the PCs' location, but seem to be happening worldwide. However, as events progress, communication of all kinds becomes increasingly unreliable. Unchecked plant growth, cataclysmic storms, and tectonic activity bring down power lines, cut underground cables, and collapse cell phone towers. These are no mere coincidences, but such communication resources and installations are among the primary initial targets of nature's wrath. Eventually, fluctuations in the Earth's magnetic field interfere even with satellite communication, leaving it highly unreliable and sometimes impossible.

These communication problems make it difficult for the PCs to get news from outside their immediate area, or even to get in touch with others in town. These problems affect civil authorities just as greatly, cutting off towns and cities from the outside world and making any coordinated response by the federal government impossible.



WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

Unsurprisingly, as the situation grows increasingly dire, many people begin to panic, taking drastic and rash actions out of fear. Rumors quickly spread in the wake of the initial animal attacks, with people blaming everything from rabies, to GMO crops, to local industries, to chemicals in pet food. Panic mounts as the violence spreads to encompass all animals.

The chaos and rampant violence quickly overwhelm animal control services, which are not even remotely equipped to deal with a problem of this magnitude. Swiftly, police forces also find themselves stretched far too thin to deal with the ceaseless animal attacks. Likewise, hospitals fill beyond capacity with people suffering everything from anaphylactic shock from insect stings to gruesome injuries from cats, birds, and any larger animals—whether predators or not—found in the PCs' region.

As plants begin to grow out of control at impossible speed, the panic increases, with people desperately trying to find an explanation and a way to stop it. In neighborhoods, residents can be seen attacking the relentless growth with axes, chainsaws, weed killer, and whatever else is available. Of course, it's a losing battle, with new plants springing up and each severed branch or stalk quickly replaced by two more. As the plants do their work, communications and power begin to go down, further adding to the panic. Soon, rioting and looting begins across the area. The police force, already overwhelmed by the terrible events unfolding, is either unable to respond to the civil unrest, or does so with violent force, further escalating the chaos.

While it took many centuries for humanity to build modern civilization, it takes scant days and weeks for nature to undo that work and bring it crashing down—perhaps demonstrating how fragile and transient civilization was in the first place.

WHAT CAN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS DO?

The governments and militaries of the world are all but powerless against the unfettered wrath of nature. It stands to reason, then, that the PCs can do nothing to stop what is happening, but can at best hope to survive it. If they are both very lucky and very resourceful, they might just live to see what comes next, assuming there is any kind of future in store.

If the PCs live in a large city, circumstances will be more difficult for them than if they are in a small town, as on top of killer animals and plants, they must contend with the worst storms, quakes, and other disasters. And while things might be slightly less apocalyptic if the PCs live in or escape to a more remote area, they must still avoid being eaten by ferocious animals or cut off and stranded by plant growth.

As well as seeing to their own survival, the PCs might focus on saving their friends and loved ones, or even on helping strangers, either as opportunities arise or with a concerted effort. If the PCs still believe in the effectiveness of civilization and society, they might see an advantage to teaming up with other survivors.

THE TRUTH

No one can ever fully comprehend or explain these events, although many postulate on it, and a few of these theories come close. The truth is that Mother Nature—Gaea, the spirit of the Earth and the natural world—has finally had enough of humanity's insults and attacks. This is why the disasters, plant activity, and animal attacks seem coordinated and intentional—they are. Although her existence is beyond comprehension, nature possesses a sentience, an awareness, and an intelligence of sorts. Whether she understands what nuclear power plants, zoos, and golf courses represent, or their purpose or function, she knows they are affronts that are injurious to the natural world.

THE ALL-NATURAL SOLUTION

Mother Nature created humanity as the ultimate expression of animal potential in any ecosystem—intelligent, adaptable, resourceful. But humanity proved a little too resourceful, a little too good at surviving. Rather than adapting to the environment, humanity forces it to adapt or, in many cases, die. Humans despoil the planet, heedless of the consequences of their selfish actions. After so many extinct species, so much lost wilderness and far too many wasted resources, Gaea has finally had enough.

Humanity has become like a plague, a disease, spreading across the planet like an infection, killing off vital natural systems. Now, the natural world is finally reacting to the infection, like an immune system repelling a virus. And just like fever and aches devastate an infected body, the process is not easy or pleasant for nature, as animals die and the very Earth splits open. But ultimately, this immune response, as difficult as it is, will cure the infection.

In much the same way as humans take it upon themselves to reduce populations of predators and other problematic animals to “appropriate” levels, Mother Nature is trying to fix her mistake, but not by completely wiping out humanity. Instead, she seeks to reduce humanity to a manageable numbers, killing as many as nine in ten, leaving the survivors spread across the globe. Nature intends to destroy the abomination of modern civilization—everything that humanity has destroyed nature to create. Perhaps humanity will finally learn its lesson, taking only what it needs and respecting its place in the ecosystem.

Think of it as tough love.

BIRDS, BEASTS, AND BLOOD-SOAKED STREETS

On a large scale, nature's attacks are clearly coordinated: dams, power plants, military bases, and government facilities are targeted first and hit the hardest. But with communication so unreliable, it's difficult to see the big picture. At a small scale, the coordination might not be so obvious. Even if the PCs learn that important locations in their area have been destroyed, it is easy to write it off as a coincidence, particularly when the devastation is so widespread.

One thing the PCs can't help but notice is the aberrant behavior of animals of all kinds. Predators ignore their usual prey in preference for humans, herbivores attack just as

ferociously as the predators, and normally solitary beasts cooperate with others of their species—even with other species—in order to pursue and corner humans. Although the animals' actions are directed toward a goal, and their uncharacteristic behavior might seem to indicate an increased level of awareness and cunning, the truth is that they are no more intelligent than usual. However, they are acting with a preternatural focus and a whole new set of instincts.

When confronting the PCs with animals, the GM should consider the animals' natural level of intelligence but should not feel limited or constrained. In its arrogance, humanity often underestimates the abilities of animals. Additionally, these new instincts bestowed by Mother Nature allow many creatures to make the utmost of their innate abilities and cunning in order to find and eliminate human prey.

Nature has always been harsh, requiring survival of the fittest. Individual lives must be sacrificed for the good of the ecosystem. This is no different, but it is on a much larger scale. Animals disregard their own safety, ignoring instincts of self-preservation and flight, focusing only on attacking humans. They throw themselves in front of cars and batter themselves bloody against doors and windows, completely willing to give up their own lives if it allows other beasts to reach human victims.

THE INITIAL RESPONSE

The initial response from civil authorities and private citizens is confused and chaotic, to say the least. Long before anyone can formulate a solution to this unprecedented crisis, Gaea's attack has crippled the government at all levels. FEMA facilities, including the headquarters in Washington, D.C., are destroyed by aggressive plant growth, storms, and earthquakes, with vicious animals entering the damaged structures to ensure there are no survivors. Military bases fare little better, although military training and supplies allow the armed forces to continue the struggle longer than other branches of government.

Even as organizations from the police to the National Guard struggle to protect critical locations against the forces of nature, the devastation throws communications into turmoil, preventing any sort of coordinated defense or assault. Even the most effective actions offer a temporary reprieve at best. Military bases, police stations, and secure facilities—even armed citizens—stand a good chance against the animal life, especially in urban areas, where most such attackers are small and individually weak. Animals, even dedicated and numerous ones, can be fought and killed.

However, as soon as the rampant plant growth and natural disasters enter the fray, circumstances swing wildly against humanity. Even industrial herbicides and military weapons are next to useless against the plants, which grow faster than they can be destroyed. At best, the growth can be delayed, but even the best defenses collapse. There is nothing to be done against these natural disasters except frantically reinforce shelters and pray for the best. Even under normal conditions, humanity's greatest constructions are vulnerable to the ravages of storms, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Now, no one is safe.

TIMELINE

Although events start with isolated animal attacks, they soon snowball out of control. As nature's wrath escalates, simply surviving without the benefits of modern civilization becomes a monumental challenge.

00:00:00	The first animals begin to attack humans. Incidents are scattered, but they occur worldwide almost simultaneously.
01:22:00	Authorities believe reports of animal attacks to be isolated events, although some 911 operators voice concerns about the number of calls.
01:36:00	Animal attacks increase in frequency.
03:13:00	With all animal control units in the field, police start to respond to animal attacks throughout the area. In light of the situation, officers quickly resort to lethal force to deal with animals.
03:39:00	Plants grow noticeably, with grass rising several inches, trees growing several feet, and roots breaking through the ground quickly enough to be visible to the naked eye.
04:02:00	Hospital emergency rooms are overwhelmed with patients suffering a variety of animal wounds.
04:41:00	A number of police and animal control officers are wounded, several fatally, during attacks.
05:19:00	Police, animal control, and others find bodies in parks, streets, and homes, dead from animal-inflicted wounds.
06:00:00	Plants continue to grow, presenting a hazard as branches stick into streets and bring down power lines, vines and bushes block doorways, and roots begin to damage water mains, gas lines, buried power lines, and information cables.
07:19:00	Scattered blackouts occur throughout the area.
08:51:00	Panic mounts among citizens; many barricade themselves in their homes, while others rush to stores for supplies.
10:03:00	All animals are engaged in ultra-aggressive behavior against humans.
11:21:00	Animals, both wild and domestic, move through the streets, assaulting anyone in the open and breaking into residences and other buildings.
12:16:00	Most businesses close.
12:33:00	Citizens begin looting retailers.
13:42:00	The governor declares a state of emergency. Local National Guard deployed.
15:38:00	The governor calls a press conference, which is interrupted when a flock of birds attacks, killing many of those present—including the governor—and injuring many more.
16:00:00	As residents attempt to flee, animal attacks, plant activity, and panicked crashes bring traffic to a halt, blocking the routes out of town.
DAY 2	Plant growth begins to damage buildings, with trees erupting through floors and roots shattering foundations.
DAY 2	The President of the United States declares a national emergency.
DAY 2	Crowds descend on a local bank after a gargantuan tree root breaches the vault.
DAY 2	Around the world, the first natural disasters strike, including tsunamis, tornadoes, blizzards, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and more.
DAY 2	The first natural disaster strikes the city closest to the PCs (which could be their own city).
DAY 2	Power and phone lines are down across the area. Cell phone reception is spotty at best.
DAY 3	Storms, extreme weather, and tectonic activity devastate cities around the globe.
DAY 4	As residents continue to try to flee, nature's assault shuts down airports and railways.
DAY 5	Several varieties of plants mutate and begin releasing spores that cause strange and dangerous—even homicidal and suicidal—behavior or simply kill their hosts outright.
DAY 7	Earthquakes and plant growth leave U.S. highways and interstates completely impassable.
DAY 10	The destruction of the Centers for Disease Control headquarters releases several deadly and contagious viruses.
DAY 22	The President of the United States gives the last presidential broadcast appearance, few people see or hear it.
DAY 62	Multiple lightning strikes assail the Washington Monument until it collapses.
DAY 93	With communications all but impossible, the U.S. capital in ruins, and military forces scattered and in disarray, the United States ceases to exist as an operational entity.
DAY 186	A tree breaks through the roof of the Empire State Building.
YEAR 2	No national governments remain operational in any real sense.

CITIES



ALTHOUGH the world's cities have been among the greatest accomplishments of modern civilization, nature takes them back in mere days. Being caught in a city during the onset of the apocalypse is actually one of the worst places to be, as nature bombards the city with disasters of all kinds. If the PCs live in a city, their first priority might be to escape—but that's what everyone else is trying too.

If the PCs remain in their city, or arrive in one later, they must contend with structurally unsound buildings and the packs of vicious animals that now control it. Yet other dangers include fellow survivors, many who are willing to take any measures to benefit themselves.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ The PCs must evade a large pack of dogs prowling the streets.
- ☼ Injured survivors on one of the higher levels of a tall building shout to the PCs for assistance, but storm damage and plant growth have left the building a crumbling ruin that could collapse at any moment.
- ☼ Trees and roots block traffic into and out of the city, trapping the panicking residents as storms and earthquakes strike.
- ☼ The PCs must travel into the dangerous city in search of supplies.
- ☼ Desperate police and National Guard units resort to force in their attempts to impose order and stop the rampant looting and rioting.
- ☼ The PCs hear rumors of a secure underground shelter, with plenty of supplies, located within the city.
- ☼ Opportunistic criminals or simply desperate survivors attempt to rob the PCs of all their gear and supplies.

EARTHQUAKE



THE very ground is a weapon against humanity in nature's arsenal of vengeance. Nowhere is safe, as tectonic activity the likes of which defy all knowledge rocks the entire globe. Those areas susceptible to earthquakes suffer near-complete devastation, with entire cities leveled. Places that never experienced earthquakes fare little better, as buildings are not built to withstand the tremors.

Even worse, those buildings that might otherwise provide shelter and protection from the elements and vicious animals become some of the greatest threats to people, crushing them and trapping them in rubble.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ An earthquake brings down one of the newly giant trees—right on top of the PCs, unless they move fast.
- ☼ The PCs are on one of the higher floors of a building when a terrible earthquake strikes. The building could collapse at any moment.
- ☼ A fissure opens in the ground, separating the PCs from each other.
- ☼ The PCs must dodge falling debris, either on foot or in a vehicle.
- ☼ As animals or some other danger closes in, the PCs must decide whether to stop and help survivors trapped under rubble.
- ☼ As the ground splits and shakes, it tilts at a steep angle, bringing cars and debris tumbling toward the PCs.
- ☼ As earthquake after earthquake strikes, the PCs must carefully time their movements to escape from ruined buildings and find safety.
- ☼ Amid cataclysmic earthquakes, a section of crust breaks away, floating out to sea or on the surface of a lake, trapping the PCs on the water.

CYCLONE



HIGH-SPEED winds and other weather extremes torment the PCs constantly; a hurricane or tornado could erupt with no warning. Whether the PCs are in a city or a small town, along the coast or near a lake, on a desert highway or even in a dense forest, a twister or typhoon poses a great danger, hurling objects around and wrenching buildings and trees from the ground.

These cyclones might even seem to display nefarious cunning, following the PCs or other groups of survivors, or steering them toward other dangers.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs witness foolhardy storm chasers attempting to record a tornado. Do they try to reason with them, or leave them to die?
- The PCs are caught up in a stampede of people fleeing the tornado and must avoid being trampled underfoot.
- Winds scatter seeds and dangerous spores, or even bring in seeds from far away, resulting in even more widespread plant growth, now including exotic species.
- After barely surviving a single cyclone, the PCs realize that several more are closing in simultaneously. And they're even bigger.
- A twister or hurricane deposits dangerous animals from near or far, leaving them somehow unharmed and ready to attack.
- Almost as if it's specifically aiming for them, a tornado hurls cars, buses, and other objects right at the PCs.
- High-speed winds whip small objects through the air at deadly velocities. If the PCs don't find some sort of protection, they'll be torn to shreds.
- After surviving a cyclone (or even alongside one), the PCs must contend with softball- or basketball-sized hail, which crushes cars, smashes through roofs, and more.

TSUNAMI



OFTEN triggered by earthquakes, but at other times with no apparent cause, tidal waves and tsunamis remorselessly batter coastal cities (even, impossibly, some on shores of inland lakes), demolishing buildings and drowning millions worldwide. In many cases, residents are unable to evacuate because of nature's many other threats, as plants and earthquakes render roads impassable. Torrential rains often accompany these storms, further adding to the flooding.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A tsunami of unprecedented magnitude drags boats of all sizes inland, including a cruise liner that could crush whole city blocks.
- As the floodwaters rise, the only escape seems to be climbing one of the impossibly massive trees.
- As the PCs are stuck in traffic or within a panicking crowd, the crest of a titanic wave appears in the distance.
- A tsunami demolishes an oil rig, factory, or nuclear power plant before hitting the PCs' location, flooding the area with water contaminated with oil, industrial chemicals, or radiation.
- A massive wave floods the community, bringing with it sharks or other dangerous sea life to attack people. Navigating the flooded streets is a tortuous and potentially deadly ordeal.
- The PCs' path is blocked by a flooded area with downed—but still active—power lines electrifying the water.
- Heavy rains trigger a mudslide, trapping the PCs between the sea and the rushing mud.

VOLCANO



As Mother Nature unleashes her fury, volcanoes dormant for millennia roar once again to life, devastating nearby communities. Even more astounding, the tectonic activity brings new volcanoes into existence, which might appear almost anywhere. These often arise in the wake of massive earthquakes that have left cities completely unprepared to deal with the volcanic onslaught. Volcanoes are among the most terrifying manifestations of nature's wrath, unleashing primordial fire and clouds of ash. Nothing can stand against the liquid-hot rock these hellish geysers unleash.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ The PCs witness other survivors in the path of the lava, or cut off by it. Assisting them is sure to expose the PCs to additional danger.
- ☼ Even in areas seemingly safe (for now) from the lava, the pervasive heat could be indirectly deadly.
- ☼ Magma running close beneath the ground super-heats the surface, whether pavement or simple dirt.
- ☼ Rivers of lava cut across the area and prevent movement, possibly stranding the PC's.
- ☼ Some location, item, or even person the PCs need is directly in the path of a lava flow.
- ☼ The PCs become stranded on an area of high ground surrounded by lava flows. If they don't find a way off, their island might dissolve into the surrounding lava.
- ☼ The volcano unleashes chemicals into the groundwater, turning lakes and streams acidic and deadly. This could be even worse in conjunction with flooding.
- ☼ During a long and intense earthquake, a small volcano emerges from previously flat ground, threatening to erupt at any moment.
- ☼ A volcanic eruption unleashes great clouds of ash, blanketing the surrounding area and blocking out the sun, plunging the PCs into darkness. Unless they find a way to protect themselves, the PCs risk suffocating as hot ash fills their lungs.

ZOO



THE zoo is, of course, not a great place to be when Mother Nature incites the animal kingdom to wage war against humanity. In many towns and cities, the zoo is home to the most dangerous animals in the area. If the PCs are particularly unfortunate, they might live near a zoo, or even be visiting when the apocalypse begins. Regardless, it doesn't take long for the enraged animals to break free of their enclosures. Elephants batter themselves against gates, while nimble monkeys move from cage to cage, opening and even unlocking them to let the other animals free.

Although the PCs are unlikely to travel to the zoo of their own volition, they might find that they have no choice. Disasters, vegetal obstructions, or hostile fellow survivors might force the PCs into the zoo. As time proceeds, few animals choose to remain near their former prisons, and they leave to hunt humans throughout the city—conveniently bringing the zoo to you!

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ As events begin, the PCs realize a friend or loved one is at the zoo.
- ☼ The disasters and plant growth have changed their surroundings so much that the PCs don't even realize they have wandered into the zoo until they come face to face with its residents.
- ☼ In the streets near the zoo, a charging rhino challenges any cars that approach.
- ☼ Baboons and other primates are some of the most dangerous animals PCs might encounter, thanks to their intelligence. These cunning beasts might spring ambushes, stalk PCs until an opportunity arises, or even use primitive weapons, such as hurling rocks.
- ☼ The PCs spot a useful or valuable object in an animal enclosure, and it looks like the coast is clear.
- ☼ A number of staff and visitors were trapped at the zoo when the animals ran amok. Unless the PCs help, they don't have long to live.



ANT SWARM

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
2	1	2	1	1	1

Features: +Swarm, +Climber, +Gross, -Squishable, +/-Wrathful Animal.

Equipment: N/A.

Swarm: Whenever an ant swarm is dealt physical stress greater than 1, it suffers 1 physical stress instead.

BABOONS

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
3	3	2	2	2	1

Features: +Aggressive, +Primate Ingenuity, -Territorial, +/-Wrathful Animal.

Equipment: N/A.



COW

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
2	5	1	2	1	1

Features: +Huge, +Sturdy, +/-Stampedes, +/-Wrathful Animal.

Equipment: Cowbell.

Sturdy: Cows have +1 physical resistance, as if they were wearing armor (see page 29), due to their sturdy bodies.



FLOCK OF BIRDS

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
3	1	2	1	2	1

Features: +Flight, +Flock, +Looming, -Territorial, +/-Wrathful Animal.

Equipment: Stolen shiny trinkets.

Flock: Whenever a flock of birds is dealt physical stress greater than 1, it suffers 1 physical stress instead.



HORSE

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
4	4	1	2	2	2

Features: +Fast, -Huge, +/-Wrathful Animal.

Equipment: Hooves (+1 damage).



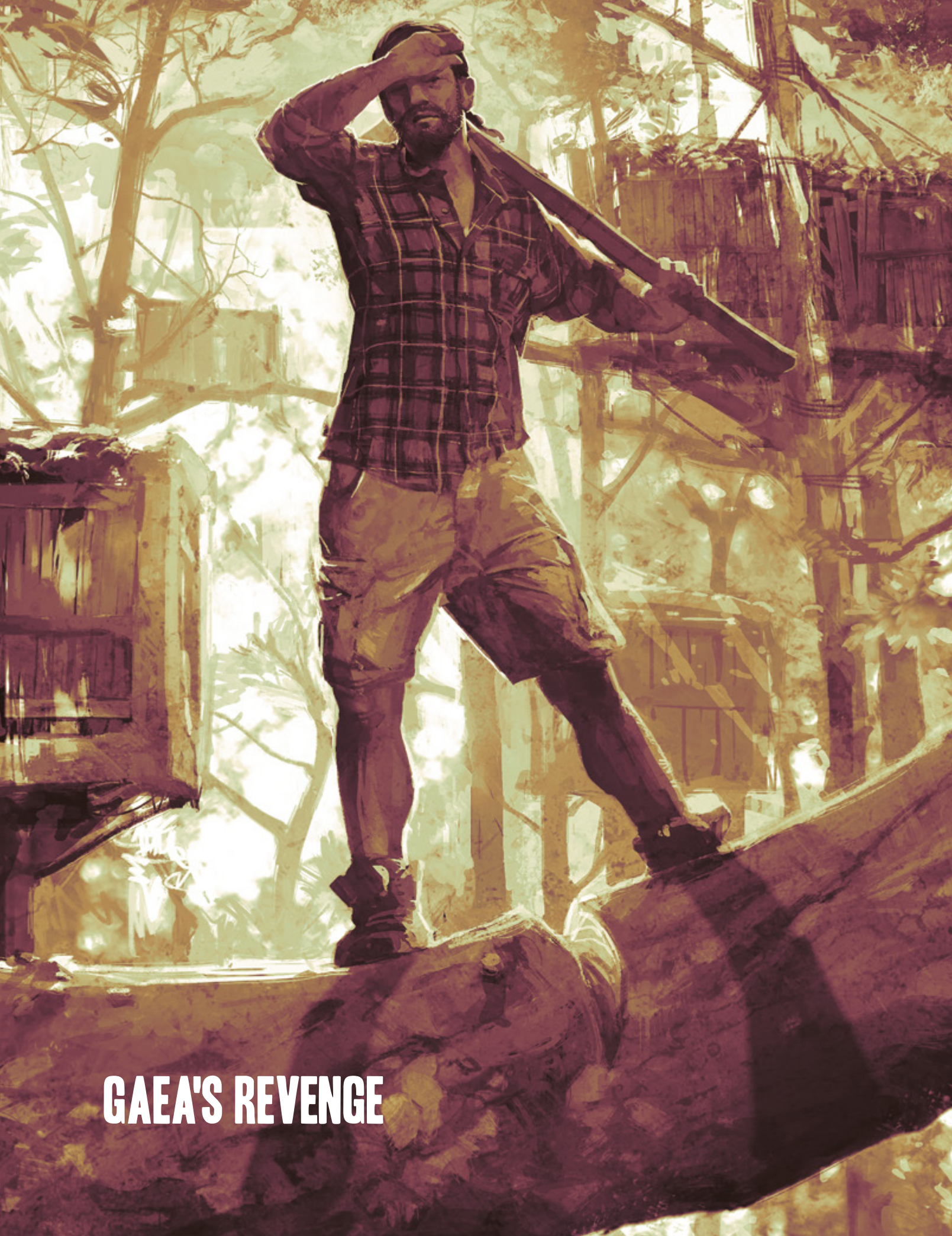
PUPPY

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
1	2	2	1	4	2

Features: ++Acute Smell, +Adorable, -Tiny, -Excitable, +/-Wrathful Animal.

Equipment: N/A.





GAEA'S REVENGE

GAEA'S REVENGE

POST-APOCALYPSE



Thousands of years of civilization reduced to ruins and dust in the blink of an eye. Nature had shown her destructive power before, but never on such a scale. Humanity has even lost whole cities before, but we always recovered. Not this time. Pompei, Dwarka, Centralia, Fukushima—hell, maybe even Atlantis—maybe those were warnings. Maybe we should have listened. It's too late now, in any case. There's so few of us left. Some people talk about starting over, about building back up to what we had, but what's the point? We know the result now. Maybe things are better this way—maybe this is how it was meant to be.

Some people still talk about what happened, trying to find a logical explanation so that we'll be prepared "next time." Yeah, right. Civilization will never be like it was. The world is different, and we're different. I think we all know, on some level, what happened. There's no other explanation for it—the animals, the plants, the storms and quakes. It was all of nature, acting as one to put humans back in their place.

This isn't so bad, really. Living off the land, living simply. Sure, I miss TV, the Internet, my smartphone—all that stuff. But not all the time. Mostly, I'm too busy just trying to get by to even think about it. Seems like a lifetime ago.

Thousands of years of civilization, and what do we have to show for it? Crumbling ruins and broken gadgets. Look on our mighty works, and despair.

NOTHING BUT FLOWERS

Mother Nature's solution was thoroughly effective. What was once modern civilization is now utterly gone. While many of the things humanity built still attest to its former existence (these sorts of non-biodegradable products were part of the problem, after all), they simply serve to highlight how truly gone that existence is. Such objects are products of civilization, but they don't constitute it. While survivors make use of battery-operated devices, or even siphon gasoline to power generators, there are no longer any governments, corporations, factories, or cities. What remains is largely hidden from sight—ruins concealed in dense foliage, entire towns buried beneath layers of igneous rock, and countless maritime freighters and passenger airplanes lying at the bottom of the ocean.

Nature has retaken the world and returned it to a primordial state. The massive trees tower above what small settlements humans now populate, and animal species once near to extinction now flourish. In the years following the end of humanity's dominion over the Earth, species thought to have disappeared have been returning, alongside entirely new ones. The rapid growth of plants during the apocalypse eventually slowed, but only after returning green life to those areas once despoiled by humankind. From the rainforests of South America to the British Isles and the heart of Beijing, trees, bushes, and flowers of every kind once again dominate. And moving amid these dense jungles, lush forests, and expansive grasslands, animals graze, forage, and hunt.

Depending on their inclinations and mere chance, the PCs might live in the post-apocalyptic landscape as traveling scavengers or as members of a small community. For some, such a life might even be pleasant. Life is simpler in many ways, and it is certainly more in tune with nature. PCs at home living off the land might even see some wisdom in Gaea's harsh actions.

NATURAL THREATS AND UNNATURAL HAZARDS

The world is a boundless wilderness, one with many dangers for survivors. Roads no longer exist—at least not passable ones—and travel means moving through dense foliage or other harsh terrain, depending on the climate. As time goes by, most animals return to their normal, natural behavior. Of course, for many predators, this still means acting with hostility toward humans. However, some humans who live in harmony with nature have even been able to redomesticate animals.

Just as natural dangers pose a severe threat, so, perhaps ironically, do the remnants of humanity's transgressions against nature. For all of Mother Nature's resources and power, some of the damage cannot be undone—in fact, her attack on civilization unleashed a number of hazards. Storms and earthquakes targeted power plants, factories, and other such sites, releasing the harmful materials within. Suffering damage, left in disrepair, and without humans to maintain them, many nuclear power plants suffered meltdowns, leaving irradiated dead zones amid the otherwise verdant wilderness. Similarly, factories and storage facilities leak dangerous chemicals and toxic waste, poisoning the surrounding areas and posing a danger to humans as well as other animals. Even oil rigs and tankers spilled their contents along coastlines. These unfortunate side effects of Mother Nature's solution serve as reminders of the consequences of humanity's former actions.

LIVING IN A LOST WORLD

Although nature's revenge eliminated modern civilization, it did not wipe out the human race. Approximately a tenth of the previous human population survived. Of course, with no mass communications and travel so limited, no one has a clear idea of the numbers. If the PCs encounter no other groups during the apocalypse or afterward, they could be the only humans surviving, for all they know.

There is no longer a power grid of any kind. Power lines, buried and elevated, have been destroyed by storms, earthquakes, and plants. Dams have been shattered, power plants of all sorts have been destroyed, and even many smaller generators are lost. Mass communications, including the Internet, are likewise of the past. Gaea's wrath has destroyed telephone lines, cell phone towers, and even means of contact with orbital satellites.

Of course, some technological devices have survived. Portable radios, walkie-talkies, and other small, battery-operated gadgets once existed in huge numbers. While many were destroyed or buried, others are still in the hands of survivors. With batteries in limited supply, the use of such devices must be carefully rationed. The odds of being close enough to another group to make contact are low, but tenacious individuals might be able to communicate over relatively short distances. Some groups even make use of portable generators, perhaps sending parties out to locate ever-scarcer fuel. Nature remains vigilant, however, and the use of polluting, gas-burning generators attracts retribution from wild animals or even storms.

SOCIETY WITHOUT CIVILIZATION

Even without modern conveniences or formal governments, humans pull together to survive. It is as nature designed us, after all. Most survivors have formed small communities, ranging from a few families to hundreds of individuals. The people of these communities live a simple but difficult life. Some live as hunter-gatherers, always moving and taking what they need from the environment. Others settle in a single place, fashioning simple structures from natural components and cultivating modest crops. Done in moderation and without unduly harming the environment, this is a natural way for humans to live. The very abundance and fecundity of the flora makes anything more than moderate agricultural endeavors unnecessary.

The wilderness is vast and impenetrable, and journeys must be conducted on foot. Few are willing to brave the dangerous wilds, filled with fearsome predators and obstructing, thick growth. Consequently, communication between settlements is quite rare, and not a few of them suspect they might be the only humans left alive. However, some people do spend their lives moving from village to village, bringing news and trading goods.

One thing humans had become quite adept at before the apocalypse was preparing, preserving, and packaging food. Although powered refrigeration is a thing of the past, and many foodstuffs were buried or destroyed, many non-perishable goods survived. In fact, with the population so drastically reduced, a surplus of canned foods, MREs, and dried goods exists for those able to lay their hands on it. Some travelers survive by painstakingly traveling the dense wilderness, searching for supplies amid the remnants of towns. Some settlements, in addition to hunting wildlife and gathering fruits and nuts, dispatch parties to the dangerous ruins of cities to collect food and other supplies.

Few of these settlements adopt any sort of formalized government. The survivors have learned hard lessons, and the daily struggle for survival ensures cooperation for the best interests of the community. However, as throughout history—perhaps as a very part of human nature—conflict does sometimes occur. When communities come into proximity, they may well fight over natural resources or the right to scavenge supplies from before the collapse.

BRIGANDS AND RAIDERS

While many people live in peace with nature and each other, there are, as always, those who prefer the way of selfishness and violence. Raiders, brigands, and bandits are yet another constant threat to communities. These run the gamut from selfish groups that would rather fight than share supplies with others to depraved cannibals who murder their fellow humans for sustenance.

These violent groups are an even greater threat to lone travelers or small parties. Some stake out territories and demand tolls from those who pass through—or simply attack them. Others move across the land, raiding opportunistically. By their very nature as violent and selfish scoundrels, such gangs tend to be small and disorganized. Consequently, most proper settlements and communities are able to defend themselves. Bandits and raiders tend to meet a violent end, either in a failed assault on peaceful villagers, in conflict with rivals or even their own supposed allies, or simply succumbing to the dangers of the wilderness.

Vicious raiders could be one of the bigger threats PCs face in the post-apocalyptic world. As ever, human beings have the capacity to be at least as vicious as any wild animal. Some PCs might take such a path of violence and larceny, whether joining an existing group or forming their own. Such a decision is short-sighted, as the wilderness is inhospitable; in the end, only by coming together as a society can humans truly survive.

CAMP



THE surviving humans band together in settlements to lead a simple life. These camps range from the remnants of towns and villages to ramshackle assortments of trailers and rough cabins to simple huts of natural make. Depending on their size, these communities might govern by popular consensus, respected elders, or even limited voting. A camp might survive via basic agriculture and hunting, or through stores of canned goods and trade.

The PCs might be permanent members of such a settlement or come across it during their travels. While some settlements are welcoming of outsiders and eager for news, others are mistrusting and insular, fearful of bandits and worse.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs are welcomed into a camp and given food and shelter. But they soon learn that guests are not permitted to leave.
- A deadly disease begins to afflict the members of the community. The only hope is for the PCs to travel to the closest hospital ruins for supplies.
- After one of the camp residents is found murdered, paranoia grips the community. Any new arrivals or outsiders (including the PCs) are the prime suspects.
- During a fierce storm, a lightning strike sets the camp ablaze.
- A large and well-armed group of bandits arrives, demanding exorbitant tribute. If the camp delivers it, they will likely starve—if not, they face a much faster death.
- One of the camp members returns from an expedition with a gas generator. The community is divided over what to do with it—and whether they should use it at all.

THE WILDS



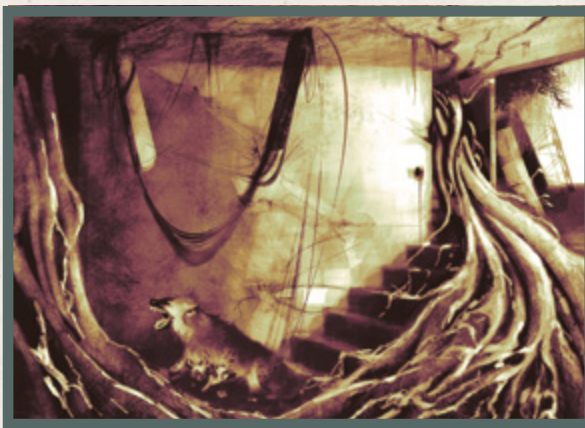
FROM dense forests to windswept plains, the surface of the globe is once more almost entirely wilderness. The wilds are no welcoming place for humans—although at least nature doesn't seem quite as set on killing them anymore. Fierce predators, poisonous plants, venomous insects and snakes, disease-carrying parasites, raging storms, freezing cold, and a thousand other dangers face anyone who travels the wilds.

PCs might avoid the wilds, preferring to remain in camp, or they might choose a life of travel and exploration. Those who learn to live as a part of nature stand a chance at surviving the wilds.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- One of the PCs steps in a pit concealed beneath the underbrush. Is it a natural formation, or a trap set by someone else?
- The PCs are caught by a sudden weather event and must quickly move to find or create shelter against the elements.
- Running low on water, the PCs find a stream with a number of dead animals lying along its banks.
- A row of severed heads impaled on stakes warns the PCs that they have wandered into the territory of some extremely vicious raiders.
- The PCs encounter a half-starved, mostly naked, and delirious man wandering lost.
- As night falls, the PCs see what look like bright, electric lights in the distance.

RUINS



THE greatest cities of human civilization now lie in ruins. The effects of storms and accelerated plant growth in mere months or years had the results of decades or centuries of ordinary erosion. It's hard to believe that these crumbling, ivy- and moss-covered structures were in pristine condition just a short time ago.

Now, these silent monuments to humanity's faded glory are home to prowling beasts, dense growth, and hazardous obstacles.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs must travel into a dangerous ruined city to find supplies for themselves or their community.
- Something is stalking the PCs through the ruins. Is it a predatory animal or a fellow human?
- A group of humans living in the ruined city have turned to barbaric rites—including human sacrifice—in their efforts to appease nature.
- The PCs encounter a band of fanatical anti-environmentalists. They see nature as the enemy, and they are committed to rebuilding civilization and defeating the natural world at any cost.
- The most efficient way to travel is through the mostly intact storm sewers beneath the ruined city, but what dangers might lurk in the darkness?
- While the PCs explore the ruins, the floor gives way beneath one of them, dropping the PC into a basement or sewer. There could be useful supplies there—or further dangers.
- The ruins of a small town are in suspiciously good condition, with plenty of useful supplies and food to be found, and no signs of recent habitation.

PACIFIST

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
2	3	2	3	2	4

Features: +Good-Natured, -Pacifist, +/-Agrarian Lifestyle.

Equipment: Pitchfork, handmade clothes.

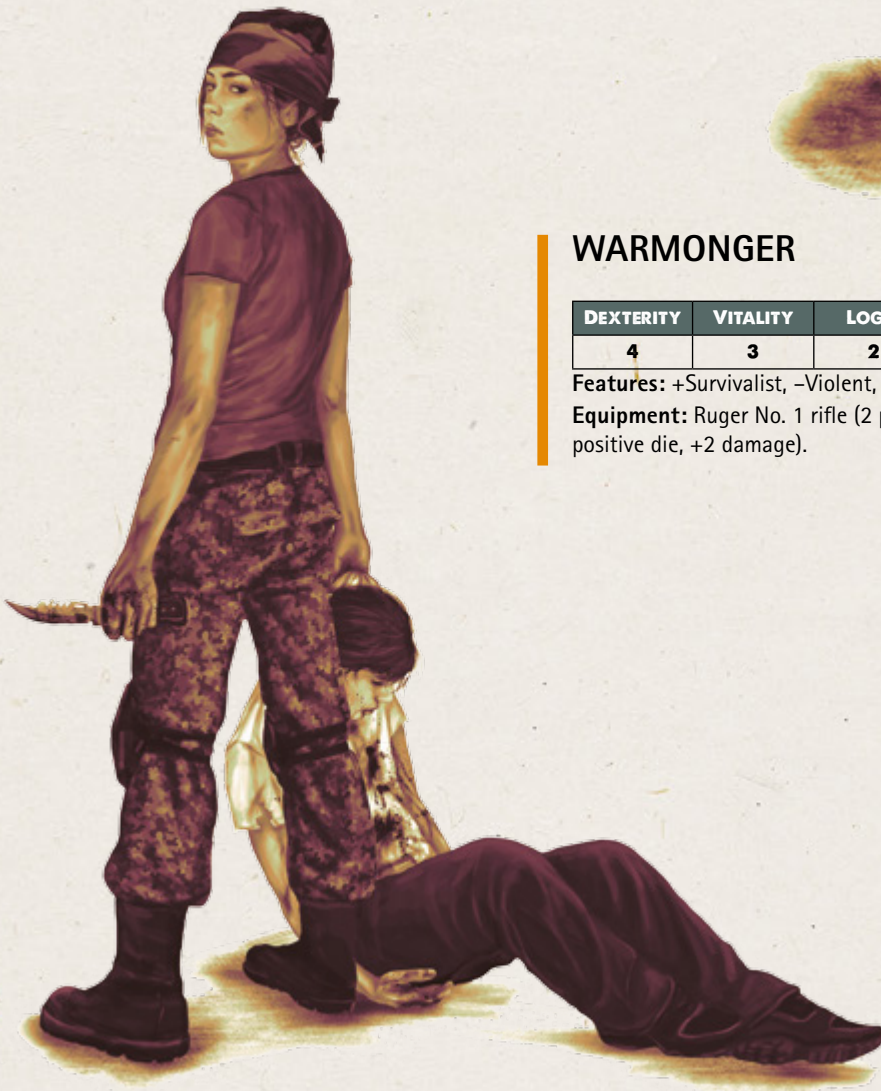


WARMONGER

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
4	3	2	3	2	1

Features: +Survivalist, -Violent, +/-Survival of the Fittest.

Equipment: Ruger No. 1 rifle (2 positive dice, +4 damage), bowie knife (1 positive die, +2 damage).





THE RETURN OF QUETZALCOATL

THE RETURN OF QUETZALCOATL

APOCALYPSE



Remember how surprised the rest of us were when it turned out those “2012 apocalypse” people were correct? Particularly since it wasn’t 2012. Sure, they were off by a few years, but as far as the core idea goes, they were closer than anyone else. It wasn’t really the end of the world, though, not exactly. Maybe things could have gone better if we hadn’t been so quick to attack, to act out of fear. Unless that’s what they wanted?

It seems like they want what’s best for humanity, these ancient warriors. But there’s been so much violence, so much blood. I don’t know if it can stop. The temples—they are so beautiful, so bright. They still run with blood, but now I just don’t seem to care, somehow. I feel that we can stop the violence—that everything will be alright. But we have to follow the light. The others who went into the light, I know they’re alive. I know they’re fine. I have to go to the light, to the temple. I don’t know what will happen, but I have to trust that it will be alright. I have to.

THE Return of Quetzalcoatl confronts the PCs with a unique apocalyptic scenario in which the nature of the threats facing humanity and the allies attempting to save it are unclear. Disasters wreak havoc across the Earth, while violent warriors from the past reappear as guardians of monumental temples. Strangest of all, a meteor brings with it a giant winged serpent. But is this creature an alien or a god, a friend or a foe?

Soon, scholars, armchair archaeologists, and New Age spiritualists all identify the temples and the warriors as being of the ancient Maya, dating from the Classic period, and the great serpent as the god Quetzalcoatl. For some, this provides further reason to trust them, while others only become more suspicious and distrusting. Of course, a lot of people have trouble accepting the existence of a feathered serpent-god, so there’s some cognitive dissonance going on.

The PCs must decide who to trust, and they must choose for themselves whether to make the pilgrimage to one of the great temples or hole up somewhere and ride out the cataclysmic events shaking the world.

THE EXPERIENCE

The apocalypse begins (like so many apocalypses do) with unprecedented natural disasters devastating the Earth. Earthquakes and tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and floods, hurricanes and twisters all occur at unprecedented levels. Amid this turmoil, a meteor, completely undetected by astronomers, plummets to Earth. Things get weirder after that.

WHAT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS SEE

How the experience begins for the PCs depends on their location. If they are somewhere remotely vulnerable to natural disasters, then a natural disaster is likely the first challenge they face. Even if their town is normally untouched, these are no normal times, and a twister, severe thunderstorm, or days of rain and flooding might pose a threat.

The location of the meteor's impact is left to the GM to determine, and it might very well occur close enough to the PCs that they experience the blast. Although the meteor lands in a somewhat remote area, it devastates the surrounding countryside on impact, possibly causing significant loss of life. People the PCs know might be among those injured or killed, which would give the PCs a reason to distrust the god that eventually emerges from the meteor. The explosive impact flattens trees—and any houses—for miles around.

The distance to the meteor and the devastation should mean that investigating it personally is no simple task. The meteor arrived without any predictions by astronomers, so the scientific community is understandably curious about it. But the continuous natural disasters and the stranger things soon to come prevent any sort of coordinated investigation.

If the PCs aren't close enough to the meteor impact to learn of it directly, they are certain to hear of it through news outlets or on social media. The mystery of its appearance captures the public attention, and many people assume a connection between it and the disasters happening around the world.

As natural disasters continue to increase in frequency and potency, five huge pyramids appear suddenly in different locations around the world. Again, the PCs might be close enough to witness this directly (or almost directly), or they might see footage online or on TV. Soon, they hear reports of people emerging from the pyramids, seemingly out of the past. Warriors clad in simple leather, gold, and feathers appear on the steps of the great pyramids, which some people, particularly those of a spiritual bent, are already calling temples.

Soon, military and police forces approach the pyramids to investigate and make contact. These incursions lead to battles in which, astoundingly, the mysterious warriors with their spears and axes defeat the modern equipment and training of the soldiers and police. The governments are not keen to let this be known, so how much the PCs learn depends on whether they get their

news from official sources or social media, or whether they are close enough to hear secondhand reports or even witness it themselves.

Even more disturbing, reports and some grainy footage circulate of the warriors sacrificing captive soldiers atop the temples, removing their hearts and offering them up to the heavens.

As if this weren't weird enough, as though summoned by the sacrifices occurring at the five temples, a huge, feathered serpent rises from the meteor's crash site. It heads directly for the closest center of national or international governance (either Washington, D.C., or the United Nations building in New York, if the meteor landed in the U.S.). However, while it is on its way, military forces attack it. The great serpent decimates the attackers, and the feathered warriors emerge from the temples in a counter-attack, prompting all-out war around the globe.



THE TEMPLES

The temples are huge, tiered pyramids that appear without warning at five locations around the world. They appear suddenly and fully intact. For the most part, they manifest in spots with (mostly) sufficient room, but some still displace or destroy buildings, cars, and anything else in the way.

The first temple is in Teotihuacán in Mexico, and the other four are in Warsaw, Poland; on the shore of Lake Khövsgöl in Mongolia; on the bank of the Ubangi River on the border between the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and just outside Alice Springs in Australia. However, the GM should feel free to relocate one or more of the temples, particularly to ensure that at least one is close enough to the PCs that they can realistically reach it under the circumstances. One temple should probably be within a few hundred miles of the PCs' home.

No one knows what the temples are or where they came from. Concerned governments send in military and paramilitary forces to investigate and ensure they do not pose a threat. The guardians of the temples—mysterious warriors clad in feathers and wielding spears, axes, blades, bows, and other low-tech weapons—attack suddenly, repelling the invaders and killing or capturing many. Reports leak out about apparent supernatural abilities: of warriors teleporting from place to place, or of bullets passing through them harmlessly. Such stories spread like wildfire on social media, while governments deny them.

The captured soldiers are carried to the crests of the temples, where priests remove their hearts in sacrificial rituals. Again, news of these acts spreads despite attempts to contain or discredit it, inflaming public sentiment and inciting calls for a full-on attack. However, military forces are already stretched thin trying to deal with the natural disasters that continuously bombard countries around the world.

After additional unsuccessful military attacks and many human sacrifices, three things happen. First, the great feathered serpent rises from the meteor's crater. Soon after, intense beams of light erupt from the apex of each temple, ascending unbroken high into the sky. Finally, the disasters affecting the world, which have continued to grow worse up to this point, now level off. They remain deadly and constant, but stop escalating.

Some people begin to visit the temples, where the mysterious warriors stand aside and allow them to ascend and enter the beams of light, vanishing forever. Some others try to stop them, and the warriors intervene violently in such cases.

As more and more people travel to the temples, even over great distances, and enter the light, the disasters wracking the planet begin to recede. Storms abate, quakes come less frequently, and volcanoes once again fall dormant.

WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

Understandably, there is quite a lot of hysteria as these apocalyptic and inexplicable events unfold. Beginning with the natural disasters, people swarm stores for supplies, while public panic sweeps the country. Emergency forces deploy in full force to implement preparations for the ever-worsening disasters; they deal with the aftermath in the brief lulls between storms, quakes, floods, and cyclones.

As the meteor arrives, many people assume it to be the cause, or at least somehow connected. Even some scientists propagate hypotheses that support this view, although they are, of course, only in the earliest and untested stages. Nonetheless, the meteor's crash heightens the panic in many places.

As the temples and their mysterious warriors appear, some people take a break from panicking, struggling to survive, and barricading their homes, to demand that the authorities take action. Some call for peaceful contact, while others demand further military action. As things progress, the population becomes more split between those who fear and hate the mysterious warriors and those who feel deeply that they are here for a reason, and that we must communicate with and even welcome them.

Of this latter group—and even, to a lesser extent, the former group—many people feel compelled to visit the temples. This compulsion might fall right in line with the person's spiritual beliefs with regard to the temples and their denizens, or it might be contrary to the person's conscious thoughts and feelings toward the warriors out of time.

Experts and even some laypeople are able to identify both the warriors and their temples from their clothing, weapons, jewelry, and architecture (although the scale of the temples is something never seen before in history). They are the ancient Maya, whose empire mysteriously collapsed in the ninth century. Of course, that means the feathered serpent can only be the god Quetzalcoatl. For those in favor of the ancient warriors, this provides further evidence of divine favor, and further reason to trust these warriors from out of time. For opponents, it only gives a name to the mysterious enemy.

Those who visit the temples find the warriors allowing them to ascend the many steps to the top, where they feel further compelled to enter the huge beams of bright light. Those who enter vanish forever, yet the loved ones they leave behind feel a sense of peace wash over them, knowing that the individual is in a better place.

Others call those who visit the temples traitors, and even try to stop them. Some approach the temples and try to block the pilgrims. The warriors respond to any such attempts at interference with furious violence.

Some of those who oppose the temples and their guardians form into militias and attack. Of course, where true militaries have already failed, these militias fail to do much. In some cases, they inflict more damage on the pilgrims traveling to the temples than to their guardians, but they always find themselves defeated by the skill, dedication, and apparent supernatural abilities of the ancient warriors.

WHAT CAN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS DO?

The PCs' first obstacle is likely to be surviving whatever disasters affect their area—floods, wildfires, mudslides, tornadoes. Depending on where they live and what is nearby, these disasters might result in additional hazards, such as chemical leaks, damaged nuclear reactors, poisoned water supplies, or whatever else seems appropriate for the area.

If they survive long enough, the PCs must decide for themselves if the true threat is from the unprecedented natural disasters, the ancient warriors and their serpent deity, or humankind itself. Although popular opinion tends toward the idea that the serpent and its followers are the cause of the disasters, there are plenty who believe that they are here to stop them. People who feel compelled to enter the temples and the light in particular feel certain that the warriors are here to save humanity from an apocalyptic end, and to usher in a new era.

The PCs might choose to take a side or might try to stay neutral. The latter is easier said than done, as all of humanity stands at a crossroads. Different factions of humanity passionately attack or defend the temples and warriors, and the PCs are likely to be forced to choose a side lest those around them assume they represent the enemy (whatever the enemy happens to be to that particular group). The PCs might be caught in the middle of arguments or even actual battles, as believers in the Maya and their opponents clash in the streets.

THE TRUTH

Although Quetzalcoatl and the Maya have returned to avert a great catastrophe, the circumstances of their arrival and language differences (and the fact that the god is a horrifying serpent) contribute to communication difficulties between them and local and national governments.

THE END

The end of humanity has arrived, as predicted by the Maya. Due to human error, the date recorded for this, December 21, 2012, was off by a few years. Nevertheless, the heart of the matter was correct. At the end of a great cycle, changes in the Earth's magnetic field have triggered cataclysmic disasters around the world. Forests burn, the tides roll without pattern, and quakes and volcanoes torment the planet.

In part, this is penance for humanity's spiritual decline. Neglecting the gods and despoiling nature have consequences. The changes humanity has wreaked on the Earth's environment and natural state have destabilized it, and the gods have abandoned mankind. All but one god, that is.

Archaeologists have long puzzled over the decline of the Maya civilization. In fact, it was not a decline, but an ascension. Pacal the Great, a brilliant warrior and philosopher, reached an enlightened and perfected state,

GO TOWARD THE LIGHT! (OR DON'T)

The Player Characters are not among those who feel the compulsion to visit the temple and enter the light—that is, unless a player or players decide they are. If any PCs do feel compelled, the GM might give them additional insight into what is happening, explaining that the PC in question has strong feelings of calm and hope, and a secure but unexplained knowledge that things will be better.

If any of the PCs do enter the light, they find themselves in a realm of boundless luminescence, buoyed by a feeling of safety, but also of purpose. Quetzalcoatl then appears to them and speaks, explaining that a time of further trial is coming, and that a false prophet will seek to corrupt his message and lead humanity astray. The PCs, he informs them, have a further destiny to fulfill. With this, the PCs emerge back onto the Earth, but learn that during their seemingly brief conversation with the god, two years have passed. It is up to them to bring down the false prophet Anders Bergstrom (see page 87) and restore balance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

communing directly with the gods and transcending the Earth, time, and his own mortal limitations. From this state, Pacal led many more Maya into transcendence. He selected those of the strongest spiritual character and the greatest intellect or talent, as well as the mightiest warriors. Not all of the Maya people achieved this transcendence. Those who were left behind tried to maintain their civilization, but in their diminished numbers, it shrank to a fraction of its former size. The descendants of these individuals are the Maya people who live today.

In this transcendent state, Pacal beseeched the gods to save humanity from itself and its demise. Foreseeing the decline of humanity and the increase in its crimes against nature, the gods refused. Only Quetzalcoatl agreed to help humanity. As the other gods withdrew and abandoned the Earth, Quetzalcoatl helped Pacal and the other Maya to prepare for the coming apocalypse.

Removed from time and space, the Maya set about constructing massive temples to serve as humankind's salvation. Now, at the end of days, Pacal and his warriors return, bringing with them the colossal temples.

Quetzalcoatl returns to earth as well, in the form of a burning meteor. This meteor, however, is not the cause of the devastating events affecting the planet. True, the meteor's collision does have a small, unfortunate cost in destruction and lives, but Quetzalcoatl's return is necessary.

THE MAYA WARRIORS

Although their weapons might appear primitive, the Maya warriors should not be underestimated. These are the finest fighters from the apex of Maya civilization, now imbued with the impossible powers of the gods. These warriors have transcended the mortal realm, and they display a host of abilities to match.

The warriors fight with a variety of weapons expertly crafted from stone and wood. These include chert axes, spears and atl-atls, bows with flint arrows, obsidian daggers, and more. Although these weapons would seem ineffective against modern military hardware, the warriors augment them through preternatural abilities. By phasing in and out of time and space as we know it, the warriors can pierce even the thickest armor. And even though the Maya fight without armor, most bullets and explosions pass through them without harm.

The ability to “phase” also allows the Maya to effectively teleport from place to place. The skilled warriors use this ability to the utmost, appearing and disappearing without warning to sow chaos in the enemy ranks, flanking soldiers and launching furious attacks only to vanish before a response is possible. Even tanks and other vehicles are of almost no protection, since the Maya warriors can simply teleport inside and attack the surprised crew.

The mission of these mysterious warriors is to defend the temples and ensure that the individuals called to them are allowed to transcend. They are dedicated to the success of their mission at any cost, and they violently oppose anyone who seeks to interfere. This, combined with the lack of a shared language, leads to no small amount of misunderstanding between the countries of the world and the mysterious warriors.

THE TEMPLES

When Pacal the Great transcended to a state of pure knowledge, he foresaw with great clarity the doom that would come to humanity. With the assistance of Quetzalcoatl, he pulled the greatest warriors and architects of the Maya civilization out of time and space. Under the guidance of the feathered god, they began the monumental task of building the gargantuan temples that would be the salvation of humanity. These temples are of such scale that they dwarf entire cities, and building them would be almost impossible within the bounds of space-time. However, with unlimited hours and resources, the Maya set about this task in preparation for the end of the world.

The temples serve two purposes: to stabilize the earth's environment and to bring humans to enlightenment. Although the goal of transcendence is beyond most humans, even given a lifetime, the divine magic of the temples allows those of a suitably spiritual or insightful nature to achieve it instantaneously (or at least instantaneously from a certain point of view, as stepping into the light-portal effectively gives them infinite time in which to achieve it).

Through these two methods, Quetzalcoatl and Pacal intend to save both humanity and the Earth from destruction.

However, there is a cost. Consecrating the temples requires the sacrifice of worthy adversaries, and so the Maya warriors must respond, at least at first, to investigations into their temples with violence. Only by sacrificing the few can the many be saved, and from his transcendent state, Pacal recognizes and accepts this truth.

Those who enter the beams of light emanating from the temples vanish from our world as they transcend. Pacal wishes for all humans to transcend, but he knows this is not possible. Humans are too stubborn and untrusting, and the requisite cruelty of the endeavor is enough to ensure that many never willingly travel to the temples.

Many who refuse or are unworthy of the call of the temples continue to fight against Quetzalcoatl, blaming him for the disasters that continue to devastate the world.

As well as being massive, the temples exist slightly out of phase with our reality, straddling time and space. As a result, they are impervious to damage; even concerted efforts to destroy them using modern weapons are futile.

THE INITIAL RESPONSE

As disasters sweep the world, the response of government at every level is one of hurried and chaotic attempts to mitigate the damage. Depending on the nature of the disasters in the PCs' area, there might be nothing to do but assist the injured in the aftermath. Authorities are busy putting out fires, stopping mudslides, saving people from flooding, and handling other unfortunate circumstances.

Although the temples draw a great deal of attention when they appear, investigation is primarily at the local level in the immediate vicinity. Disasters continue unabated around the country, and most jurisdictions are completely occupied dealing with them. The city or county surrounding any temple that appears in the United States faces a dilemma.

The governments of the countries in which the temples manifest, and the local authorities in some cases, dispatch military or police forces to investigate their appearance. Because these are intruders on sacred temple grounds—and since sacrifices are needed to consecrate the temples—the Maya warriors respond swiftly and violently, launching an immediate surprise attack on the soldiers and anyone else trespassing on temple grounds. This leads to counterassaults and further reprisals on both sides, escalating to a period of all-out war between the Maya and the governments of each country with a temple present.

Between the method of the god's arrival and his appearance, the United States does not respond well to Quetzalcoatl. Although the god intends to communicate with the nation's leaders, the military attacks him before he has the chance, and the god defends himself. With great sweeps of his tail and bursts of flame, the god decimates his attackers, while bullets glance harmlessly from his scales.

Although attacking Quetzalcoatl is costly, it does nothing to deter the god from his mission—at least not in the long run. In the short term, the feathered serpent defends himself and even exacts retribution, but his ultimate goal is still the survival of humankind.

TIMELINE

The events of the apocalypse begin without warning and unfold quickly, yet continue for some time before taking a drastic turn.

00:00:00	A chart-shattering earthquake rocks Southern California.
06:00:00	Natural disasters of unprecedented proportions begin occurring around the world. Nowhere seems to be safe.
16:14:00	Unpredicted and without warning, a meteor crashes in an isolated area of North America.
16:15:00	Theories connecting the meteor to the disasters' continuing increase in severity begin to circulate.
DAY 2	Overwhelmed emergency services scramble to react to the unprecedented number and severity of natural disasters.
DAY 2	Massive temples appear simultaneously and without warning in five locations scattered around the world.
DAY 3	Experts and most laypeople are at a loss to explain the presence of the temples and any connection to the disasters still shaking the world with any certainty. Theories that circulate nevertheless include alien intervention, mass hallucination, and eschatological scenarios from numerous religions.
DAY 3	Some experts and laypeople recognize the temples as Maya construction, but on an unfathomable scale. This does not help to explain their sudden appearance, although some practitioners of New Age religions, cryptozoology, and parapsychology offer a number of theories, some actually quite close to the truth.
DAY 3	Military forces move in toward the temples, only to be attacked by mysterious warriors wearing feathers and gold, and wielding stone weapons.
DAY 4	The disasters affecting the entire world continue to increase in severity and frequency, decimating civilization and completely overwhelming emergency services.
DAY 4	Over the course of a series of attacks, counterattacks, and prisoner extraction attempts, the mysterious warriors capture numerous soldiers and begin ritually sacrificing them atop the temples.
DAY 4	Due to the natural disasters and the Maya threat, many cities are evacuated.
DAY 4	A colossal feathered serpent rises from the meteor's impact crater.
DAY 5	The human sacrifice spurs governments to greater action, and bloodier battles occur, with the mysterious warriors continually victorious, taking more prisoners each time.
DAY 5	Military forces attack the giant serpent, only to be massacred and routed.
DAY 6	In response to the attack on their god, Maya warriors emerge from temples and attack neighboring cities.
DAY 8	Large beams of light project upward from each temple.
DAY 8	The disasters wracking the world continue to occur, but they are no longer getting worse.
DAY 10	Some people begin feeling an inexplicable drive to visit the temples.
DAY 12	Around the world, many people begin abandoning their homes and traveling, however far, to the closest temple. On arrival, they ascend the hundreds of steps and enter the light beams, vanishing forever. Loved ones left behind feel a sense of peace.
DAY 14	Local police and military attempt to bar access to the closest temple. Maya warriors surge out and attack them, breaking the cordon and allowing pilgrims to enter the temple.
DAY 20	As an increasing number of people enter the light, the natural disasters subside, occurring less frequently and less destructively.
DAY 38	Some governments cease their (now clearly futile) attacks on the temples and find that the Maya are content to remain there as pilgrims arrive.
DAY 66	Opponents of the Maya organize militias to attack the temples and prevent pilgrims from entering. In every case, they are defeated by the Maya warriors, and prisoners are sacrificed atop the temples.
DAY 102	Quetzalcoatl and Pacal the Great meet with world leaders and explain, in part, what is happening. Some leaders refuse to believe and order further (ill-advised) attacks, others are content to leave the Maya in peace and allow those who wish to do so to enter the temples, and yet others accuse the Maya of mass kidnapping.
YEAR 2	Anders Bergstrom, a wealthy Swedish businessman, claims to have entered the light and returned.
YEAR 2	Quetzalcoatl descends beneath the temple at Teotihuacán to slumber. The Maya warriors seal the temples, and all but a minimal staff of priests vanish.
YEAR 2	Bergstrom appears in news publications and on television to promote his newly founded religion, Neo-Mayanism. He presents himself as a prophet of Quetzalcoatl. Millions embrace Bergstrom's new religion, which calls for an end to human sacrifice and transcendence while on Earth—no more vanishing into the light.

CITIES (DAY)



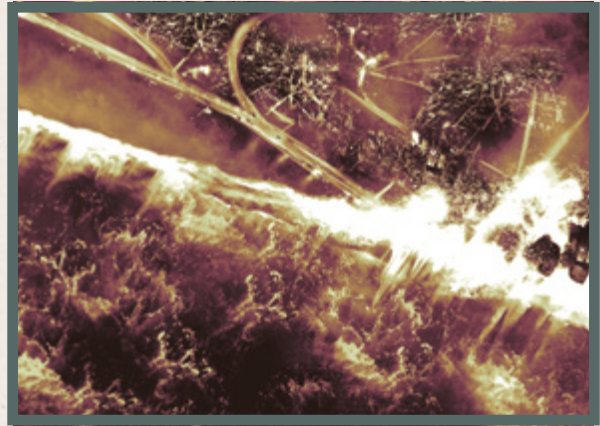
THE natural disasters that sweep the world quickly leave many cities horribly damaged. They are far from safe, and in fact seem particularly vulnerable to such catastrophes. As events progress, some cities also come under attack by Maya warriors who are counter-attacking to defend the temples. During the day, cities are overflowing with activity ranging from protests to emergency responders to panicking citizens fleeing or buying supplies.

The PCs might begin the apocalypse in the city where they live, or they might travel to a city in order to get closer to (or further from) a temple.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ Disasters have taken their toll, and the city is in a state of anarchy. Panicking crowds fill the streets, obstructing movement.
- ☼ A group of Maya warriors attacks the city in response to an attack on the temple or Quetzalcoatl.
- ☼ An emergency meeting of the city council is called, and fearful citizens flock to it.
- ☼ In light of increasing disasters, an evacuation order is given for the city.
- ☼ Earthquakes or wildfires breach chemical plants or release other hazards into the city and its water supply.
- ☼ An anti-Maya protest threatens to spill over into violence.
- ☼ A friend of the PCs tries to convince them to leave town (or to stay, if they were planning on leaving).
- ☼ Protests or a natural disaster have left a large portion of the city burning, and the PCs are in the fire's path.
- ☼ The city lies in Quetzalcoatl's path, and panicking inhabitants attempt to flee.
- ☼ Scores of people feel the call of the temple almost simultaneously and leave the city in a large group.

CITIES (NIGHT)



BY night, the city is overtaken by looters and rioters, while fearful citizens board up their homes. Fires can be seen lighting up the night sky, while in the distance, the bright light of the temple pierces the heavens. PCs might stay indoors at night, or they might take to the streets for supplies or to check on friends and family. Whatever the case, danger is a constant.

Nightfall does not stop the ceaseless disasters or slow the Maya warriors. These constant threats continue throughout the hours of darkness, and nowhere in the city is really safe. Emergency lights flash in the dark, and sirens can be heard over the cries of fear and anger.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ An explosion lights up the night sky. The result of a natural disaster, or sabotage by Maya warriors?
- ☼ It's up to the PCs to help a family barricaded in their home and threatened by violent looters.
- ☼ Under martial law, a curfew is declared. Anyone in the streets after dark is subject to arrest.
- ☼ Maya warriors "teleport" from place to place in the city, attacking police and the military personnel stationed there.
- ☼ A Maya warrior stalks the PCs, vanishing into the darkness, only to reappear behind them a short time later.
- ☼ A shimmering, feathered serpent appears above the city and challenges the city's "greatest warriors" to come forth to face the Maya.
- ☼ Throughout each night, one of the PCs or an ally suffers vivid, disturbing dreams about the temple.

RURAL TOWN



RURAL towns suffer just as greatly as cities from the unchecked natural disasters. Floods, tornadoes, wildfires, and more threaten people, property, and livelihoods. PCs might come to a rural area because they are fleeing the chaos of the city, or they might already live in such a place. Either way, they soon discover that nowhere is safe. Lacking the high-level emergency services of cities, rural areas could be even more vulnerable to natural disasters and might be hit especially hard.

A town near a temple might become a stopping point for pilgrims or a target for Maya reprisals when militias attack the pyramid. Anti-Maya groups might take over a town to use as a staging post for attacks on a temple, or they might simply pass through to recruit new members.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The town is burning, and the small local fire department is outmatched.
- The residents of a small town see what the Maya are doing and decide human sacrifice is the only way to save their crops and town—and the PCs are their targets!
- Livestock and other animals are running loose, blocking traffic and posing a danger to citizens.
- Refugees from the city flood the surrounding rural areas, using up the already-scarce resources.
- The PCs' vehicle breaks down or runs out of gas outside a rural town.
- The PCs need to get to a nearby town to check on a friend or loved one.
- The residents of a rural town need the PCs' help to expel the violent militia that has taken over.

RIOTS



As disasters escalate and the Maya warriors battle the United States military, panicked or angry citizens begin riots in cities and towns across the country, especially those close to the temple. Rioters and looters range from disorganized mobs to ragtag anti-Maya militias seeking to claim power and incite additional violence.

These rioters and militias can pose as great a danger to their fellow citizens as the natural disasters or the Maya warriors. They might attack those who do not share their views, or who just happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- After days of peace, an anti-Maya militia is trying to whip up a frenzied mob to attack the temple.
- People are breaking into stores and stealing supplies, but is it looting or simple survival?
- With the police already stretched beyond their limits, only the PCs can protect their property from vicious criminals taking advantage of the situation.
- While simply trying to get across town, the PCs find themselves in the middle of a huge riot.
- With the authorities weakened from fighting the Maya, a large militia group moves to take over a city or town.
- A militia group attempts to recruit the PCs—and doesn't give them any choice in the matter.
- Maya warriors appear in the midst of an anti-Maya protest, sparking violence.
- Pro- and anti-Maya groups are facing off in the streets and, if someone doesn't act soon, violence is a certainty.

ROAD TO THE TEMPLE



FROM hundreds and thousands of miles around, people of all backgrounds and positions heed the call of the temple. The roads to the temple are crowded with pilgrims, pleading family, and even anti-Maya activists trying to stop the exodus. Many roads have been made impassable by quakes, storms, or other disasters, leading pilgrims to abandon vehicles on the roadside and continue on foot.

The pilgrims stop only as necessary for supplies and rest, and many push themselves to their limits in an effort to reach the temple faster. As events progress and it becomes clear that the ascendance of the pilgrims lessens the severity of the natural disasters, people begin coming out to support them on their journey, offering provisions, places to sleep, and fuel.

The PCs might find themselves on the road because one of them feels drawn to the temple, because they know someone else who is, or perhaps simply out of curiosity.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☛ A militia group blocks the way, threatening violence against pilgrims who try to get past them.
- ☛ A close friend or family member of one of the PCs feels called to the temple.
- ☛ A pilgrim asks the PCs for help in the form of supplies, transportation, or protection.
- ☛ The road is crowded with pilgrims, when a tornado or other disaster appears.
- ☛ A pilgrim collapses from exhaustion.
- ☛ A military unit (acting either under orders or as a rogue unit) attempts to block access to the temple.
- ☛ Maya warriors appear from nowhere to assist pilgrims.
- ☛ A pilgrim has a waking vision of Quetzalcoatl and hears a strange and startling message. Is it authentic, or is this a trick or delusion?

TEMPLE



THE temples are awe-inspiring: hundreds of stories tall and apparently handcrafted of stone blocks of unbelievable proportions. Even more impressive are the beams of light that project from their apexes once the temples have been consecrated. The temples are surrounded and protected by Maya warriors, who welcome the pilgrims who have been chosen to transcend and turn away all others—violently, if need be.

The apex of a temple is both a horrible and an awesome sight. Even after the beam of light appears, Maya priests continue to sacrifice prisoners, removing their hearts in front of the spellbound onlookers. The stone is permanently stained with blood, a strange juxtaposition to the radiant light.

The PCs might visit a temple because one of them feels compelled or because they accompany someone who does. They might visit simply to lay eyes on the breathtaking sight, or perhaps they even hope to stop someone from transcending.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☛ A large group of militia members assaults the temple, prompting a large battle. Will the PCs take a side, or simply spectate?
- ☛ Anders Bergstrom arrives at the temple and briefly speaks with the PCs before heading toward the summit.
- ☛ An anti-Maya fanatic attempts to enter the temple with a bomb.
- ☛ The Maya turn away would-be pilgrims who have not been deemed worthy of transcendence.
- ☛ The PCs see a group of Maya select someone from the crowd and drag them toward the apex to be sacrificed.
- ☛ Quetzalcoatl appears above the temple to welcome—and judge—the new arrivals.
- ☛ A Maya warrior bars the PCs' path and gruffly indicates they should turn back.
- ☛ An anti-Maya organization wants to hire the PCs to scout out the temple and report back.



RIOTERS

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
3	2	1	3	3	2

Features: +Strength in Numbers, +/-Mob Rule.

Equipment: Stolen electronics, cinder block (1 negative die, +4 damage).

MAYA WARRIOR

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
4	3	2	3	2	2

Features: +Divine Foreknowledge, +Warrior, -From Another Time.

Equipment: Atl-atl (2 positive dice, +3 damage), macuahuitl (2 positive dice, +3 damage).

Phasing: The Maya Warrior can phase in and out of time and space at will. Remove 1 positive die from all attacks made against the Maya Warrior and remove 1 negative die from all attacks made by the Maya Warrior, to a minimum of 1 in both cases.

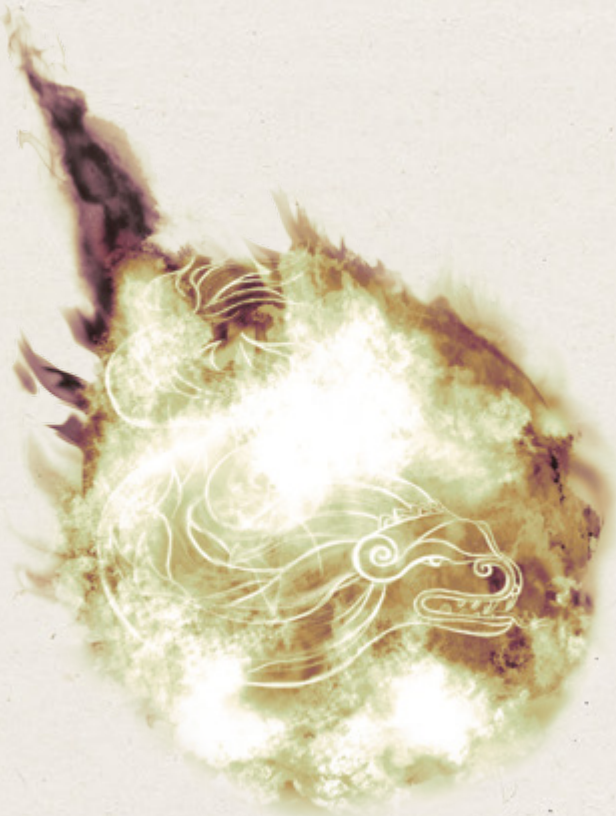


MILITARY FORCES

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
4	3	2	3	2	2

Features: +Military Training, -Just Following Orders.

Equipment: M16A4 Rifle (1 negative die, +4 damage), helmet and pads (+1 physical resistance), uniform, MREs, canteen.



QUETZALCOATL

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
6	6	6	6	6	6

Features: ++++Divine Perfection, +Flight, +/-Extremely Scary.

Equipment: Quetzalcoatl exists beyond the need for physical objects.

Master of Space and Time: Quetzalcoatl is the divine master of existence. The physical world bends to his will, and he cannot be harmed by physical means.

The Winged Serpent: Each of Quetzalcoatl's stress tracks has six tiers of three boxes each. Once all eighteen of these boxes are filled, Quetzalcoatl dies.



THE RETURN OF QUETZALCOATL

THE RETURN OF QUETZALCOATL

POST-APOCALYPSE



I can't say I fully understand it, but whatever those Maya temples did helped. A lot. The storms, the quakes, the floods: they all eased up. A lot of theories flew around about what happened to the people who stepped into the light of the temples. Most of the family members they left behind were certain they were in a better—place isn't the right word—state. Condition. But a lot of people say they were killed. Hell, maybe they were, if being removed from the physical world counts as death. Even if it wasn't so pleasant for them, maybe it was worth it.

Then, as suddenly as they arrived, Quetzalcoatl and the Maya time travelers vanished. I've heard that Quetzalcoatl—I still can't believe it's real—went inside one of those giant temples, the one in Mexico. And some people say the Maya are all holed up inside the temples, maybe waiting for the next crisis.

I'm not so sure about Neo-Mayanism, though. It doesn't seem right, to found this religion after the Maya have disappeared. I know what Bergstrom says, but how can we know it's true? Why would Quetzalcoatl choose him? But I better watch what I say—some of those Neo-Mayanists are...fanatical.

A NEW EPOCH

After two years and millions of people entering the light, all of the humans chosen for transcendence have achieved it. With his work done, Quetzalcoatl retires to the deepest levels of the temple at Teotihuacán to rest. The Maya warriors and priests likewise withdraw, some of them remaining within the temples to serve as stewards and guardians, others returning to the place outside of time and space where they previously resided.

The lights of the temples fade, and the entrances seal. Although pilgrims continue to crowd around them, the temples fall silent. Pilgrims, scholars, and many others circulate theories about why Quetzalcoatl and the warriors from out of time have left. Some mourn, feeling abandoned; others are relieved that the mysterious warriors and their terrifying god are finally gone.

TENUOUS CIVILIZATION

Between hellish natural disasters; the domino effect of chemical spills, fires, and even nuclear leaks; and the transcendence of millions, the population of the world is vastly reduced. Governments struggle to maintain control and to rebuild in the aftermath of the upheaval,



while most of the population grapples with understanding what has occurred. Due to the enormous death toll and the numbers of those who have transcended, reconstruction of the major cities takes years.

The world is in shambles thanks to the natural disasters, and many militaries are hamstrung after battling the Maya warriors, but most governments maintain a tenuous control. Some get back on their feet quite quickly, while others struggle with civil unrest stemming from dissatisfaction with how they handled the disasters and the Maya.

The temples remain a problem. The huge buildings continue to prove impervious to harm, due to being slightly out of phase with the physical world. As the temples are objects of veneration for millions, entire pilgrim tent cities have sprung up around them. Governments wishing to claim control of them or attempting their removal usually come into conflict with the pilgrims. In some cases, governments or private corporations endeavor to profit from the temples, turning them into tourist attractions complete with on-site gift shops, guided tours, and more.

NEO-MAYANISM

Anders Bergstrom is a wealthy and influential Swedish industrialist who disappeared during the apocalypse. With no evidence of his death in a disaster or at the hands of Maya warriors, many assumed him to have transcended. Without warning, soon after the withdrawal of Quetzalcoatl and the Maya, Bergstrom reappears. He claims to have transcended and communed with Quetzalcoatl, who entrusted him with wisdom and directed him to establish a new religion. Bergstrom is interviewed in magazines and appears on TV, and his videos go viral.

Quetzalcoatl has already proved his own existence to the world, so establishing a powerful new religion allegedly based on the god's teachings proves quite easy for a man

of Bergstrom's wealth and resources. Particularly in these troubled times, people are eager for something to cling to: something to provide greater meaning to what has happened. Many of those who did not transcend feel that they have somehow been abandoned, or judged unworthy. Bergstrom presents himself as the prophet of Quetzalcoatl, preaching that those who embrace the teachings of Neo-Mayanism will transcend when the god returns to Earth. He claims to be the only person who can lead humanity to salvation. This message is tremendously appealing to a large portion of the population, who willingly give up their own wealth and resources to swell Bergstrom's.

However, Bergstrom is not the chosen prophet of Quetzalcoatl, nor did he transcend. He is a shrewd megalomaniac who sees an opportunity for profit and power. Millions of followers embrace him as a messiah, the one who will see the world through further tumult and ensure a peaceful return of Quetzalcoatl. Meanwhile, those who hate and fear Quetzalcoatl grow their own power bases, recruiting ever-more zealous counterparts to Bergstrom's own followers.

BUILDUP TO WAR

As Bergstrom's power swells, many governments begin to view him as a threat. The Neo-Mayanist religion builds compounds around the world that attract thousands of adherents, becoming autonomous states in their own right, despite Bergstrom's claims to the contrary. As a religion, Neo-Mayanism is exempt from taxes in the United States and many other countries. Bergstrom arranges for enormous monetary and property donations from the many corporations under his influence in order to further expand its power and resources.

After a series of attacks by anti-Maya militias, Bergstrom begins building a paramilitary defense force, ostensibly to protect Neo-Mayanist adherents and facilities.

Drawing on his vast personal and corporate resources, as well as the donations of Neo-Mayanist converts, Bergstrom creates a sizable and highly equipped army.

Meanwhile, Bergstrom builds his political power, recruiting many world leaders to his cause. Old religions fall by the wayside as the influence of Neo-Mayanism spreads, and Bergstrom buys up property surrounding the temples, erecting places of worship in the shadows of the massive structures.

APOCALYPTIC CONFLICT

Having solidified his power base and extended his influence to governments around the world, Anders Bergstrom announces a startling new revelation. It seems Quetzalcoatl has decreed (at least, according to Bergstrom) that humanity's only path to salvation is a united world government under Neo-Mayanism. Incredibly, some countries go along with this. As a half-measure, the United Nations recognizes Neo-Mayanist religion as an observer state, but this isn't enough for Bergstrom.

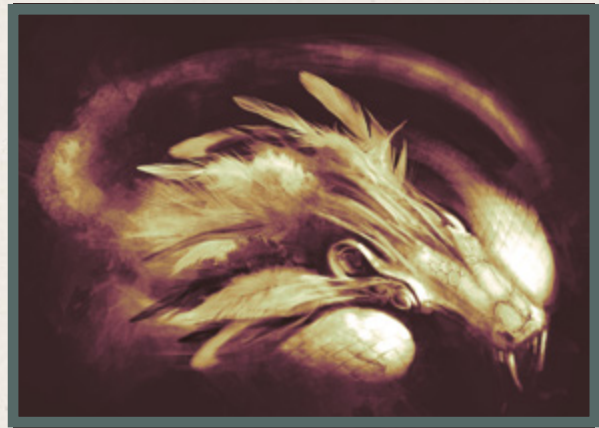
Drawing on political clout, extortion, and the fanatical adherence of his disciples, Bergstrom attempts to unite further nations under his control. The United States is split, with many devout Neo-Mayanists angling to make Neo-Mayanism the official religion of the country. As others resist, Congress reaches a stalemate, and things soon get ugly.

Worldwide, Bergstrom's followers move to forcibly take control of governmental bodies and facilities. Bergstrom claims no involvement, but neither does he move to stop them. In fact, Bergstrom is behind it. As things escalate, he tips his hand and brings out the Neo-Mayanist military in force. Allied with France, Sweden, Mexico, Egypt, and a number of other nations, Neo-Mayanism is a force to be reckoned with. The United States is consumed by internal strife, while Britain, China, and other countries go to war against Bergstrom's alliance.

Soon, the planet is embroiled in a world war. Everywhere, bombardments and invasions devastate nations, and countries burn in the fires of conflict. Corporate security forces clash with military units, and anti-Maya militias battle Neo-Mayanist zealots. For his part, Bergstrom claims that Neo-Mayanism is simply defending itself against heretics and unbelievers, fighting for the future of humanity. In truth, he and his countless deluded followers are fighting for Bergstrom's control of the planet. Perhaps on some level, he really does think he's been divinely chosen—or maybe he's just a megalomaniac. Either way, the result is a war that threatens to truly end the world.

It's only a matter of time until nuclear weapons are employed. Without intervention by Quetzalcoatl and Pacal the Great, humanity is doomed to self-destruction. The post-apocalypse will become a true apocalypse, and we'll be lucky if anyone remains. What side do the PCs choose? Can they summon the feathered god to end this war before it's too late?

LAIR OF QUETZALCOATL



AFTER completing his mission on Earth, Quetzalcoatl retires to the inner recesses of the temple at Teotihuacán (or the temple closest to the PCs). Here, the god rests, his mind floating in the ether of the transcended world-out-of-time, even while his body remains in our world. The PCs might seek to visit Quetzalcoatl in order to learn the truth of Bergstrom's claims or to beseech the god to return to the world and avert—or end—all-out war.

Entering the temple is no simple task, as the Maya sealed the temples up before departing. If the PCs previously passed through the light and received Quetzalcoatl's blessing, the great stone doors might open for them without hesitation. But if they try to force their way in, they are met by some very unhappy Maya warriors.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- No matter what the PCs try, the temple doors won't open, and the Maya won't emerge. Perhaps a human sacrifice is necessary to unseal the doors?
- As the PCs breach or enter the temple, Pacal the Great meets them, surrounded by warriors. They must convince him of the importance of their mission before he allows them to gaze upon Quetzalcoatl.
- After they finally find Quetzalcoatl, the PCs have another problem. How do they wake him up without losing their own lives?
- Anders Bergstrom claims to meet with Quetzalcoatl on a regular basis, but how is that possible?
- Quetzalcoatl is not happy to be roused from his slumber and demands that the PCs explain themselves quickly—or face his wrath.

NEO-MAYANIST COMPOUND



ANDERS Bergstrom's religion sets up numerous compounds around the world. These range from state-of-the-art meeting complexes worthy of a multibillion-dollar corporation to highly defensible military fortifications. Some are built from the ground up, others repurposed. The one thing they all have in common is that within, there is no law save what Bergstrom decrees. That, and the high security.

Each compound is led by a high priest. These individuals are second only to Bergstrom himself in the eyes of their followers, and their commands are obeyed without question. In many cases, the priests come across more as military or political leaders than religious ones.

There are many reasons the PCs might visit a Neo-Mayanist compound. Whether they do so as supporters, members, or enemies is up to them. But everyone has to pick a side eventually.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A friend invites the PCs to a tour of the Neo-Mayanist compound, hoping to convert them.
- The PCs are captured by Neo-Mayanist forces who suspect them of being spies (whether true or not) and bring them to a compound.
- A government agency or anti-Maya group wants the PCs to infiltrate (or betray) the Neo-Mayanists.
- Inside the compound, the PCs find evidence that Bergstrom's beliefs and claims are not sincere.
- Pacal the Great shows up with a thousand warriors at Neo-Mayanist HQ. He doesn't seem pleased with Bergstrom's self-appointed prophet status.
- Based on rumors of spies, the compound shuts down and seals up. And the PCs are high on the list of suspects.

TEMPLE BESIEGED



IF and when the Maya do reappear and become involved in the global conflict, Bergstrom declares Pacal the Great to be a traitor and false prophet of Quetzalcoatl. The irony of that, sadly, is lost on almost everyone. Soon, the Neo-Mayanists and the true Maya are engaged in all-out war, while other countries don't know whom to fight with and against.

Although the phased nature of the Maya renders them nearly invulnerable to mundane attacks, that doesn't stop their enemies from trying. A temple might come under siege by anti-Maya militias, Neo-Mayanist puppet forces, or a nation's military. Bergstrom can't directly attack the temples, as that would undermine his own claims, but he can order mercenaries to do so, or disavow his own followers after the fact.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The Maya haven't played any part in the war, but that changes when someone assaults a temple. Suddenly, Maya warriors appear around the world to decimate military forces, just like a few years ago.
- The PCs are visiting the temple for their own reasons when it suddenly comes under attack.
- One of the countries fighting against Neo-Mayanism launches an assault on a temple.
- Pacal the Great asks for the PCs' help in defending the temple.
- The Maya once again sacrifice their enemies atop the temple. But this time, the beam of light erupts down from the temple like a laser, burning a swath through the attackers' ranks.
- As blood flows down the steps of the temple and fighters fall on both sides, the temple begins to quake, and even the Maya seem surprised.
- As Maya warriors defend the temple, Quetzalcoatl emerges from within it. The enraged god could be the doom of the world, unless someone convinces him that Bergstrom is to blame for everything.

ANDERS BERGSTROM

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
2	3	4	3	5	1

Features: +Charlatan, +Mega Corporation CEO, +Natural Leader, +Obscenely Wealthy, -Feigned Divine Knowledge, -Hubris.

Equipment: \$10,000 suit, VIP Royal Platinum Card.



PACAL THE GREAT

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
4	3	5	4	3	3

Features: ++Chosen of Quetzalcoatl, +Divine Foreknowledge, +Natural Leader, +Philosopher King, -From Another Time.

Equipment: Ceremonial garb, spear (2 positive dice, +3 damage).

Phasing: Pacal the Great can phase in and out of time and space at will. Remove 1 positive die from all attacks made against Pacal and remove 1 negative die from all attacks made by Pacal, to a minimum of 1 in both cases.



RAGNAROK

RAGNARÖK

APOCALYPSE



It's a little ironic—maybe a lot, actually—that a religion that most of the world wrote off as myth and fiction centuries ago turned out to be the truth. And that its version of the end of days was, well, pretty accurate. The monsters, the gods—the dead—it's impossible to believe, yet it's happening. The world is dark and cold, but the burning homes and cities around the world light the endless night.

I don't know where the gods were all this time, but they didn't abandon us. When we really needed them, they returned. Odin, Thor, Heimdall, and all the others, battling enormous monsters and legions of trolls and giants. But with everything else that's happening, I don't know if they will be able to save us. I know what the sagas say, but it's not like they're carved in stone.

THE players must survive the final destiny of the gods themselves in **Ragnarök**, an apocalypse predicted centuries ago in Scandinavia. Sensing the end is here, trolls and giants emerge from within the Earth to battle the gods and decimate the armies of humanity, even as draugr and dead heroes—figures of human history, both great and terrible—rise to life again. With so many supernatural beings manifesting, it's hard to know which are fighting for us or against us, and which are following their own agendas.

For most people, these events are horrific beyond reckoning. Not only are the monsters unleashed impossibly destructive, but their very existence shakes the average person's worldview to its very core. There is no scientific explanation for what is happening, and even most religions of the world can't account for it. Most individuals can do nothing but try to survive somehow, as helpless mortals caught in the middle of a battle between the gods.

The Player Characters have a choice to make. They can hide, flee, or try to do something. Although the foretellings of Ragnarök focused on the actions of the gods, some mortals have a part to play as well. If the PCs fight bravely alongside the gods, it might just turn out that their destinies are the stuff of sagas and tales.

THE EXPERIENCE

The very gods face their inescapable fates during **Ragnarök**, and the world trembles as colossal monsters clash with war-forged deities. Amid this turmoil, the PCs' only chance for survival is to play their parts according to fate and hope their destiny is to live through the climactic events of the end of days.

ENDLESS NIGHT

The world ends the way the universe began—with darkness. Without warning, the sun and moon disappear, stunning people around the world and completely baffling scientists. A number of astronomers, both professional and amateur, begin ranting about monsters devouring the sun and moon, and other nonsense. Without a rational explanation, people around the world soon begin to panic.

Depending on the GM's preference and when the events begin in-game, the disappearance of the sun and moon might happen at night, dusk, dawn, or even in the middle of the day. PCs who pay less attention to such things might not even notice for some time that something is wrong.

Depending on the timing and their own awareness, the PCs might pass the night fearfully, hoping to see the sun rise, or they might simply assume it's a particularly dark night. Checking social media or the news, however, quickly shows that other people are quite worried—there is no sign of the sun or moon anywhere, in any hemisphere! If the PCs don't check, they might spend the night in blissful ignorance.

The next day, with no sign of the moon or sun visible from anywhere across the globe, panic begins in earnest. Again, how long it takes the PCs to realize something is amiss depends on how connected they are. If they stay up late absorbed in their own gaming, they might not even become suspicious until a couple of hours after the estimated time of sunrise. Most, however, are likely to see frenetic posts on social media or dramatic news coverage.

Soon, all humans on Earth briefly lapse into a sort of trance. Upon regaining consciousness, each person has near-precise knowledge of the time and circumstance of that individual's own death. This is troubling information, so it's not terribly surprising that many people take drastic action to try to avert their fate, or wyrd. For some, this means boarding their home up tight and avoiding outside contact. Of course, beyond the knowledge itself, the method of its acquisition is inexplicable and terrifying, leading to further panic.

ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION

Ragnarök is an event foretold, a tapestry woven eons ago by the Norns and played out over the course of the game. In this version of Ragnarök, each living being is cursed with the knowledge of its wyrd, or personal fate. Most disconcertingly, this vision includes the manner of its own demise. For the players and the GM, this represents an exciting narrative opportunity (for the PCs seeing it, it likely only represents a source of bowel-shattering terror). However, while Player Characters might know the means by which they will perish, this doesn't mean that players—or even the GM—have to know in advance. After all, Ragnarök might be preordained, but the decisions that RPG players make are notoriously hard to predict. Instead of trying to guess how events will transpire, the players can model their PCs' knowing their respective wyrds with the following rule:

At any time while your character is still alive, you may declare that your character is going to accept their wyrd and die a glorious death befitting a champion in Norse mythology. Until the end of the encounter, all of your character's characteristics count as 6, and your character cannot die from stress, traumas suffered, or any other means. However, after this surge of heroism, your character unavoidably perishes (it is a glorious death, after all!) You can choose the manner of your character's end or let the GM have the satisfaction of delivering the PC's deathblow. Either way, whether it is stumbling out of battle to die of exhaustion or being crushed by a frost giant as your friends escape, it should be suitably epic.

WORLD WAR III

Although most people face fairly mundane deaths and can do relatively little to avoid them, those in positions of influence are more likely to think they have the power to do what they think is best to avoid death. Around the globe, world leaders take drastic action to neutralize the perceived threat from other nations. Ironically, these actions only serve to bring about the very geopolitically motivated dooms the leaders sought to avoid.

For the PCs, the outbreak of war around the world might seem distant and of little importance, next to their own looming demises and the supernatural threats emerging around them. Conversely, it might be among the greatest dangers facing them. If the players live near a major city or a key military installation, they might have to worry about bombings and other attacks. Players who are in the military could be called to duty, though whether they have a chance to report before all Hel breaks loose is another matter.

THE EARTH TREMBLES

As war breaks out around the globe, the events of Ragnarök continue to unfold. Out of the Scandes mountain range, a great wolf, hundreds of feet long, erupts. It shatters the mountain, devastates the surrounding area, and unleashes catastrophic earthquakes across northern Europe and Asia.

The wolf rampages throughout the Scandinavian countries and across the continent. Militaries cease their ongoing fighting to try to halt the beast, but to no avail. The titanic lupine shrugs off fire from the heaviest weapons, while those few able to injure it only further enrage the wolf. It stomps through infantry formations, crushes tanks in its powerful jaws, and snatches attacking jets from the air.

Soon after the great wolf's appearance, a powerful earthquake far out in the Pacific Ocean sends tidal waves to batter countries around the rim, including the West Coast of the United States. Following on the heels of these devastating waves, a gargantuan serpent emerges from the sea, rampaging along the stricken coast and across the U.S.

WYRD

BIG, BIGGER, AND DEAD

As if a new world war and the appearance of the great wolf and world serpent weren't bad enough, additional creatures from deepest myth appear to threaten humanity. All around the world, trolls, fire giants, and frost giants emerge from the bowels of the Earth, tearing down the edifices of modern civilization and butchering the populace.

Depending on where the PCs are, these beings are likely the first encounters they have with the supernatural. Although PCs might have seen footage of the great wolf and dragon terrorizing Europe and North America, trolls and giants can appear wherever the PCs happen to be. Of course, trying to fight such monsters (at least without the proper weapons) is foolhardy in the extreme. The PCs might have to spend a lot of time running and hiding at this stage, before the gods appear. Don't worry—they will have their chance to fight back (although the players shouldn't realize it yet).

Wherever they might be, the PCs see either the aftermath of the giants' destructive rampages or witness the devastation firsthand. PCs might come across smoldering, smashed buildings or huge footprints in red-hot asphalt. They might even see buildings collapsing in the distance, or cars hurtling through the air as if thrown. The GM can use such ominous signs to build tension before the PCs' first encounter with a giant—one that they would be smart to run from. Fortunately, the PCs might be able to use the giants' size against them, disappearing into sewers, tunnels, or other small spaces. Of course, if a giant does know where the PCs are hiding, its great strength means it can break through to them sooner or later—probably sooner.

Giants aren't the only supernatural creatures assaulting the world of humanity. Around the globe, the dead rise from their graves, intent on dragging the living down into Hel. These abominations manifest in a variety of forms, from mere skeletons to desiccated and mummified corpses to the recently deceased. These are no zombies, though. They are quick-moving, strong, resilient, and intelligent, yet consumed with a hatred for the living—they are the draugr.

But perhaps most surprising, even when compared to the notion that the hateful undead march to battle against the armies of the Earth, the mightiest figures of humanity return. Unlike the walking corpses battling alongside the giants, these heroes appear as they did in the primes of their lives, as flesh-and-blood champions of all nations, races, and genders, and they are possessed of even greater strength and vitality. Although it seems impossible to believe at first, many people soon learn to accept that these heroes are who they appear to be.

Their appearance raises the spirits of humanity, as warriors from throughout history rally soldiers of all nations against the encroaching giants and legions of the dead. Accompanying these great individuals are shining warriors, women clad in gleaming armor and bearing blades and shields. These mysterious, almost angelic figures fight alongside the returned heroes against the monsters.

THE RETURN OF THE GODS?

With humanity in its darkest hour, beings of supernatural strength and ability appear to rally its warriors and battle the monstrosities that assault it. Some identify these beings for what they are, recognizing Mjöltnir (Thor's hammer) or Odin's ravens. Although a few scoff when these beings introduce themselves as Thor, Odin, Heimdall, Freyr, and other ancient legends, most are ready to accept the truth upon witnessing their strength, particularly in light of all that has already happened.

These godlike beings display incredible prowess in battle, cutting swaths through the legions of the dead and vanquishing giants with hammer and blade, where even modern artillery was unable to strike them down. As well as fighting personally against the monsters, the gods rally humanity's armies, discussing strategy with generals or issuing commands directly to troops. Some world leaders are outraged by this usurpation of their authority, but on the battlefields that consume the planet, such protestations are dimly heard, and seldom heeded.

WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

Most people, understandably, do not cope very well with the fantastical events unfolding. As soon as the sun and moon vanish, scattered panicking and rioting breaks out around the world. Many people lock up their homes, and some get in their cars and start driving with no particular destination in sight. As the giants and undead appear, these reactions only increase in frequency and severity.

The revelation of wyrds and the presence of giants, draugr, and the gods themselves all defy reason and the beliefs of most people. Many are overcome by these events, evincing severe trauma responses ranging from insomnia, anxiety, and hypervigilance to dissociation, amnesia, and aggression. Chaos and panic are everywhere as events progress further; even many soldiers throw down their weapons and flee rather than face the supernatural monsters.

WHAT CAN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS DO?

Quite a lot, actually. Conveniently, it turns out the PCs are destined to play a part in the events of Ragnarök. Although the ancient sagas and Eddas focused on the actions of the gods and neglected to mention the humans involved, the PCs actually have important roles in the events of the final days. Of course, they might stumble into their destinies quite by accident, but they should eventually realize there is more to do than simply struggle to survive. After all, when even the gods fight and die, and the dead rise, mere survival might be considered a cowardly, unimportant goal.

Whereas some scenarios concentrate on enduring against omnipresent threats, Ragnarök gives the GM and players the opportunity to make a difference in the important events. The fates demand that the PCs end up in the right spot at the right time. They must either try to stay out of the way and survive the destruction or find some way to offer their assistance. For more on ways in which the PCs might become involved with the important events of Ragnarök, see the locations beginning on page 95.

THE TRUTH

The fate of the nine worlds has arrived. Although humanity has had many religions during its time, that of the Norse was uncannily accurate in its descriptions of the end times. Perhaps other religions were true in their own way, offering interpretations or translations of the same beliefs. Now, as foretold in Norse “mythology,” the day has come for the gods to clash with the giants, and with the great wolf Fenrir and the world serpent, Jörmungandr. Paradoxically, these events, though predestined, will decide the fate of all the worlds, not only that of Midgard, where humans reside. Humankind is caught in the middle of this epic conflict, yet certain humans still have their part to play in events.

THE FATE OF THE GODS

In ages past, the trickster god Loki was imprisoned beneath the Earth as punishment for his crimes. When the wolves Sköll and Hati devour the sun and moon, Ragnarök begins, and Loki breaks free from his chains. Playing the ultimate trick, Loki immediately frees the great wolf, Fenrir, from its own prison within the Scandes mountain range. This sets in motion the events of Ragnarök, the final destiny of the gods. Although these events are fated, they are no less important for it, and the gods will nevertheless fight with all their might. To succeed, however, they must have the help of humanity, and of certain individuals in particular.

A COLD AGE, A WIND AGE

A ceaseless night brings with it, of course, the cold. With the sun’s disappearance, temperatures around the world plummet drastically, and continue to drop, while the moon’s absence results in the loss of tides. The results of the celestial changes have profound repercussions, as air temperatures change abruptly and currents dissipate. Massive thunderstorms split the sky, earthquakes wrack the globe, and titanic hurricanes churn the seas. To most observers, it seems clear that the world is ending.

Soon, as the temperature plummets and the seas calm, storms and quakes give way to silence and stillness—or they would, were it not for the ceaseless warfare between the armies of humanity and otherworldly forces. Around the globe, snowfall blankets the ground, lakes freeze, and all of the Earth has become a frozen battleground.

A WOLF AGE, AN AGE OF GIANTS

With Fenrir freed from the mountain, the giants see their opportunity to wage the final war against both humanity and the gods. Leaving Jotunheim—the realm of giants—Muspelheim—the realm of fire—and Niflheim, the frost and fire giants begin their assault on Midgard. The armies of humanity are caught completely unprepared for this attack, and suffer heavy losses. The giants and trolls emerge from the depths of the Earth, coming from fissures and caves, and simply breaking up through the ground.

Even as Fenrir begins its rampage across Europe, the world-serpent, Jörmungandr, uncoils from its place encircling the earth. It enters Midgard by erupting from the



depths of the Pacific Ocean, unleashing earthquakes and sky-scraping waves that batter all nations along the Pacific Rim. Already devastated by the quakes and waves, California is no match when Jörmungandr emerges in the tsunamis’ wake.

THE WRATHFUL DEAD

With her father, Loki, freed from his prison, Hel, goddess of the underworld, pulls back the gates of her realm to unleash the legions of the dead upon the Earth. These undead warriors, the draugr, are no heroes or noble soldiers. These are the cowards, traitors, scoundrels, murderers, and all those unworthy of Valhalla. Since their deaths, they have lingered in the chill misery of the afterlife, their souls twisting and darkening with each passing age.

The draugr march on Midgard, fighting against humanity alongside the giants and trolls and the rampaging Fenrir and Jörmungandr. Many soldiers throw down their weapons in despair when they see the undead draugr approaching.

THE HEROES RETURN

Standing alert for the prophesied events, the god Heimdall blows his horn, Gjallarhorn, alerting the other gods to the troubles on Earth. Taking up their enchanted weapons, the gods cross the Bifrost, the bridge that divides Asgard from Midgard, and arrive on Earth to offer aid to beleaguered humanity against Loki and the forces of destruction.

Hearing the call of Gjallarhorn, the valkyries throw open the gates of Valhalla, allowing humanity's heroes to return in this hour of need. Among their number are the mightiest of nigh-mythical leaders and warriors from across the ages. Freyja, who claims half the valorous dead, marches her worthy soldiers from the field Fólkvangr, lending her strength to the fight. With their work gathering souls for Odin and Freyja now complete, the valkyries follow their charges across the Bifrost, lending their skills to the battle.

As gods, heroes, and valkyries set foot on Midgard, the Bifrost collapses. With the rainbow bridge in ruins, there is no way back to Asgard and Valhalla—meaning there is no retreat for the gods and heroes, who are now committed to the fight, whatever it takes.

THE FIELD OF GLORY

While giants and draugr are seen the world over, Jörmungandr, Fenrir, and the gods all eventually converge on whatever continent the PCs are on to engage in their final battles. For the sake of generalities and given where this book was published, this scenario is written assuming a North American group of PCs.

AN AXE AGE, A SWORD AGE

The trolls, frost and fire giants, and draugr that attack humanity are not creatures of our world, of Midgard. They are supernatural beings, creatures of magic possessed of great strength and fortitude. Although humanity has progressed greatly in the centuries since such creatures were last seen, modern technology is of little avail in the struggle.

Moreover, modern weapons technology has served to separate warriors from each other increasingly, through distance, speed, and ruthless efficiency. Modern armaments are tools that equalize cowards and heroes. Such weapons and principles are anathema to the gods of Asgard and to the denizens of Hel, Jotunheim, Muspelheim, and Niflheim. To put it simply, don't bring a gun to a sword fight.

Although they are not entirely immune to modern weapons, the creatures out of legend shrug off all but the most grievous of injuries caused by bullets or shells. Yet, traditional weapons forged by humankind, and wielded with courage and heroism, are effective. A draugr might advance through a hail of gunfire without lasting harm, but a warrior brave enough to face it up close can lay it low with a single sword blow. Likewise, a frost giant might emerge wounded but undaunted from the detonation of a missile, but succumb to a shield wall of steel-tipped spears.

This rule does not apply only to melee combat. Bows, throwing axes, and other ranged weapons that rely

purely or primarily on the skill and strength of the wielder maintain their full effectiveness. Steel and mettle, not laser-guidance systems and automatic weapons, are the key to defeating trolls, giants, and draugr.

Of course, the most potent weapons are those wielded by the gods, and other magical weapons provided by the svartálfar to humanity's returning heroes. Although these powerful artifacts cannot save the gods from their fates, intrepid PCs might put them to good use after their owners meet their doom.

THE INITIAL RESPONSE

With the disappearance of Earth's star and moon, panic sweeps over the planet. When all of the world's populace simultaneously receive their wyrds, things get even worse. People take drastic actions in misguided attempts to avert their fates, from stockpiling weapons and food to committing outright murder. Military and political leaders declare wars and "emergency actions" to protect themselves and their nations. These battles weaken armies and deplete resources needed for the coming fight, yet also mean that militaries are at a combat-ready state when disaster strikes.

As nightmarish monsters appear from nowhere, many nations cease their war-making and join forces against the supernatural threats. Some, however, continue their shortsighted wars, splitting their resources between their mortal enemies and the immortal creatures encroaching on all fronts. Fortunately, the United States is able to reach an agreement with Canada and Mexico. The three nations largely work together to deal with the threats.

Earth's militaries try to fight, but their tactics and equipment are unsuited for the enemies facing them. Fenrir and Jörmungandr are swift, destructive, and all but immune to the modern weapons used against them. The beasts are capable of annihilating huge swaths of soldiers and vehicles, and moving on before a counterattack is mounted.

Although many draugr fall, blasted apart or mowed down in hails of bullets, more continuously pour forth from Hel, wielding corroded blades and splintering bows. Those draugr who lived more recently take up guns of their own, or steal tanks and other vehicles.

Trolls and giants are resistant to cowardly guns and other modern weapons, but they are not immune to them. Though these beings are possessed of supernatural resilience—especially against unworthy adversaries—enough bullets or a big enough shell will bring them down.

Needless to say, things do not initially go well for humanity. Not only are Earth's armies completely unprepared for such a fight, but the legions of dead far outnumber the living soldiers. With each passing moment, humans lose ground in the battle against the otherworldly invaders. Loki himself plays no small part, sowing chaos amid the defenders.

Fortunately, humanity is not alone in the fight. Soon, the gods arrive, accompanied by the heroes of ages past and the valkyries.

TIMELINE

Ragnarök begins abruptly, but the full scope of the battle—and the stakes—are not immediately clear. As time goes on, an ever-increasing number supernatural beings enters the fray.

00:00:00	The wolves Sköll and Hati catch and devour the sun and moon, plunging the Earth into darkness and cold.
08:49:00	All people on Earth briefly black out. They resume consciousness each having learned their wyrd—approximate knowledge of the time and nature of their death.
12:32:00	Some individuals begin to take preemptive actions to avert their fate, from traveling to murder.
17:15:00	The President of the United States orders a number of military actions against key targets in several countries.
DAY 2	Wars break out around the world as politicians act on the knowledge of their wyrds.
DAY 2	Loki breaks free of his chains beneath the Earth.
DAY 3	Loki frees the great wolf, Fenrir, from its prison beneath the Scandes, resulting in massive destruction as the colossal being erupts from the mountains.
DAY 3	The world serpent, Jörmungandr, emerges from the depths of the Pacific Ocean, unleashing massively destructive tidal waves and triggering seauakes that cause tsunamis.
DAY 4	The first frost giants and trolls are seen, although few witnesses survive.
DAY 6	Surtr leads his fire giants onto Earth, igniting the landscape and striking down enemies with his flaming sword.
DAY 7	The goddess Hel unleashes the draugr onto the Earth. The undead emerge from caves, lakes, oceans, tunnels, and other dark or unseen places around the globe, immediately attacking civilians and soldiers alike.
DAY 8	The watchful god Heimdall sets down his mug of mead and blows his horn, Gjallarhorn, alerting the other gods and the valkyries to the turmoil in Midgard.
DAY 8	The valkyries throw wide the gates of Valhalla and Freyja empties her hall, Sessrúmnir, sending the heroes and noble warriors of all history to march across the Bifrost to Earth, appearing at many places around the world.
DAY 8	The gods, including Odin, Thor, Heimdall, Freya, Freyr, Vidar, and Vali, accompany the valorous dead across the Bifrost.
DAY 9	Thor strikes down a fire giant in Times Square. The event is broadcast around the world.
DAY 9	With Valhalla emptied and their work there done, the valkyries cross the Bifrost to join the fight.
DAY 9	As the last of Asgard's residents cross the Bifrost, the bridge, still resonating with Gjallarhorn's call, collapses.
DAY 10	George Washington appears on the National Mall, and with a blow of his sword, he brings the Washington Monument crashing down. "This is not a time for reflection," he declares to the stunned crowd, "but an age for deeds."
DAY 11	Disregarding the protests of the sitting President and many members of Congress, George Washington assumes the role of commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the United States.
DAY 12	After demolishing most of London, Fenrir enters the Atlantic Ocean and begins swimming west.
DAY 12	The god Freyr battles a group of fire giants led by Surtr, but eventually falls beneath Surtr's flaming sword.
DAY 13	General George S. Patton gives the first of several rousing speeches to the beleaguered troops fighting Jörmungandr.
DAY 14	The tide begins to turn in the United States' battles, thanks to the involvement of the returned heroes and the gods.
DAY 14	Heimdall confronts Loki, and the two engage in combat.
DAY 14	Fenrir arrives at North America.
DAY 15	Genghis Khan and Jeanne d'Arc lead a victorious assault against a large band of fire giants. Shaka Zulu strikes Surtr a near-fatal blow, despite his own grievous injuries. Surtr survives, but only barely.
DAY 16	Loki kills Heimdall's steed, Gulltoppr.
DAY 17	Thor battles the world serpent, Jörmungandr.
DAY 18	Odin halts the devastating advance of Fenrir, and the two engage in battle.
DAY 19	The god Vidar, Odin's son, arrives and enters the battle against Fenrir.
DAY 19	Thor defeats the great serpent but dies immediately after from the potent venom, delivered by several bites.
DAY 19	Fenrir devours an exhausted and wounded Odin.
DAY 19	The god Vidar slays the weakened Fenrir, avenging his father.
DAY 20	Exhausted from many days of battle, Loki and Heimdall finally slay one another simultaneously.
DAY 21	A new sun appears in the sky, and the Earth begins to warm. Baldr emerges from Hel and returns to Asgard to take Odin's place as lord of Valhalla.

BATTLEGROUND



WHILE the entire realm of Midgard is a battlefield during Ragnarök, certain areas see particularly high concentrations of combat. The PCs might travel to such an area to aid against a large force of draugr or one of the more potent monsters, or they might unwittingly stumble into the middle of an ongoing battle. Regardless of the circumstances, survival requires cunning, skill, and bravery.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- In order to reach their destination, the PCs must cross a battlefield, or somehow get around it.
- A particularly foul and evil historical persona is leading the army of draugr. The PCs must help defeat the villain if the living are to triumph.
- After a brush with death, the PCs awake to find their enemies slain and a Valkyrie tending their wounds.
- A svartálfar asks the PCs to deliver an important magical item to the leader of the living forces (who could be either a living officer or a returned hero) or to a god.
- The PCs are captured by trolls and given an offer: Retrieve their most hated foe for them, or serve as dinner.
- A respected historical figure commends the PCs on their courage or skill, and tasks them with an important mission.
- Their side is losing, and the PCs must choose to fight—and likely die—valiantly, or flee. If they make the right choice, relief forces or valkyries soon arrive and turn the tide.
- The PCs come across a slain warrior or god, who still grips a potent magical weapon.

FREYR VS. SURTR



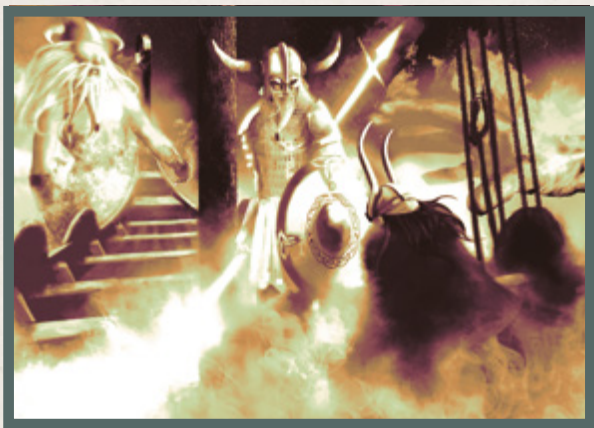
THE god Freyr is fated to die in battle against Surtr and his fire giants, but the PCs also have a destined role in this event. The location of this epic battle can be anywhere the PCs might happen across it, or they could travel there—possibly borne aloft by valkyries—at the request of another god. Heimdall is particularly likely to make such a request, as he is gifted with foresight.

Having previously given it away, Freyr no longer possesses his magic sword, putting him at a distinct disadvantage against Surtr and his flaming blade. Freyr nonetheless battles bravely with an expertly crafted sword and shield, but Surtr eventually shatters both of these and deals Freyr a mortal wound. This fate is unavoidable, but the PCs still have their part to contribute.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Another god or a svartálfar gives the PCs a magic weapon and bids them take it to Freyr. Although they arrive too late to save the god, perhaps they can wield the weapon to avenge him.
- Freyr is outnumbered by the fire giants, and for him to have any chance at Surtr, the PCs must distract or even defeat some of them.
- As Freyr battles Surtr and the fire giants, structures catch fire and molten asphalt runs in the streets. The flames and heat transform the surrounding environment into a hellscape, posing many dangers to PCs and bystanders moving through or trying to escape the area.
- It is clear that Surtr's flaming sword puts him at a great advantage in the battle; the PCs must try to find some way to separate him from it.

HEIMDALL VS. LOKI



HAVING been the first to learn of Loki's escape, Heimdall pursues the wicked trickster god from northern Europe across the sea to North America, finally catching up to him in the PCs' area. The battle between these two mighty gods lasts for days, due both to the skill of each and Loki's use of tricks to prolong the engagement. These deceptions lead to something of a running battle, with Heimdall and Loki pursuing each other throughout the area. Consequently, the PCs might not experience this event all at once, but over a series of encounters spread across several days.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ Loki attempts to tempt the PCs to aid him in some way, such as by helping him escape, bringing him a magic weapon, or distracting Heimdall. He offers power, immortality, magic, and anything else the PCs might wish. All his promises, of course, are lies, but he is nothing if not convincing.
- ☼ Loki uses his deceptive magic to switch places with one of the PCs, both in location and appearance. The unfortunate PC must now face the furious Heimdall and somehow convince him—and the other PCs—of the deception.
- ☼ In order for Heimdall and Loki to slay each other simultaneously, the PCs must help distract or even attack Loki. Otherwise, the trickster god is set to deliver the killing blow first.
- ☼ A force of giants is closing in, and the PCs must hold them off or lure them away before they interfere in the battle.
- ☼ Loki frightens away Heimdall's golden-maned horse, Gulltoppr, and the PCs must retrieve it.

ODIN VS. FENRIR



THE All-Father is fated to battle—and lose to—the great wolf Fenrir. As with the other gods and their fated battles, destiny has brought Odin to the United States, and specifically to the PCs' location, for unknowable reasons. Mounted atop a mighty steed, the ruler of the gods charges the titanic wolf to engage in an equally titanic battle. Due to the size of Fenrir and the power of both individuals, the collateral damage of their epic conflict is considerable. Fenrir tosses Odin through walls and tramples cars. Odin hurls his unerringly accurate magic spear, Gungnir, clear through a building to reach Fenrir. Buildings collapse and the ground splits asunder at the devastating attacks these immortals unleash.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ Fenrir crashes into a building, bringing it toppling down right on top of the PCs.
- ☼ The PCs happen to be caught standing between Odin and Fenrir, and must avoid being impaled on Gungnir.
- ☼ The ravens Huginn and Muninn come to fetch the PCs, for Heimdall told Odin they must be present at his battle.
- ☼ Fenrir strikes Odin's ravens from the sky, and the PCs must find where they landed.
- ☼ As Odin battles Fenrir with his sword, he calls on the PCs to retrieve Gungnir, which is embedded in the street, a concrete wall, or some other durable surface. Pulling the spear free requires great strength or clever thinking.
- ☼ After Odin has been slain, Vidar calls on the PCs to help him avenge his father and slay Fenrir. How they do so depends on their weapons and skills, but one might even take up Gungnir.

SVARTÁLFAR BARGAIN



THE svartálfar are master smiths, the crafters of many of the magical weapons and armor used by the gods and the returned warriors of Earth's history. If the PCs strike a suitable bargain or impress the svartálfar, these diminutive craftspeople can provide them with enchanted armor and weapons that allow the PCs to fight back against the monsters invading their world.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☁ The PCs encounter a lone svartálfar under attack by a troll or a group of draugr. If the PCs defeat these enemies or otherwise save the dwarf, he brings them to a hidden smithy in a cave straddling the worlds, and his kin provide these new heroes with weapons and armor to aid them in battle.
- ☁ Seeing some promise in the PCs, a group of svartálfar approach them and offer to trade magical items for something of value. Modern money is of no use to the magical beings, but they might accept items of personal value to the PCs, as well as gold or precious stones.
- ☁ A craven thief has stolen a magic sword from the svartálfar, and they will richly reward anyone who recovers it.
- ☁ At a major military base, svartálfar are busy crafting enchanted arms and armor for the United States' soldiers, as payment for a service rendered to them by a heroic military figure of the United States' past (perhaps Francis Marion or Joshua Chamberlain).

HEROIC WEAPONS

Heroic weapons are the sorts of weapons stories are told about; weapons with a history, weapons crafted by the hands of clever smiths, or wielded by mighty heroes. A heroic weapons does not possess any special abilities that makes it more powerful than another weapon, save that being noted as "Heroic" marks it out as something special. See the Beings of Myth special rule found on the NPCs in this scenario.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THOR VS. JÖRMUNGANDR



As prophesied, the god Thor must battle the Midgard Serpent, Jörmungandr. The great dragon is impossibly massive and a formidable foe even for the mighty god of thunder. The two engage in combat somewhere in the PCs' vicinity, for the PCs are destined to be involved in the battle.

The conflict is monumentally destructive. Whether it is in the middle of a city, a small town, or even an expanse of wilderness, the trees, buildings, and anything else in the area are leveled by great sweeps of the serpent's tail, shattered by Mjöltnir, or stricken by thunder. Although Thor is ultimately triumphant, after slaying the dragon, he takes only nine steps before succumbing to its venom and dying.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☁ The PCs must temporarily take cover as lightning streaks down from the sky all around the battling god and serpent.
- ☁ Innocent bystanders caught in the vicinity of the battle are at great risk, and only the PCs can save them—but doing so means abandoning Thor to fight on his own.
- ☁ After Thor hurtles Mjöltnir at the world serpent, the hammer crashes through a building and brings it toppling down, endangering bystanders.
- ☁ The PCs see that the venom of Jörmungandr's bites are slowing Thor down, but is there anything they can do?
- ☁ In the aftermath of the battle, the PCs have the opportunity to take Mjöltnir for their own.
- ☁ The great serpent swallows whole one of the PCs or an ally, and their only hope is to help Thor kill it quickly.
- ☁ Jörmungandr wraps around a building with either the PCs or other survivors inside and begins to crush it.
- ☁ Jörmungandr bites Thor, and a fang slices through his belt, which falls to the ground below. Without his belt, Thor is greatly weakened.



DRAUGR

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
4	3	2	3	1	1

Features: +Undead, +Variable Size, +Warrior of Old, -From Another Time, -Hoarder.

Equipment: Heroic spear or sword (2 positive dice, +3 damage), rusty mail (2 physical resistance), buried treasure hoard.

FENRIR

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
6	6	2	6	2	N/A

Features: +Inconceivably Terrifying, -Singleminded, +/-Colossal, +/-Great Devourer.

Equipment: Slavering maw (2 positive dice, +8 damage), monstrous hide (8 physical resistance).

Being of Myth: When attacked by a character without an heroic weapon or the Being of Myth special rule, Fenrir's resistance is counted as double.

Colossal: Each of Fenrir's stress tracks has six tiers of three boxes each. Once all eighteen of these boxes are filled, Fenrir dies.

Unfettered Rage: Fenrir deals +1 damage for each full tier of physical stress he has.



FIRE GIANT

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
6	5	4	3	3	2

Features: +Fiery Aura, +Unnatural Strength, -Violent, -Wrathful, +/-Titanic.

Equipment: Colossal flaming sword (heroic, 6 negative dice, +8 damage), searing mail (3 physical resistance).

Being of Myth: When attacked by a character without an heroic weapon or the Being of Myth special rule, a fire giant's resistance is counted as double.

Fiery Aura: A character that makes a physical attack against a fire giant immediately suffers 1 physical stress from the super-heated air that surrounds the giant. This stress ignores resistance.

Titanic: Each of a fire giant's stress tracks has four tiers of three boxes each. Once all twelve of these boxes are filled, the fire giant dies.

FROST GIANT

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
6	5	3	4	2	3

Features: +Frozen Aura, +Unnatural Strength, –Prideful, –Violent, +/-Titanic.

Equipment: Colossal axe (heroic, 5 negative dice, +7 damage), frosty mail (3 physical resistance).

Being of Myth: When attacked by a character without an heroic weapon or the Being of Myth special rule, a frost giant's resistance is counted as double.

Frozen Aura: Characters who make a physical attack against a frost giant add 1 negative die to their pool due the superchilled air that surrounds the giant.

Titanic: Each of a frost giant's stress tracks has four tiers of three boxes each. Once all twelve of these boxes are filled, the frost giant dies.



JÖRMUNGANDR

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
6	6	2	6	2	N/A

Features: +Incomprehensibly Terrifying, +World Serpent, –Single-Minded, +/-Colossal.

Equipment: Venomous fangs (2 positive dice, +10 damage), scales (5 physical resistance).

Being of Myth: When attacked by a character without an heroic weapon or the Being of Myth special rule, Jörmungandr's resistance is counted as double.

Colossal: Each of Jörmungandr's stress tracks has six tiers of three boxes each. Once all eighteen of these boxes are filled, Jörmungandr dies.

Hypervenomous: Jörmungandr's successful physical attacks automatically apply the World Serpent's Venom physical trauma. At the end of an encounter, any character with the World Serpent's Venom trauma dies.



TROLL

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
4	4	2	1	1	2

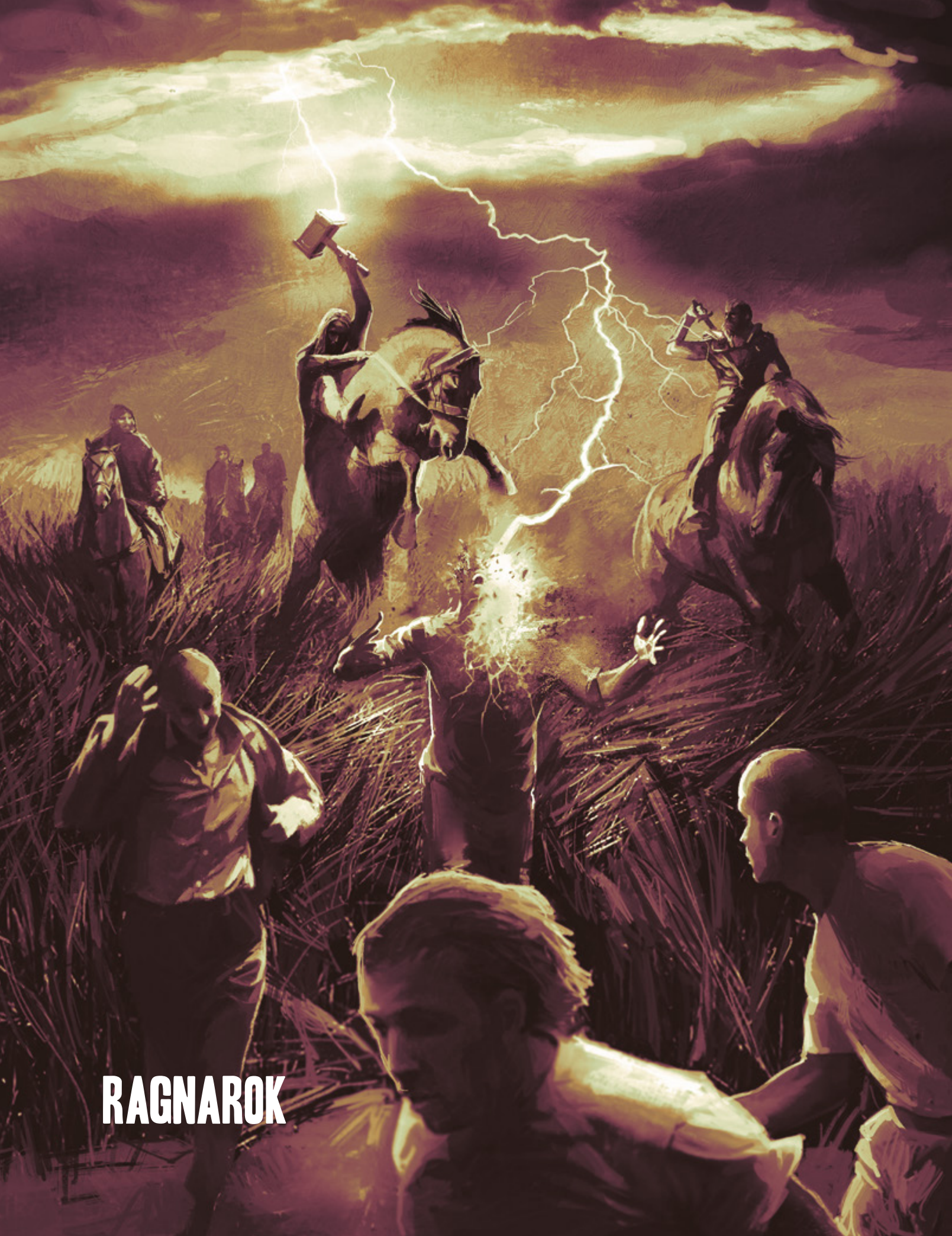
Features: +Brutish, +Unnatural Strength, –Hideous, –Huge, –Hungry, +/-Extremely Clannish.

Equipment: Club (1 negative die, +4 damage), filthy rags, stolen heroic weapon.

Being of Myth: When attacked by a character without an heroic weapon or the Being of Myth special rule, a troll's resistance is counted as double.

Turn to Stone: A troll exposed to direct sunlight turns to stone and dies immediately.





RAGNAROK

RAGNARÖK

POST-APOCALYPSE



Ragnarök wasn't the end for humanity, after all, as much as it seemed that way. The casualties were great, but humanity survived. Really, it was the end for the gods. I hear a few are still around, but most of them died fighting—for us, I suppose. Everything we thought we knew about science and the cosmos turned out to be wrong—not to mention most religions. It was a rude awakening, but the gods of Asgard were there when we needed them most.

Life isn't back to the way it was—far from it. Although the armies are broken, small groups of undead and individual giants still roam the planet, raiding and attacking at random. The governments of the world are in shambles, and some of our so-called leaders are still in hiding. Those few gods that remain are not impressed, and I hear they are making some changes. Good, I say. The politicians didn't help us through Ragnarök; they only made things worse.

Of course, the strangest thing is this overlap between worlds. I don't really understand it, but there are places where other worlds kind of meet Earth. Some are great places—heavenly, even—but others are horrible, and filled with monsters. You have to be careful; you never know when a wrong step could take you into another plane of existence.

Overall, I'd have to say it's an improvement.

NINE WORLDS AS ONE

With Loki and his foul progeny Fenrir and Jörmungandr defeated, Ragnarök comes to an end. The daughter of Söl takes up her chariot and returns light to the sky, providing much-needed relief from the endless night and bone-chilling cold, greatly bolstering humanity's shaken spirits. With the greatest of all giants defeated, the remaining gods and the heroes of humanity's past rally the defenders to drive off most of the remaining monsters, scattering their armies and truly ending Ragnarök.

In the aftermath of Ragnarök, the nine worlds of the cosmos come together, merging or overlapping in many places. In a number of ways, this is a reward for humanity's valiant warrior spirit, providing access to the divine realm of Asgard in places such as the mead hall on the plain of Okólnir. The living and dead can be together again, as Valhalla's gates remain open. With the Bifrost broken, such places of overlap are the only links between Midgard and Asgard. But whether through some twist of fate or inevitable consequence, less pleasant realms also overlap, such as Jotunheim and Muspelheim, the domains of the giants, and Hel. These convergences are rarer, but they can be very dangerous.

Throughout the world, creatures of myth and legend co-exist alongside humans and the remnants of modern civilization. Magic fills the air, and blades and shields replace guns for most true warriors. The *svartálfar* provide masterfully crafted—even magical—arms and armor for those who fought by the gods' side. If the PCs did not receive such armaments previously, they are likely to now, assuming they got through the apocalypse with courage and virtue.

The events of Ragnarök highlighted the follies and failures of so-called modernity, both in technology and society. Many people willingly return to an older way of doing things, while others cling to the world they knew as best they can in light of the undeniable proof that magic and myth are every bit as real as science and progress.

NEW MANAGEMENT

Of the many gods who engaged in the final battle, only four survive. These are Vidar and Vali, both sons of Odin, and Magni and Modi, twin sons of Thor. Thor's hammer, Mjölnir, passes to his sons, unless the PCs have already claimed it for themselves (in which case there might well be a debate as to the weapon's rightful bearers). These gods take a strong hand in directly guiding humanity in its rebuilding. In the aftermath of the twilight of the gods, they help humans adjust to this strange new world of worlds.

In light of the new truths revealed by the gods' return and the destruction wrought on most countries, civilization must be rebuilt in a new form. After all, Earth is no longer alone, but joined to the other realms at mystical points around the globe. The power and authority of the gods cannot be denied, and most people are glad to defer to their judgment in redesigning civilization. At the direction of the gods, those who fought bravely are given positions of leadership, replacing the cowardly politicians who made things worse at the outset of Ragnarök and throughout its duration.

Many politicians and leaders are, however, unwilling to give up their power, arguing against the gods' authority. In some cases, this results in further battles between soldiers following orders and those of true warrior spirit, led by the gods and heroes of the past. Unsurprisingly, few soldiers are willing to continue to defend craven politicians against history's most worthy heroes, making these battles short-lived. Nevertheless, such tragic skirmishes are numerous, resulting in much unnecessary bloodshed.

In the United States, the transition is largely peaceful, thanks primarily to the presence of George Washington. The father of the United States appears before the remnants of Congress and the Executive Branch to announce that the country must enter a new age, starting over based on the principles that guided its creation, and abolishing the corrupt political apparatus that has grown over time.

If the PCs fought bravely, the gods approach them with thanks and recognition. They might also ask for the PCs' help in dealing with the cowards who still cling to power, or with other aspects of rebuilding a new society in accordance with ancient Scandinavian law. Sadly, the former might require battling against living soldiers still loyal to their leaders, unless the PCs can convince them of the gods' greater authority. Other activities might include fighting off remaining monsters, convincing the still-panicked populace that the worst is over and that the gods are—in fact—gods, and leading efforts to rebuild cities.

If the PCs were truly impressive during Ragnarök, the gods ask them to serve as warrior-rulers in this new world. This is a great honor and a great burden, for such individuals are rulers not only on Midgard, but on all of the merged worlds. They must resolve disputes, lead warriors into battle against giants and draugr, divvy up land, and make many difficult decisions. As the PCs adjust to their new positions, the gods are available to offer advice and guidance—at least when they are not away battling monsters or seeing to the reestablishment of civilization in other places around the globe.

THE FATE OF THE DEAD

With the gates of Valhalla thrown open, the spirits of valiant warriors and virtuous people are free to return to Earth, even those who died during the events of Ragnarök. This includes allies and friends and family of the PCs, and even any PCs who died. With the nine worlds merged, the division between life and afterlife is all but non-existent. If someone is to die a second time, they—like the gods—simply cease to be or, perhaps, pass on to some unknown tenth world, completely cut off from both Midgard and Asgard.

As the defenders of Midgard rout the remaining giants and draugr, the gods Vidar and Vali force Hel to resume her stewardship of her realm, shutting the gates and preventing the escape of any more draugr. With her father, Loki, dead, Hel has little reason left to rebel.

THE LINGERING THREAT

Although their organized armies are broken and the majority have been defeated, monsters still trouble the world. Both individually and in small bands, frost and fire giants, trolls, draugr, and even more beasts unleashed by the merging of the worlds strike at humanity as it tries to recover and rebuild. Some of these monsters remain on Midgard, while others retreat to their respective realms, only to return through points of overlap to try once again to destroy humanity. Without the resistance of the other gods, these beings, if left to their own devices, might unite into a force powerful enough to overwhelm humankind. It is up to the PCs and heroes to seek them out and slay them before this happens.

The greatest remaining threat (unless the PCs already avenged Freyr) is the fire giant Surtr. This cunning leader and powerful warrior has the potential to unite the remaining giants and monsters of all kinds. Finding and slaying him is a high priority for the gods, but with so many other threats and challenges before them, they might turn to the PCs for this task.

The draugr also continue to plague the world, although their numbers are greatly reduced from their heights at the battle of Ragnarök. These unholy creatures are returned cowards and criminals, and their sins are reflected in their foul appearance. There is no mistaking the draugr for the virtuous individuals released from Valhalla during and after Ragnarök. However, with the gates of Hel closed, new draugr are unable to enter the world—unless someone were to breach the gates, a distinct possibility thanks to the overlap of the realms.

Although an uneasy peace eventually comes to the world, the continuing threat of the gods' enemies, new dangers unleashed by the joining of the worlds, and the evil endemic to humanity itself mean that valorous and mighty heroes are needed as much as ever.

FLIGHT FROM RAGNARÖK



THE battles of Ragnarök, both those waged by humans at the outset and those between the gods and giants, were devastating. Entire cities collapsed under the onslaught, and countless refugees had to flee their homes. Ragnarök having concluded, cities around the globe lie in ruins, leaving many people with nowhere to go. Remaining monsters continue to raid and pillage, and many communities are unprepared to defend themselves even from small bands of giants or draugr.

Some people actually choose not to return to their former homes. In light of the gods' return to the world and the collapse of modern society, these people believe that Ragnarök was proof of humanity's errors, and they decide to adopt an archaic lifestyle.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs see a band of giants pursuing a fleeing group of refugees.
- A group of survivors asks the PCs to protect them as they make their way back to their old home.
- The PCs find a small community in a rural or wilderness area, living simply as their ancestors did, but valuing martial ability.
- Fleeing survivors are heading toward an even greater danger, such as the pit of Náströnd (see page 104), an enclave of giants or draugr, or even the collapsed Bifrost. The PCs have to convince the panicking people to change their course or turn back.
- A group of refugees has gathered around the mead hall on the plain of Okolnir, asking for shelter and food. But they are considered cowards and denied entry. The PCs might try to convince the mead hall's residents otherwise, or they might encourage the refugees to leave.

NÁSTRÖND



THE pit of Náströnd is one of the most terrible places in the realm of Hel. Unfortunately, when the nine worlds merged, Náströnd overlapped with Midgard. Whether this convergence is dangerously close to the PCs or far away, there are a number of reasons they might need to visit the nightmarish domain.

In Náströnd, the damned are condemned to suffer for eternity as serpents bite and tear at their bodies. Previously, it was the destination for those guilty of the most heinous crimes. Now, as it straddles the boundary between worlds, it presents a threat to anyone who wanders into the vicinity, and evil individuals might be able to use its presence to their advantage.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A group of the worst criminals imaginable have escaped from Náströnd and are roaming the land engaging in wickedness.
- When the worlds merged, innocent people were trapped in Náströnd. Only the PCs can free them, but doing so requires fighting past guardian draugr and the serpents themselves.
- One of the surviving gods tasks the PCs with accompanying the valkyries as they deliver to Náströnd a group of evil individuals who took advantage of Ragnarök to engage in their sins.
- The PCs learn that an old friend or ally (or even a PC who died during the apocalypse) has been wrongly imprisoned in Náströnd.
- A group of draugr seek to free one of history's most evil villains from Náströnd, in order to rally the remaining monsters and reignite the war.

OKOLNIR MEAD HALL



THE heavenly mead hall exists on the plain of Okolnir, in Asgard and Midgard at once, where it serves as a bridge between these worlds in much the same way as Bifrost once did. Only the worthy are welcome in the mead hall: the valiant warriors within usher in their fellow worthies but turn away cowards.

The mead hall is always spacious enough to comfortably accommodate the many warriors within, no matter how many might come or go. The mead and beer flow freely and are always of the most impeccable quality, yet no matter how much one consumes, one never becomes inappropriately inebriated. The hall hosts history's finest brewers and entertainers, and it is frequented by the valkyries. The surviving gods, Magni, Modi, Vidar, and Vali, often spend time in the Okolnir mead hall as well. To spend time in the hall is to know true camaraderie and bliss.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- If the PCs fought bravely during Ragnarök, they are welcome in the hall. But if they ran from challenges or failed to aid the gods, they are turned away.
- In the mead hall on Okolnir, the PCs find a friend or ally (or even another PC) who died heroically during Ragnarök, who welcomes them for a horn of mead and requests their assistance.
- One of the gods or a great historical figure asks the PCs to share one of their own stories of battle.
- A large force of giants and draugr have gathered to attack Okolnir, and the PCs must join in the valiant defense.
- There are still many troubles in the world. The mead hall on Okolnir is a place to share news, where the PCs might learn of potential quests. Such quests may range from rescuing survivors from Náströnd to vanquishing surviving giants.

MAGNI

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
6	6	4	3	4	3

Features: +Aesir, +Child of Thor, +God of Strength (Magni).

Equipment: Gullfaxi (Magni) ("Golden Mane," the lord of horses), svartálfar-forged mail (5 physical resistance).

Being of Myth: When attacked by a character without an heroic weapon or the Being of Myth special rule, Magni's resistance is counted as double.

Lord of Strength (Magni): Magni does not suffer stress from remaining negative dice when making tests for feats of strength. Magni can also name a character his champion. Until Magni chooses otherwise, that character receives the "+Champion of Strength" feature.

MODI

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
6	6	4	3	4	3

Features: +Aesir, +Child of Thor, +God of Anger.

Equipment: Mjölfnir (Modi) (heroic, 2 positive dice, +9 damage); svartálfar-forged mail (5 physical resistance).

Being of Myth: When attacked by a character without an heroic weapon or the Being of Myth special rule, Modi's resistance is counted as double.

Lord of Anger (Modi): Modi does not suffer stress from remaining negative dice when making attacks in anger. Modi can also name a character his champion. Until Modi chooses otherwise, that character receives the "+Champion of Anger" feature.



VIDAR

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
6	6	4	6	4	2

Features: +Aesir, +Slayer of the Fenris Wolf, +Son of Odin, +/-The Silent.

Equipment: The Iron Shoe (heroic, 2 positive dice, +9 damage), svartálfar-forged mail (5 physical resistance).

Being of Myth: When attacked by a character without an heroic weapon or the Being of Myth special rule, Vidar's resistance is counted as double.

Lord of Heroes: Vidar can name a character a Hero of Ragnarök. Until Vidar chooses otherwise, that character gains the Being of Myth special rule.

VALI

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
5	6	4	6	4	2

Features: +Aesir, +The Avenger, +Divine Huntsman, -Instrument of Fate.

Equipment: Lios-beri ("Light Bringer," bow of the hunt) (heroic, 3 positive dice, +7 damage), svartálfar-forged mail (5 physical resistance).

Being of Myth: When attacked by a character without an heroic weapon or the Being of Myth special rule, Vali's resistance is counted as double.

Lord of Vengeance: Vali does not suffer stress from remaining negative dice when making tests against any being that has committed a greatly dishonorable act. Vali can also name a character his champion. Until Vali chooses otherwise, that character receives the "+Champion of Vengeance" feature.





REVELATION

REVELATION

APOCALYPSE



We were told He would come again to judge the living and the dead. A lot of us even gave lip service to the idea, but how many thought it would happen in their lifetime? Actually, quite a few. But not enough, clearly. Either way, it turns out they were right on the money. Looking back, things were getting worse for a while. It was gradual at first, but maybe we should have known. Is this being done to us, or did we do it to ourselves? Maybe if more of us had faith, things would be different. Then again, it was written down centuries ago. Maybe it was always destined to be like this. Maybe there's nothing we could have done.

I guess I should thank God that I'm still alive, but I just don't know anymore. After all, isn't the Creator the one doing all this? Or is it the other one, the Fallen One? Maybe being alive isn't even something to be thankful for anymore. The Earth isn't like it used to be. Suffering is everywhere. Even now, the cavalry hunt for us.

I never took it literally, but it's all true. The Horsemen... I've never conceived of anything so terrifying. But they're real, and they're unstoppable. Every day, I pray for an ending to all this, but it seems to somehow just keep getting worse. I have to believe it will get better. After all, everything else has come true, just as it was once revealed and written. So I'll keep praying, and try to keep believing.

REVELATION finds the PCs living through the prophesied end of days. The Creator and the Great Deceiver are locked in a cosmic battle for the soul of all humanity, which the PCs are lucky enough to witness firsthand.

The seven seals are opened, and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse descend upon the Earth. Pestilence, War, Famine, and Death ravage the world, and the PCs must struggle to survive in the face of impossible odds.

Now, they must endure as the sky turns to blood and rains fire, as the world is cast into perpetual darkness, and as plagues of locusts and the very armies of Hell are unleashed on the world. No, it is not a good time to be alive. Then again, the dead are going to be judged, too. Maybe the best thing to pray for is a quick trial.

THE EXPERIENCE

The end of days has arrived, when the forces of good and evil clash in the final battle for the fate of all creation. As predicted centuries ago, humankind must undergo a series of trials. Amid the ordeals, the PCs must find a way to overcome the ultimate tribulation.

WHAT THE PLAYER CHARACTERS SEE

The apocalypse has been in the making for some time, perhaps since the dawn of humanity. But for all intents and purposes, it begins with a marked upswing in catastrophes, both natural and of human origin, around the globe. Although the PCs should not realize it at first, these represent the presence of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Of course, clever PCs might put two and two together—but there is nothing they can do to stop what's coming.

Examined individually, the works of the Horsemen seem to be unrelated hardships and disasters. But looking at the larger picture, one can see that pestilence, war, famine, and death are all concurrently increasing in frequency and severity around the globe. How much of this the PCs are aware of depends on how closely they watch the news, what they see on social media, and so on.

As pestilence, war, famine, and death all reach unprecedented levels worldwide, even the most stubborn or oblivious person must come to the realization that these are not unrelated incidents, but rather that something big is happening. As the myriad catastrophes reach a crescendo, billions scream out for help, and the world's attention splits between countless horrors, an earthquake of unprecedented scale rocks the entire planet. Defying our understanding of plate tectonics, every continent, every nation, every block on Earth rumbles and shakes simultaneously. Buildings collapse, the ground splits asunder, and many millions are killed or injured in the event. All the other horrors that have been unfolding suddenly seem a little less pressing, and it is impossible to avoid the fact that something momentous is in motion.

Wherever the PCs are, they feel the earthquake. It's enough to knock them from their feet, and it might, particularly if they live somewhere unaccustomed to quakes, bring the building down. The earthquake is a good way to begin the game in earnest. The GM might fill the players in on background information pertaining to war, famine, and plague, with the group sitting down to play a game to take their minds off these horrors, when a massive tremor quite literally brings the house down.

The next day, the sun fails to rise. The first country to experience this is the United States, but it soon becomes clear that the sun has vanished from the sky. Over the next twenty-four hours, the stars disappear from the firmament, the wind ceases to blow, and finally, the moon glows a dull red. Wherever the PCs are, these changes

are inescapable. Of course, if they are indoors during a marathon gaming session, it might take them a while to catch on!

If the PCs haven't yet noticed that something is amiss, they certainly do when fire and blood begin to rain from the sky. If they are outdoors, this is extremely dangerous. If indoors, well, it's still pretty dangerous. The PCs' first inclination might be to hunker down in someone's home, but they might be forced to move by the rain of fire igniting the building.

As if all this weren't bad enough, next, a series of previously unknown undersea volcanoes erupts, boiling the seas. The PCs might see footage, read reports online, or if they live on the coast, witness it firsthand. Countless dead fish rise to the surface, cooked alive. People also die, as many have sought safety from the raining fire in the ocean.

If none of this has yet forced the PCs to flee from their initial location, the meteor shower just might do the trick. Completely unpredicted by astronomers, meteors bombard the Earth from all directions, scattering ashen filth across the surface to poison the lakes and rivers (which escaped the boiling, although they were already showing a bit of discoloration from the blood rain).

As though in cahoots with the meteors, the moon now makes its exit, taking its blood-red glow and casting it into perpetual darkness. Fortunately, the many out-of-control wildfires and residential fires cast some illumination.

The chaos seems to calm down briefly, and the PCs have just the slightest bit of breathing room. Whether they take the time to step into the open or further barricade themselves, before long they hear a horrid droning sound on the horizon. Soon, as across the planet, billions upon billions of locusts arrive. Not only do these devour plants of all kinds (especially crops and anything else remotely edible), but they torment people and animals with their painful bites and stings. Although the insects appear normal, their behavior is wholly unnatural, as they crawl under doors and swarm down chimneys to inflict suffering on humans, wherever they might be.

Next, shredding any deluded vestiges of hope for a logical explanation, an army of unnatural armored warriors atop equine steeds with the heads of lions attack humanity. Even if the PCs have managed to stay safe thus far, they must contend with being hunted by these hellish knights, who show no mercy and kill indiscriminately. Clad in blackened armor and burning from within, the horrors hunt with supernatural senses, marauding worldwide.

WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

As one might expect, there's an awful lot of panic. With each new devastating event or unnatural disaster, society collapses a little further. Beginning with the earthquake and escalating further with each subsequent sign of impending apocalypse, the population's panic accelerates, resulting in riots, looting, mass exodus from cities and clogged highways, and the accompanying muggings, murders, and other displays of the worst of human nature.

Not everyone reacts in such ways, though. Some remain relatively calm, even serene. Believers come in all varieties, from those calmly awaiting judgment to those ranting and raving in the streets, exhorting others to repent. The faithful flock to churches and pray, while those without faith—or with false faith—curse the Creator. Meanwhile, mass baptisms become hugely popular.

Across the globe, cults and extremist sects engage in everything from mass suicides to mass murder. Some groups incite further riots or detonate explosive devices. Others share poison among themselves, ending their lives together in a misguided attempt at salvation.

Scientists and those with a “rational” worldview try to find logical explanations for the catastrophes. But there is no natural explanation to be found, at least not in the way science understands the world.

Governments and authorities are powerless. There is nothing they can do to stop the unnatural disasters, even when the next step can be predicted based on consulting prophecy. Even against the tangible foe presented by the cavalry from Hell, armies are powerless.

As the disasters continue, society rapidly breaks down. Governments try in vain to maintain law and order despite the impossible events, but this endeavor grows increasingly futile with each passing hour.

WHAT ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ON FIRE DOING?

As humankind suffers at the hands of the hellish warriors and the mandibles of the unnatural locusts, something just as strange happens. Around the world, people fall from the sky, wreathed in flame. All of these people are, well, dead—except now they're not. Some died only days, even hours ago, others centuries or millennia. No one can explain where they came from or how they survived a fall of many miles, while also remaining untouched by the flames.

Some of these people initially have no memory of how they returned to Earth, or why. Others immediately praise the Creator, claiming that the Almighty has returned them to Earth to lead humanity through the end of days. Although this seems hard to believe, after all that humanity has been through in recent days, most people are surprisingly quick to accept such claims. Others, however, suspect that this is yet another trial, and that these people are not who they appear to be and plan to act against humankind's best interests.

WHAT CAN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS DO?

There is not much the PCs can do except try to survive. Between meteors, fire from the sky, ravenous locusts, and burning cavalry, ample threats confound the PCs at every turn and make their lives—well—a living Hell.

PCs who figure out what is happening might have a second agenda besides surviving: being a good person. They might seek salvation through helping others to survive the horrific events, even at further risk to their own lives.

Initially, PCs are likely to be quite confused and to focus on finding and fortifying a shelter. This might protect them from the rain of blood and fire, but probably not from



a meteor, and certainly not a Hell-knight. As events get worse, the PCs must either continue digging themselves deeper into a metaphorical (or literal) trench or go on the run. The problem is that neither hiding nor running are great bets; the PCs might find themselves simply hoping that others come to the attention of the hellish hunters before they do. Not a very nice thought, but it can be tough to remember the golden rule in times like these.

THE TRUTH

The end of days has begun. Humanity must undergo a time of intense trials set in motion by the Creator, leading up to the final battle between good and evil. Whatever the PCs' personal beliefs happen to be, this is happening. Of course, their personal beliefs might color their perspective on events, making them slow to realize—or accept—what is really happening. However, some PCs might figure out the explanation very quickly, and others might learn from a conveniently located NPC of a religious bent. Whether PCs believe religious explanations or not is another matter.

There is no loud proclamation from above. Trumpets may sound in the heavens, but on Earth, only the effects previously described are experienced. The tribulations inflicted on humanity come as a direct result of events happening in Heaven, which might be thought of as the true apocalypse. Seven seals are opened, each one unleashing further horrors on the Earth.

There is nothing the PCs or anyone else can do to stop the apocalypse from proceeding. It must unfold as proclaimed by the Creator, leading up to the final battle for the soul of humanity and the cosmos. The PCs might have a part to play on the Field of Armageddon, but they must survive until then.

SEVEN SEALS AND SEVEN TRUMPETS

The first four seals unleash the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. With the fifth seal, the martyrs of history. Clad in white robes, call out for vengeance, but they are silenced until the living are martyred. The sixth seal brings earthquakes, blackens the sun and stars, and turns the moon as red as blood. Once the seventh seal is open, there is silence in Heaven for a time. Then, seven angels sound seven trumpets, causing a further seven tumultuous events.

The first trumpet heralds a rain of fire and blood. The second announces the boiling of the seas. With the third, shooting stars fall to Earth and pollute the rivers and lakes. The fourth trumpet calls the blood-red moon away from the sky. With the fifth trumpet, the gates of Hell swing wide and release a plague of locusts to torment humanity. The sixth trumpet calls forth two hundred million cavalry, riding from the open gates of Hell to kill one-third of Earth's population. On the sounding of the final trumpet, the gates of Heaven are opened, and 144,000 worthy souls from throughout history are returned to Earth.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

The first four seals unleash the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Pestilence, War, Famine, and Death. Each Horseman brings with it worldwide disaster, and each has a physical form as well. However, the Horsemen remain unseen until the apocalypse is well underway.

Pestilence: As the end of days begins, an unprecedented pandemic sweeps across the planet. This virulent disease bears some similarities to the bubonic plague, but it has never before been seen. No one has any idea where it came from, how it started, or whether it evolved from a known disease. Scientists scramble to develop a cure, but it evades them. Before much progress can be made, more disasters add further difficulty and destroy or force the reallocation of resources.

War: Conflicts escalate the world over, and the continental United States does not go untouched by war. As the U.S. deploys forces in the Middle East and eastern Europe, a different kind of war erupts at home. Anarchy is rampant as intradepartmental conflicts within police forces inexplicably turn violent, and everyday citizens attack police and each other. Further inciting violence, terrorists and criminals take hostages, detonate bombs, and attack public centers.

Famine: As war and plague sweep the Earth, they naturally lead to the loss of crops. But on top of this, plants and livestock around the world die inexplicably. Some people blame genetically modified crops, or theorize that the plague has spread to animals and plants (or originated there). Refugee populations from the ongoing conflicts suffer starvation, and nowhere on the planet is there sufficient food. In some wars, soldiers simply lie down and die, rather than fight, after days without rations or clean water.

Death: The Horseman Death largely makes its presence felt through the actions of the others. War, famine, and pestilence all lead to death on a massive scale. But Death also strikes seemingly at random, its spectral figure stalking the planet.

Once the seven trumpets sound, the Four Horsemen reveal themselves, openly riding across the world to inflict their particular punishments on anyone in their paths. Pestilence cuts down the wounded and sick as it rides, spreading plague in its wake. War charges into battle against any foe, and those around it are spurred to extreme violence and bloodshed. Plants and animals wither and die in the vicinity of Famine. Death is perhaps the most terrifying to see directly. From atop its pale horse, it wields its scythe to cut down anyone it passes, while most of those who simply lay eyes on Death have their life-force wrenched from their body, dying where they stand.

THE LOCUSTS

These locusts are no natural creatures, but a plague from the depths of Hell. They ravenously devour crops, with a speed and hunger far beyond those of any mundane insect. But they do much more, tormenting humans and animals with bites and stings. A swarm of these hellish locusts can strip the flesh from a creature as surely as it can devour a crop.

The locusts display a sort of cunning, as well. There are few places to hide from the creatures, as they enter through any available gaps, from doorways to ductwork, in search of victims. When necessary, they even burrow through wood to reach living prey.

Although a swarm of locusts can certainly prove fatal, death is not the purpose of these creatures—that falls to the hellish cavalry and the Horsemen. The locusts exist to torment humankind. They bite and sting, tearing flesh and leaving excruciating welts. Even when given the opportunity to kill humans, the locusts almost always leave their victims alive—but in so much pain they might wish otherwise.

THE CAVALRY

Burning with hellish flame from within, the cavalry ride their fearsome lion-headed mounts in search of victims. While the locusts exist to torture and inflict suffering, the cavalry are here to kill humans—until they have slaughtered a total of one-third of all living people. In pursuit of their nightmarish goal, the cavalry ride down the streets, leap through windows, and batter down walls to find victims. When necessary, they dismount and pursue their prey on foot. Further, the unnatural mounts possess their own malign intelligence and are fully capable of seeking out and killing humans on their own.

As well as possessing great strength, both the mounts and their fiery riders are highly resilient. Few mortal weapons are capable of harming them: bullets glance off Hell-forged armor and sink without effect into demonic flesh. For most humans, running and hiding are the only options against these assailants, though neither is likely to be effective. Only those possessed of strong faith can directly harm the hellish cavalry, but even they are more likely to be martyred on a burning spear than to triumph.

THE 144,000

Across the Earth, a total of one hundred and forty-four thousand people fall from Heaven. Wreathed in flames until they miraculously survive their landing, these are the pure souls anointed by the Creator to lead humanity through the trials of the end times. Each one falls from the sky in a halo of fire, which extinguishes upon landing, leaving an unharmed—and unclothed—individual. All of these chosen beings have returned to life from death, whether after only a few weeks or thousands of years.

Many of the living are horrified by the fiery appearance of these pure souls, and few initially trust them. Considering all that has happened, it's hardly surprising that so many people think they are not who they appear to be, but are some sort of deception designed to lead humanity further into torment.

The chosen possess a greater understanding of the events currently happening, and some yet to come, than any living person. Those who listen to them find them to be great leaders, whose faith inspires those around them. They know of the best ways to avoid—and even fight against—the hellish cavalry and locusts, and even the Four Horsemen themselves.

THE INITIAL RESPONSE

There is nothing humanity can do to turn back the apocalypse. The best it can do is have faith and follow the guidance of the 144,000 returned. But humans are largely unwilling to accept this, and they try countless ways to fight and survive. The truth of the end times is not apparent at the outset. As such, people and governments must respond to events as they occur, becoming more aware as the situation worsens that something very big is happening.

Until the sun disappears, many refuse to believe that anything supernatural is occurring. Although many individuals recognize the signs of the apocalypse, governments primarily act only on the known facts, not on faith and the words of prophecy. (Of course, some individuals in government attempt to influence it in light of apocalyptic prophecy.) As the effects of each Horseman are felt in turn, governments scramble to cope. Scientists, researchers, and health systems are taxed to the breaking point in short order as the great plague strikes victims without pattern or discernible origin. In this tumultuous time, a fearful populace takes to the streets, rioting and panicking. With no natural explanation in sight, authorities fear a biological weapon, and countries soon accuse one another.

As conflict erupts around the globe, food shortages and the expanding pandemic further stoke the fires of war. In the United States, criminals take advantage of the situation, and terrorist cells emerge from hiding to launch their own attacks. Riots break out over food shortages and in response to the rampant plague. States and the federal government declare emergencies, and martial law is soon imposed, pitting the larger populace against those who exist to defend it.

TIMELINE

The end of days begins with the release of the Four Horsemen. From there, the trials facing humanity grow steadily more, well, challenging.

00:00:00	The first seal opens, unleashing Pestilence.
03:46:00	The first victims of the plague, unrelated individuals across the globe, begin to show symptoms.
05:21:00	The first victim falls ill in the United States.
06:19:00	Someone the PCs know begins to show symptoms.
09:33:00	Contagion spreads, and the populace begins to panic. Businesses shut down, and people barricade their homes.
12:50:00	The second seal opens, unleashing War.
17:03:00	The mysterious disease spreads across the country, and panicked citizens riot and storm government facilities and hospitals, leading to brutal police crackdowns and fighting in the streets.
21:29:00	Violence of all kinds increases drastically around the world.
DAY 2	The third seal opens, unleashing Famine.
DAY 2	Food supplies world wide spoil as crops wilt and livestock die of sudden maladies. Even canned goods and other nonperishables turn overnight.
DAY 3	Police and rioters clash violently.
DAY 4	The United States declares war on Russia.
DAY 6	Military actions are ordered and wars declared by countries around the world in response to aggression both real and perceived. Nations call on their allies, embroiling further countries in the conflicts.
DAY 7	The fourth seal opens, unleashing Death. The fatality rate from the plague, famine, and wars immediately increases.
DAY 9	The fifth seal opens, and the martyrs are quieted.
DAY 10	Pundits, politicians, and the populace begin referring to the conflict encompassing the globe as World War III.
DAY 11	The sixth seal opens.
DAY 11	Simultaneous earthquakes wrack every nation of the world.
DAY 11	The sun abruptly disappears from the sky, and night falls over the entire planet.
DAY 11	The stars vanish, casting the world into complete darkness.
DAY 11	The moon glows the shade of blood, blanketing the Earth in a dim red light.
DAY 12	The seventh seal opens, and there is silence in Heaven for the space of half an hour.
DAY 14	The first angel blows its trumpet, announcing a rain of fire and blood from the skies worldwide.
DAY 14	The Four Horsemen reveal themselves and increase their attacks on humanity.
DAY 17	The second angel blows its trumpet, and the seas boil.
DAY 20	The third angel blows its trumpet, and many meteors fall to Earth, blanketing the land in ash and radiation.
DAY 21	The fourth angel blows its trumpet, and the red moon disappears from the sky.
DAY 23	The fifth angel blows its trumpet, and locusts swarm across the face of the Earth.
DAY 26	The sixth angel blows its trumpet, and two hundred million cavalry ride forth from Hell to slay humans.
DAY 28	The seventh angel blows its trumpet, heralding the return to Earth of the 144,000 worthy souls.
DAY 74	The returned souls beseech individuals to heed their guidance and have faith.
DAY 114	Governments and organizations continue to wage wars with each other, while simultaneously attempting to battle the hellish cavalry and the Four Horsemen. Truces are reached and violated, and alliances are struck and broken.
DAY 173	The United Nations convinces most countries to stop fighting each other to focus on the external threat.
YEAR 2	Disease, famine, and war continue to kill millions each day.
YEAR 2	The disasters worsen and society breaks down further. Governments try to hold together in spite of the chaos.
YEAR 3	With governments largely powerless, it is left to individuals to band together to survive.
YEAR 3	The hellish cavalry have killed one-third of the population. The Four Horsemen have killed another third.
YEAR 4	The Dragon and its followers are cast down from Heaven by the archangel Michael and the angelic host.
YEAR 4	The Dragon raises from the sea a Beast to deceive humanity.

IN HIDING



THERE is little point in fighting against the hellish cavalry or the Horsemen. Mortal weapons are all but useless against them. The best most people (including the PCs) can hope for when these mounted hunters come around is to manage to hide successfully; it is folly to try to outrun the swift riders. A hiding place might be anywhere, from a shuttered home or basement, to a private or public emergency shelter, to a police station or military base. Even a vehicle might serve as a hideout, as well as a means of travel. Hiding from these unearthly killers is no simple task, however, as their senses seem to defy natural bounds.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ The PCs come across a group of people in a safe-looking hiding place, but the group doesn't want to admit anyone else.
- ☼ Inside the hiding place, people fall sick or become angry and violent, or food spoils. Is a Horseman nearby?
- ☼ Another group wants to share the PCs' hiding place, but can they be trusted?
- ☼ Locusts can be heard chewing their way through the walls.
- ☼ Someone in the hideout begins to panic when a cavalry member rides nearby, threatening to expose the entire group.
- ☼ The echoing roar of a lion-steed is coming from nearby, but it's not clear where.
- ☼ Someone gets the idea that they can strike a deal with the cavalry by offering up the others in the hiding place.
- ☼ A cavalry member or its mount finds the hideout, leading to panic and slaughter.

BLASPHEMY



As it becomes clear that the end of days is upon humanity, many people blame the Creator and lash out against the Almighty. In addition to engaging in personal blasphemies, some attack churches, temples, or other places of worship. In some cases, this reflects a rise in sectarian strife; in others, believers of weak faith are turning against their own religions. Non-believers, confronted with the undeniably apocalyptic nature of the catastrophes, may realize that they have already damned themselves and begin striking out in anger.

Around the world, believers and unbelievers—or those with differing beliefs—come into conflict. In various cases, either side might be the aggressor, or the feeling might be mutual. PCs could find themselves on either side of any such conflict, or they may simply try to survive and stay out of the way.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ Rioters are about to set fire to a church full of innocent people.
- ☼ A group of the faithful blocks a group of unbelievers intent on desecrating a church. If someone doesn't defuse the situation, it is about to turn violent.
- ☼ The hellish cavalry are not attacking the people holed up in a church, and those outside are getting very jealous and angry.
- ☼ The PCs visit a church, where the forlorn clergyman explains what is going on.
- ☼ A group of fervent believers has gathered to celebrate the end of days, inciting others to violent anger.
- ☼ A friend of the PCs asks them to come and wait things out with the friend's congregation.
- ☼ A clergyman's faith fails, and the minister exhorts the congregation to abandon hope and renounce such a cruel God.

FAMINE



ALTHOUGH the locusts ravage agricultural areas in particular, the scourge affects the entire planet. These hellish creatures devour and destroy food of all kinds, not only crops. Wherever the PCs might be, locusts constantly torment them with stinging, biting, or simply their constant droning buzz. The locusts are vicious, aggressive, and apparently sadistic, as they prefer to inflict pain and suffering rather than kill humans outright.

The destruction of food stores around the world, including in the PCs' vicinity, leads to further unrest, fear, and anger. Hungry people take drastic measures to secure their own continued existence.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs begin to spot solitary locusts here and there, and then the numbers slowly start to increase everywhere they go.
- A swarm of locusts begins following the PCs, tormenting them with bites and stings.
- The PCs come across a series of animal—and possibly human—skeletons. Whatever stripped their flesh away must be incredibly dangerous.
- Locusts devour all of the PCs' food, forcing them to look for—or steal—more.
- People aren't the only ones going hungry: animals—wild and domestic—become aggressive.
- The PCs become the targets of a small group of people that has turned to the one food source left after the locusts pass through—human beings.
- Locusts flock to anywhere with food—including shelters—even destroying canned goods and MREs.
- The PCs see a group of people running from a swarm of locusts, or trapped and surrounded.

WAR



THE Horseman War unleashes strife around the globe. Wherever the PCs are, they see the results both on the news and in person. People become quick to anger and violence, while countries unleash hostilities with little cause. The PCs could become caught in the middle of a military mission, a police action, a terrorist or criminal attack, a riot, or any other sort of violent encounter.

There is also a spiritual war underpinning the physical violence. The soul of humanity is being tested, and those who fail the test are likely to lash out with savagery. Some retain their inner peace and faith even in the midst of such horrors, which further angers those who succumb to violent impulses.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs are accused of being enemies or traitors by a mob of angry citizens, the police, or some other group.
- A group of terrorists, a band of criminals, or another nation's military forces wrest control of the PCs' location, taking them prisoner or hostage.
- The United States reinstitutes the draft, leading to mass protests.
- One of the PCs, or someone they know, is called up to fight in a clearly pointless conflict.
- A peaceful protest threatens to erupt into violence as police try to break it up.
- A military patrol stops the PCs or comes to their residence and orders them to give up any weapons they have.
- The Horseman War has arrived at the PCs' area and is leading a rampaging force of hellish cavalry through the town, destroying everything in sight.
- The PCs see a group of innocent civilians trapped amid an ongoing battle.

FALLING STARS



THE meteors fall to Earth simultaneously around the globe, and the PCs might be caught in the midst of a shower wherever they happen to be. Meteorites not only poison lakes and streams, but pose an immediate physical danger to anyone nearby, as well as damaging buildings of all kinds.

These are no natural meteors, but ones of divine origin, testing humanity. They target population centers and sources of fresh water, and even seem to target specific buildings and people. The PCs must move quickly and carefully or find a secure location in which to wait out the storm if they hope to survive. Either that, or pray.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ The meteorite impacts result in craters, fissures, broken streets, and collapsed buildings, making travel difficult or impossible.
- ☼ The impacts kick up huge clouds of dust and debris, blanketing the area in darkness and making it difficult to breathe.
- ☼ Meteorites strike all around the PCs, whose only chance is to outrun (or out-drive) them.
- ☼ A meteorite smashes into a nearby structure or the one the PCs are in, bringing it toppling down on them.
- ☼ After a few close calls, it almost seems like the meteorites are targeting the PCs. Or one of them, at least.
- ☼ A group of people is trapped by fissures in the ground or other hazards, and they are sitting ducks for a meteorite strike.
- ☼ The meteorites stop falling, but for how long?

THE RETURNING



WITH the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the Creator marks the 144,000 worthy souls and opens the gates of Heaven, sending them back to Earth. They arrive in every country of the world, and it's a safe bet that at least a few, and possibly a great number, land in the PCs' area.

Confusion abounds as these individuals fall from the sky, encased in flames. Who are they? How is it that they are back? What is their purpose? And did the Creator really send them—or did the Great Deceiver?

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ The PCs are caught in another meteorite shower—only they aren't meteors this time.
- ☼ Although the returned are not harmed when they make impact with the ground, it turns out the same isn't true for structures or people in the way.
- ☼ Someone the PCs used to know lands nearby, but they have no memory of who they are or where they came from.
- ☼ The PCs find a naked person lying in a crater. This person doesn't speak the same language as any of the PCs, but is trying to communicate something important.
- ☼ An angry mob has surrounded one of the returned, apparently intent on violence, if someone doesn't intervene.
- ☼ The returned preach that those with faith cannot be harmed by the tribulations of the end times—but this doesn't appear to be true, at least not in a physical sense.
- ☼ One of the returned is a major figure from the country's history, and the respect they still receive means the government listens to them.
- ☼ One of the returned is someone the PCs saw die earlier in the events of the apocalypse.



THE FOUR HORSEMEN

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
5	5	3	6	3	N/A

Features: +Immortal Warrior, ++Incomprehensibly Terrifying, +Swift, -Hubris, -Single-minded.

Equipment: Conquering bow (Pestilence) (3 positive dice, +6 damage), Sword of War (War) (2 positive dice, +8 damage), Famine's Scales (Famine) (1 negative die, +4 damage), Scythe of the Reaper (Death) (1 negative die, +6 damage).

Lords of Hell: The Four Horsemen suffer stress only from attacks made with a consecrated or infernal weapon. Any object taken from the Four Horsemen grants the wielder the "---Pawn of Darkness" feature.

On a White Horse (Pestilence): Pestilence has 4 physical and mental resistance. When a character gains a physical trauma, if any of the stress removed to gain the trauma was caused by the physical attack of Pestilence, the trauma gained is "Plague Unending." A character with the Plague Unending trauma can never recover from traumas.

On a Red Horse (War): War has 5 physical and mental resistance. When in combat, War grants all participants in that combat 2 additional positive dice on all attacks.

On a Black Horse (Famine): Famine has 4 physical and mental resistance. Famine's successful physical attacks permanently lower the target's Vitality characteristic by one. If a character's Vitality characteristic is reduced to 0, that character dies immediately and cannot cling to life (see page 31).

On a Pale Horse (Death): In the presence of Death, characters cannot cling to life (see page 31). When all boxes on Death's stress track are filled, instead the GM clears its stress track and it returns to "life" at some later time determined by the GM. Death cannot permanently die, but the PCs may fend it off long enough to escape it for a time.

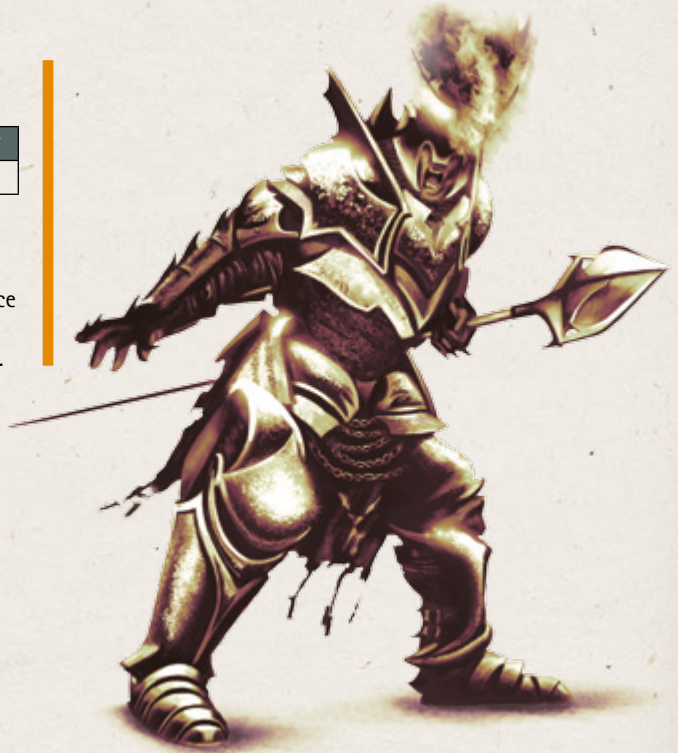
HELLISH HORSEMAN

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
4	4	1	4	N/A	N/A

Features: +Immortal Warrior, +Utterly Terrifying, -Blood-lust, -Hubris.

Equipment: Infernal spear (2 positive dice, +4 damage), hell-forged plate (3 physical resistance).

From Hell: Consecrated and infernal weapons ignore the physical resistance granted by a Hellish Horseman's hell-forged plate. Any weapons or armor taken from a Hellish Horseman grant the wielder the "-Blood-lust" feature.



LION HORSE

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
4	5	2	N/A	N/A	N/A

Features: +Swift, +Utterly Terrifying, -Blood-lust, -Huge.

Equipment: Flaming hooves (1 positive die, +4 damage), hell-forged barding (3 physical resistance).

From Hell: Consecrated and infernal weapons ignore the physical resistance granted by a Lion Horse's hell-forged barding.

LOCUST SWARM

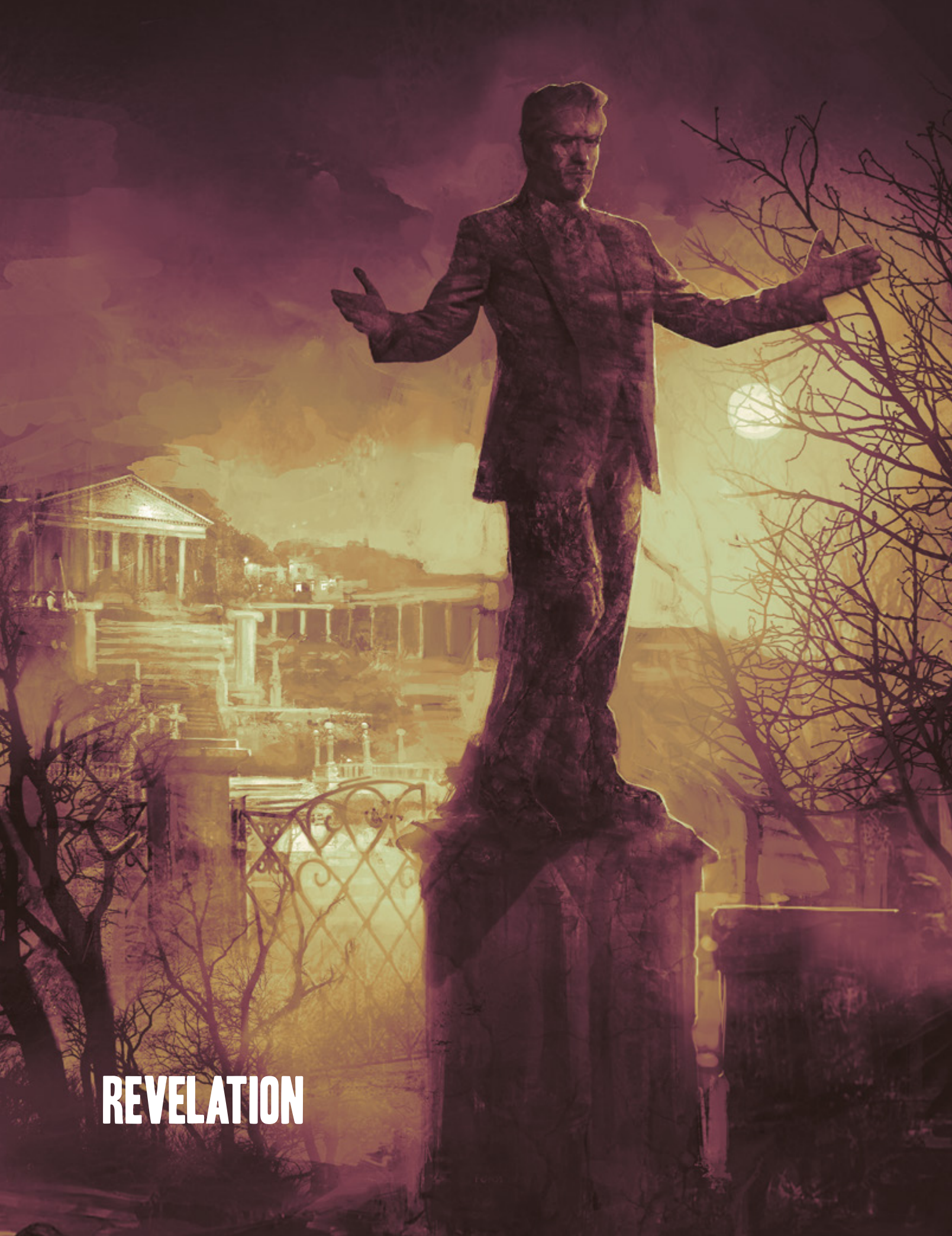
DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
2	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A

Features: +Consuming, +Flying, +Gross, +Swarm, -Mindless.

Equipment: N/A.

Swarm: Whenever a locust swarm is dealt physical stress greater than 1, it suffers 1 physical stress instead.





REVELATION

REVELATION

POST-APOCALYPSE



Difficult times necessitate strong leaders, and these have been the most difficult times in history, without a doubt. So thank Heaven we finally have a strong enough leader to get through it. To come from such humble origins to serve as the leader of the free world—and I don't mean President of the United States, but the actual leader of the world—is such an accomplishment. It speaks highly to his capabilities in all arenas, including politics and war.

His decisive leadership has turned the tide. Civilization was so close to complete collapse, but he rallied us, united the world's armies against the forces of evil, and pushed them back. He allocated the resources needed to hold the epidemics at bay and to ensure humanity has enough food to survive. I know there are those who question his methods, who say he's a liar or even worse, and who refuse to receive his mark. They are only hurting themselves, and they deserve what they get. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and these have been the most desperate times in history.

THE BEAST ARISES

As humanity undergoes the trials and tribulations of the end of days, the Dragon, the Father of Lies, leads his fallen angels in an assault against the gates of Heaven. Time has little or no meaning beyond the bounds of the physical world, and this battle rages for many years—perhaps for all time. Finally, the Archangel Michael and the angelic host defeats the Dragon and his forces, casting them out from Heaven and down to Earth. They arrive roughly four years after the first seal opened.

What is left of humanity is still suffering the consequences of the seals and trumpets, with two-thirds of the population already dead as a result of apocalyptic terrors, primarily the hellish cavalry and the Four Horsemen. Rather than take command of his infernal forces immediately, Lucifer conceals his presence, intending instead to corrupt humanity to his side in preparation for the final battle he knows is coming.

The Dragon raises from the sea a Beast, which takes the form of a human. This could be a well-known politician or other public figure, or even someone the PCs know personally. It might instead be an unknown individual, a newcomer on the international scene who quickly rises to power.

In its guise as a human, the Beast ascends to a prominent position in a U.S. or European government. Through shrewd diplomacy and a series of ingenious strategic decisions that seem to turn the tide in the ongoing battle between human armies and the armies of Hell, the Beast rises to effectively claim control of the majority of U.N., E. U., and NATO countries. He is widely viewed as an almost messianic figure, the one who will deliver humanity from the terrors of the end times. Of course, some view his meteoric ascent as suspicious, but such concerns are drowned out by the larger praise.

Once his power is secure, the Beast begins to rail against the Creator. He declares the Creator the enemy in the ongoing war, saying the Almighty is the one responsible for the plagues and terrible enemies assaulting humanity. The Creator, the Beast says, is the source of all this suffering. He encourages people to curse and forsake the Creator, and many do so. Even in official documents and military strategic meetings, the Creator is declared the enemy.

In this way, the Beast leads humanity astray and into darkness. With his policies and acts, he further corrupts the masses, all in the guise of helping humanity and reestablishing the stability of civilization.

THE BEAST IS DEAD: LONG LIVE THE BEAST

After more than a year falsely blaspheming the Creator to infiltrate the ranks of the Beast's followers, a truly faithful person, or perhaps a group, arranges an assassination attempt on the Beast. The bullet narrowly misses his heart, and the Beast's survival seems miraculous. Upon his recovery, the Beast's personality and apparent views change radically. He publicly repents his blasphemous ways, claiming to have seen the Creator during his brief time in a coma.

This is, of course, a deception. This new "changed" man is the Second Beast, and he is just as wicked as before, but he hides it behind a veneer of apparent faith. Having already won the secular world to his cause, the Beast now attempts to subvert the faith of those who previously opposed him. With honeyed words, he leads them astray from the true path of righteousness. He acts as a false prophet, claiming to present the words of the Creator while actually enacting the plots of the Dragon. These plots include establishing the mark of the Beast.

The Beast works with scientists to develop a cure for the plague that still ravages humanity, using knowledge he claims to have received from the Creator. Likewise, his allegedly divinely inspired plans help to restore the food supply to a minimal level, and food is carefully rationed in accordance with his policies. Through these acts, the Beast wins the esteem even of those who are skeptical of his newfound spirituality.

The Beast also reveals one startling "truth" he claims to have received directly from the Creator. The 144,000 are not pure souls, but damned souls, sent by the Dragon to deceive humanity. With this, he declares them enemies, and everyone from military to police officers to zealots begins to hunt them down for imprisonment.

THE MARK

After his recovery, the Beast presents a new plan he claims is divinely inspired. To ensure that all receive their due portion of the limited food stocks available, the Beast announces an electronic distribution and tracking system. In order to ensure equitable distribution of food and other scarce necessities, the Beast declares that each citizen will receive a small RF-ID chip implanted under their skin on the back of their right hand or under their scalp. These chips will allow for the accurate monitoring and distribution of resources.

Some, particularly those who oppose this system, refer to the chip as a "mark" and to those who receive it as "being marked." However, most people embrace the system. After all, it allows many people to receive sufficient food for the first time in years, along with other necessities. It effectively replaces money in most countries. Others object to the invasion of privacy and of their bodies, or do not believe the Beast's transformation.

Those who refuse the mark find life even more difficult than it already was. There is now no legal way for them to obtain food, water, or other necessities, and lack of the mark is in itself a crime in most countries. Those who refuse risk imprisonment and—perhaps worse—forcible implantation with the RF-ID chip.

ARMAGEDDON

After three years of the Beast's blasphemous leadership, the angelic host descends from Heaven to Earth for the final battle against the forces of the Dragon. The United States is the chosen battlefield. Around the world, people watch in awe either in person or on screen as the shining angels descend from on high.

Michael summons the 144,000 to fight alongside the angels, and the world is thrown into turmoil as it now becomes clear that the Beast deceived humanity. Yet, some remain faithful to the Beast, even going so far as to call Michael an impostor or a fallen angel. Confusion reigns, and in some places the followers of the Beast and his opponents openly clash in violence.

The Four Horsemen and the hellish cavalry descend upon the U.S., and the Beast declares that they are the true servants of the Almighty, sent to test humanity's faith. He orders his armies to fight alongside them against the angelic host and the 144,000. Most soldiers, however, see through the Beast's lies, and entire regiments defect to fight alongside the angels. Others, following orders or misguided faith, obey the Beast's commands and take up arms against Michael and the angelic host.

Now, the Dragon reveals itself, appearing with the fallen angels—the demons—alongside the hellish cavalry, the Four Horsemen, and the followers of the Beast. The stage is set for the greatest battle of all time: the final conflict between the forces of Heaven and Hell.

This is not only a battle between proper armies. The faithful—both of the Creator and of the Beast—flock to the field to take up arms. Some of these form into organized militias; others effectively enlist and fight alongside soldiers. Still others simply fight on their own against their enemies, heedless of any orders or larger strategy.

The battle is decidedly epic. Angels and demons soar through the air alongside fighter jets and missiles, as hellish cavalry clash with tank brigades on the ground. The death toll is great among both mortals and immortals. The Beast himself arrives on the battlefield to inspire his loyal forces and exhort them to cooperate with the Dragon and the forces of Hell.

Ultimately, the angelic host and the forces of Heaven defeat Hell's army at great cost, once more imprisoning the Four Horsemen, the cavalry, and all of the demons—including the Dragon—in Hell. What part the PCs play in the greatest battle of all time is ultimately up to them.

THE FIELD OF ARMAGEDDON



THE remnants of humanity, whether on the side of the Creator or the Beast, together with the 144,000 returned, fight alongside the hosts of Heaven and Hell in the final battle between good and evil. The Field of Armageddon is the site of the primary engagement in this battle, although, of course, the entire world is a battlefield in this war. The site of the main battle might be anywhere from an open field to a crowded city, but it should be somewhere close to the PCs.

The PCs might become involved in any number of ways. They might volunteer to fight, be recruited by one side or the other, or simply become caught unexpectedly in the middle of the battle. Regardless, they are present at the most important moment in all of history.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☉ Lucifer himself appears before the PCs, offering them the chance to join his army or die. But perhaps an angel can sacrifice itself to save them.
- ☉ Michael or one of the angels sees the PCs' destiny and bestows upon them a flaming sword capable of harming demons and even the Horsemen.
- ☉ The PCs find a wounded and apparently dying angel, who has an important task for them.
- ☉ The Beast triggers a remote pulse to deliver crippling pain through the RF-ID chips of any who fight against Hell (including the PCs, if they have the mark).
- ☉ A fallen angel who has retained its divine appearance tries to trick the PCs into fighting against the forces of good.
- ☉ Zealous penitents throw themselves in front of the forces of Hell, intending to martyr themselves in an attempt to slow the enemy down.
- ☉ The PCs see a group of civilians caught between the opposing forces.

BABYLON



THE Beast might establish his headquarters in the United States or Europe, or possibly one in each place. From his headquarters, he issues proclamations and makes decisions to steer the course of civilization (or what remains of it). Despite its outward appearance as a place of piety and a bulwark against the forces of evil, the Beast's headquarters is, in fact, a place of darkness and barbarity. To this location, his security forces and faithful followers drag "heretics" and unbelievers in order to receive his blessing and his mark.

Those who see through the Beast's deception know his headquarters for what it is. They call it Babylon, the Mother of Idolatry, the great city that reigns over the kings of the Earth.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Each day, the Beast's faithful gather in front of Babylon to hear the Beast deliver a sermon or speech, which is also broadcast over the radio, on television, and online.
- Opponents of the Beast stage a demonstration in front of his headquarters. His security forces end it with a massacre.
- Someone the PCs know (or possibly one of them) is taken to the Beast's headquarters to receive the mark against their will.
- The Beast invites the PCs to Babylon to meet with him personally.
- Misguided penitents gather in front of Babylon, asking for the Beast's blessing.
- Opponents of the Beast ask the PCs to infiltrate his compound.
- The PCs are implicated in the assassination attempt against the Beast. The only way to get to the bottom of things is to find evidence at Babylon.

FAITHFUL OF THE SECOND BEAST



FOLLOWING his "awakening," the Beast deceives many into trusting him and heeding his orders. Among his many followers, some particularly faithful ones seek to serve him more substantially, however they can. Whether acting on unofficial orders received through intermediaries or purely on their own initiative, these faithful seek to ensure that everyone follows the Beast and receives his mark.

The faithful see the Beast as a prophet, as one who speaks with the words of the Creator. Consequently, many become fanatically devoted to him, serving him as they would the Creator. The tragedy, of course, is that these poor souls have been deceived into evil, and ultimately, they must be punished for it.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- A friend or family member of the PCs comes to them for help, fleeing the faithful of the Beast.
- The Beast's faithful begin an inquisition to root out those who still oppose him and his leadership.
- For some followers of the Beast, it is not enough that those without his mark are unable to engage in trade or receive food; they must convert or suffer.
- A group of the Beast's followers approaches the PCs, inquiring as to whether they have received the mark.
- The PCs witness some of the faithful accusing one of their own of being an apostate and trying to forcibly remove the mark from that person.
- Someone close to the PCs has become a fanatical servant of the Beast, and wants to recruit them at any cost.
- The PCs see servants of the Beast violently detaining innocent people.

ANGEL OF THE HOST

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
5	6	4	6	6	6

Features: +Angelic Mien, +Flight, +Immortal Warrior, -Purpose-Made, -Sentimental Towards Humans, -Unsubtle, +/-Utterly Terrifying, +/-From another Plane.

Equipment: Consecrated spear (1 positive die, +5 damage), angelic aegis (4 physical resistance).

Host of Heaven: An angel of the host suffers stress only from attacks made with an infernal or a consecrated weapon. Characters fighting alongside an angel of the host in combat gain the "++On the Side of the Angels" feature.



FALLEN ANGEL

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
6	5	6	4	6	2

Features: +Flight, +Immortal Warrior, +Utterly Terrifying, -Bound by Bargains, -Cruel, - -Supreme Hubris.

Equipment: Infernal claws (2 positive dice, +6 damage), infernal scales (3 physical resistance).

Lord of Hell: A fallen angel suffers stress only from attacks made with an infernal or consecrated weapon.

Shapeshifter: A fallen angel can change its shape to that of any natural earthly animal or any human it has personally killed.

PENITENTS

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
2	3	2	4	2	4

Features: +Faith, +Selfless, -Crippling Regret, -Sinner.

Equipment: Strict asceticism.





THAT IS NOT DEAD...

THAT IS NOT DEAD...

APOCALYPSE



It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the end of the world began, as humanity was—as it so often has been—willfully blind to the warning signs of the looming threat. It would seem that it began on a deceptively unremarkable day, but the unspeakable truth might be that it commenced countless aeons ago, long before humankind's evolution—or even before the ascendance of mammalian life on Earth. For although the terrors that brought our demise came from deep beneath the oceans, they might as well have come from out of the forgotten mists of time itself.

As I write this, I can sense my own doom drawing near. There is no one I can trust yet living. Amongst the many horrors that now press upon my struggling, overtaxed mind, the knowledge that humans in service to this evil helped to bring about our annihilation is singularly appalling.

I have forsaken all hope that humanity can stand against the servants of this great and incomprehensible malevolence, let alone the colossus itself. Although I have not seen it in person—thank God!—the grainy video footage I viewed while perusing the web has left me in a stupor for more than a day. No—the end is here, and the only question is whether I will end myself before the Deep Ones or their foetid servants find me. Wait, what was that sound? No! Where is the revolver? I must find the revolver before it is too late. I only pray that someone survives to read this missive, and that...

THAT IS NOT DEAD... is perhaps the most horrifying apocalyptic scenario the Player Characters will ever face. Not only does it spell the end of the world and a staggering loss of life, but the source is an impossibly ancient and unfathomable evil, one that no one can experience with their sanity intact.

Great Cthulhu, the High Priest of R'lyeh, has risen from millennia-long undeath beneath the Pacific Ocean to usher in the end of humanity's brief dominion over the insignificant speck we call the Earth and reinstate the dominion of the entities that ruled long before. Even more so than in any other scenario in this volume, there is no fighting against the threats that face the PCs, and even survival is perhaps a misguided goal. For even if one lives through such events, the odds of doing so with one's mind intact are slim indeed.

If the PCs are fortunate, they might succumb to blissful torpor or kind death before they can comprehend the stark horror of their situation. For the longer they hold on to their lives and faculties, the greater the anguish their awareness will generate.

THE EXPERIENCE

The apocalypse that faces humanity does not begin quickly or obviously. After all, it has built to this moment for countless aeons. The servants of the unspeakable horror are not in a hurry, for their master is beholden neither to time nor to the cycles of mortality that afflict lesser beings. Steps must be taken to prepare the world for the emergence of Great Cthulhu, while the stirrings of its unfathomable mind from slumber have effects felt around the globe.

Rather than immediately demonstrating the nature of the apocalypse, GMs should take care to build slowly to that terrifying revelation. The nature of this scenario accommodates a gradual buildup, with many days of hints and signs that something is amiss. The GM should feel free to adjust the timeline to further prolong this part of the game if the players are engaged. By slowly increasing the frequency and severity of strange happenings, the GM can build the tension for the terrifying appearance of Cthulhu itself.

WHAT TERRORS THE PLAYER CHARACTERS WITNESS

Well before the ultimate cosmic terror reveals itself, the PCs learn of a number of strange events. Some occur right in the PCs' town, in front of their eyes, while others are reported on the news and social media. The present-day chain of events starts, however, with a deep sea earthquake measuring higher than magnitude nine far out in the South Pacific. The earthquake triggers tsunamis and is followed by severe storms that pummel coastlines along the Pacific Rim.

How aware the PCs are of the disasters depends largely on how closely they follow the news. Those who live along the Pacific Coast are certain to notice the storms and might feel the aftershocks of the quake. Even PCs who don't pay close attention to the news are likely to hear about the quake, but they might not think much of it.

Soon after the earthquake, sensitive and creative people around the globe begin to experience similarly vivid, strange, and disturbing dreams. The PCs might learn of this from blog posts or other social media, or directly from someone they know (possibly even another PC: see the **Horrors in the Night** sidebar). How much detail the PCs learn depends on their sources, but the dreams all involve similar elements, including the deep sea, massive structures and cities of indescribable architecture, octopus-like tentacles, and words or thoughts in a language they cannot understand.

Other strange things occur around the world, including in the PCs' town or city. Each PC knows at least one person who begins to behave very oddly, and there is no other connection between them that the PCs know of. These individuals become unreliable (or perhaps more reliable than usual), act erratically, and overall seem out of sync with their previous selves.

The PCs might also hear of an alarming increase in missing persons reports. The disappearances are particularly prevalent among coastal communities and near large lakes. Especially if the PCs live along the coast, these disappearances hit close to home and may be all that the locals talk about.

Particularly unfortunate PCs might become the targets of strange individuals seeking to kidnap them, or even outright kill them. These mysterious attackers carry no ID, but are likely members of the local community.

HORRORS IN THE NIGHT

It is possible that one or more of the PCs will experience the strange nocturnal visions. Whether this occurs depends on how quickly the GM wants the PCs to realize the nature of the scenario and on whether any of the characters are appropriate candidates. Obviously, the GM does not want to accuse any of the players of being overly sensitive in some way, but if anyone is a particularly creative or artistic type, meaning they engage in artistic pursuits either as a career or hobby, they might be unfortunate enough to experience the dreams. This has the potential to alert the PCs to the threat earlier, but also to make it more personal and terrifying. If more than one PC has such dreams, they can compare the similarities, confirming that the visions are more than the result of reading too much horror stories (or game scenarios) before falling asleep!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

THE SURVIVOR'S TALE

The lone survivor of a cargo ship lost in the South Pacific is found and returned to his homeland (either Norway or anywhere the GM deems appropriate, such as somewhere close to the PCs). His hair has turned shock-white, and he raves of a tentacled horror and an impossible island. Most people consider him delusional, but his words find a wider audience on the Internet, where he shares his experience in rambling and disturbing blog and social media posts.

This content spreads like wildfire on social media sites, variously viewed as humor, a sad commentary on the mental health system, or a dire warning. Of course, many of those familiar with the works of Lovecraft believe the man is engaging in some sort of performance art, and they might not even believe there was any lost ship in the first place.

The survivor soon learns of the works of H. P. Lovecraft and confirms the similarity to his own experiences. Some online communities embrace him, believing he is corroborating what the members believed all along—that Lovecraft's work does not belong on the fiction aisle.

NIGHTMARES FROM BELOW

Several days after the earthquake that shakes the Pacific, military and civilian radar and other instruments detect an object of immense size moving toward the West Coast of the United States. In many cases, these are dismissed as errors. Those forces the Navy does dispatch lose contact upon approach. But by this time, it is far too late to do anything—as if there were ever anything that could have been done.

For most people, the presence of imminent destruction only becomes apparent when its harbinger comes ashore on the coast of California. An unearthly creature, with the visage of a demonic octopus, great leathery wings, and slippery skin, emerges from the sea. Its clawed hands, feet, and tentacled maw visit untold destruction all about it. The event is met with unreasoning horror and disbelief in equal measure. Some people viewing the news footage on the other side of the country assume it to be a movie, but they cannot account for the deep-seated feelings of terror and vertigo that it inspires in them. For those within eyesight of the Great Old One—a considerable distance, considering its miles-high stature—there is no reassuring explanation available. Many people instantly go mad, others die of cardiac arrest, and still others simply lose consciousness, their brains shutting down due to the impossibility of comprehending the sight.

The appearance of the colossal monstrosity dominates all media outlets and the Internet, although initial reports are incomplete due to the inability of most people to retain their faculties. Even footage is shaky and ends abruptly, as videographers pass out, die, or throw their cameras down as they flee. Regardless, news swiftly spreads, all but freezing the populace in terror in every nation of the globe.

Almost simultaneously, bizarre and disturbing humanoid fish-creatures emerge from lakes and ocean waters around the world to attack communities, killing or dragging away civilians in huge numbers. In fact, the Deep One attacks preceded Cthulhu's arrival, but they were scattered and subtle enough that a larger pattern was mostly undetected. With the appearance of their unliving god, however, the Deep Ones discard all attempts at secrecy, revealing themselves in open and remorseless assault against hated humanity.

As the creatures from the deep make raids around the globe, the colossus of the Pacific rampages across California, demolishing buildings and slaying innocents by the thousands. Yet, despite this inconceivable level of destruction, the entity seems almost uninterested in the task or in humanity, simply crushing anything in its path under its massive feet or swatting helicopters and fighter jets the way one would a bothersome fly.

THE ACTIONS OF THE DESPERATE AND THE DEGENERATE

Unsurprisingly, the appearance of Cthulhu and the Deep Ones leads to mass panic and hysteria. Millions die of heart failure simply from seeing the shaky footage of the Great Old One, and millions more lose their fragile sanity. Countless individuals take their own lives rather than see what fate awaits them, or because they are unable to bear the burden of the horrific knowledge of the creature's actuality. The revelations of the star-being's existence lead to rampant rioting and anarchy, with police forces unable to contain the frenzied panic. Nations around the world declare states of emergency or martial law, but these are scarcely sufficient to deal with a panicking populace, attacking cultists, and rampaging Deep Ones.

Not all of humanity succumbs to fear, however. For some, this day was long awaited. Following immediately on the heels of the horrifying appearances, people from all walks of life and in every nation of the world discard their shrouds of normality and attack their fellow humans, assisting the monsters of the deep in wanton murder and abduction. As their masks of civility slip, these cultists engage in all manner of depraved acts, openly celebrating the appearance of the monstrous titan and aquatic reavers.

STRIVING IN VAIN

There is little the PCs can hope to accomplish in this scenario. Indeed, the arrival of dread Cthulhu brings with it an end to hope. Death is the best the PCs can truly wish for, as survival means continued exposure to mind-shattering truths of the nature of creation and humanity's insignificance, and the threat of physical torment at the hands of cultists, Deep Ones, or Star Spawn.



THE TRUTH

That is not dead which can eternal lie, and with strange aeons even death may die.

After countless epochs, the stars have aligned, and the time is right for Cthulhu, the Great Priest of the Old Ones, to rise from its deathless sleep in the sunken city of R'lyeh. A maddening terror older than time, Cthulhu is beyond human comprehension, just as mercy is to it for the insignificant beings that inhabit the negligible planet called Earth.

The full truth of this apocalypse, therefore, cannot be explained, for it is beyond understanding. Yet the following pages offer Game Masters enough insight to guide players through the end of existence while retaining their sanity—hopefully.

THE MAD NEW ENGLANDER

Since before the dawn of humanity, Cthulhu has dwelt in the submerged city of R'lyeh, dreaming as it drifts somewhere between life and death, wakefulness and sleep. Such is the potency of its unfathomable mind, that since the earliest humans walked the Earth, Cthulhu's dreams have invaded their sleep, inducing

visions of horrors and abominations. Throughout history, those touched by Cthulhu's dreams have been known as seers and prophets, madmen and geniuses. Countless myths have spawned from these visions, but few have possessed the insight or will to give accurate voice to them.

In the early twentieth century, a man named Howard Phillips Lovecraft recorded these visions in the guise of fiction, writing stories that drew inspiration from the dreams of Cthulhu itself. Of the many dreamers touched throughout history, for whatever reason, he was best able to discern the meaning behind the dreams, identifying the existence of Cthulhu and translating the words: *Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn*. As Lovecraft wrote, "In his house at R'lyeh, dead Cthulhu waits dreaming."

Lovecraft came too close to the truth, in fact. Since time immemorial, cults dedicated to the worship of Cthulhu have flourished in secret. Lovecraft's writings, as he might have known, could not help but draw the attention of these cultists. They feared Lovecraft might expose the truth and ruin their plans. To avoid this, a group of cultists arranged for Lovecraft's death, using their eldritch knowledge to destroy his body while making it look like a natural illness.

FISHY GENEALOGY

ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION

While many Deep One hybrids have a disturbing countenances throughout their lives that grow stronger with age, others appear almost indistinguishable from ordinary humans in their earlier years, their aquatic origins becoming apparent only later, if ever. It is possible, therefore, that one (or more) of the PCs might be a Deep One hybrid of a more humanoid appearance without even realizing it. Most likely, the intermingling of the character's bloodline occurred generations ago, and so their amphibious traits are overshadowed by human ones.

There are a number of ways the character might discover this heritage during the course of the game. Prior to Cthulhu's appearance, the PC might have dreams of forgotten cities at the bottom of the sea, of feeling a strange connection to the inhabitants of these civilizations or recognizing long-lost relatives, even though they now have the fishlike appearances of Deep Ones. Other Deep Ones and hybrids might recognize the character as one of their own, sparing the PC from harm or suggesting that the PC join them. Alternatively, the character might become submerged and spontaneously begin breathing water as though it were air.

AN END FORETOLD

For those familiar with the works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft, the similarities between these events and the writings of the so-called "Cthulhu Mythos" are clear—painfully so, in some cases. Some—such as reports of words like *R'lyeh* and *Cthulhu fhtagn* occurring in dreams—seem so obvious as to be dismissed. However, the volume of the reports, and the physical evidence provided by the earthquake—which occurred almost exactly at the location of *R'lyeh* reported in Lovecraft's writing—indicate more than coincidence. Nevertheless, some discount the numerous reports of visions and dreams around the world as a hoax of some kind, likely perpetrated by fans using the Internet to communicate their plan, or even as a monumental viral marketing campaign for a new game or film.

Others are unwilling to dismiss the strange occurrences, but their cries of warning almost universally go ignored. The PCs might very well realize what is happening, but no one in a position of authority is willing to act on the information. Even those who secretly believe there might be something to it move cautiously and slowly, fearful of ruining their careers if they commit too strongly to the idea that Lovecraft's work was not entirely fiction.

Those who are particularly vocal about the similarities could become the targets of cults, who seek to silence them before the wider populace catches on. If the PCs figure things out quickly and try to share the news, they are likely to be attacked by cultists seeking to kill them.

Of course, once Cthulhu and the Deep Ones emerge, many people instantly recognize them for what they are. Not that this makes the horrifying truth of the cosmos any easier to cope with. Knowledge of Cthulhu from books and games does next to nothing to prepare one for the terror of seeing it in person, or even for hearing reports of the devastation wrought by the Great Priest of *R'lyeh*. If anything, the realization that people knew what would happen and were unable to do anything to prevent it, or even to lessen the effects, makes the situation even more horrifying.

CULTISTS AND TRAITORS

For as long as there have been humans, there have been cultists of Cthulhu. These depraved individuals have kept the secret knowledge of the Great Old One's existence, passing it down along with the unspeakable rites that honor it. In the lead-up to the apocalypse, cults around the globe increase their activity. They kidnap individuals to serve as living sacrifices, steal tomes of forbidden knowledge, and engage in numerous unholy observances and rituals to usher in a new age. These cultists know of the coming celestial alignment, and they believe that their prayers and rites can help to rouse Cthulhu from slumber.

There are many ways in which cultists might threaten the PCs. As the apocalypse begins slowly, cultists might target one or more of the PCs as sacrificial victims, seeking to drag them off to a hidden and profane altar. If the PCs figure out what's going on and try to warn others of Cthulhu's imminent emergence, they might become a target for cultists. Once Cthulhu appears, many cultists come out into the open, attacking people seemingly at random and spreading chaos. Some cultists are unprepared for the truth of what they have welcomed into the world, losing what remains of their minds either when they see the Great Old One or simply upon realizing the true consequences of its awakening.

Although many cultists reveal themselves after Cthulhu's appearance, others remain hidden, sabotaging humanity in countless ways, both large and small. Nearly anyone could be a cultist, to say nothing of the Deep One hybrids...

THE DEEP ONES

Long before humanity's fleeting dominion over the planet, the Deep Ones held sway. These amphibious bipeds worshiped and served Dagon, Hydra, and other Great Old Ones, including Cthulhu. Not unlike the human cultists described above, the Deep Ones have kept the worship of Cthulhu alive since antediluvian ages, awaiting the Great Old One's inevitable return.

The Deep Ones have not been idle during these long epochs. They have infiltrated the ranks of their enemy, humanity, by targeting isolated coastal communities around the world. Trading strange jewelry and prosperous fishing for human sacrifices and slaves, the Deep Ones have intermingled their blood with that of humans to ensure continued cooperation. Especially as modern peoples have intermingled through globalization, the offspring of these unions and their descendants have filtered into the wider population, spreading their tainted genes. The Deep One hybrids can now be found throughout society, although many are unaware of their true nature. While some hybrids work with cultists to destabilize civilization and aid the Deep Ones, others, ignorant of their own corruption, fight back against the monsters.

The Deep Ones have harbored a hatred of humanity these countless centuries, plotting all the while to retake the surface world and claim dominion over the planet. Deep Ones do not expire of old age, meaning many of the same individual Deep Ones have had multitudinous years in which to nurse their bitter enmity and craft their plans for revenge. The time has come and, with the help of human cultists and hybrids, the Deep Ones emerge from the seas and lakes of the world in Cthulhu's wake, seeking to subjugate and enslave humanity.

THE GREAT OLD ONE

Cthulhu is a Great Old One, a godlike being of unimaginable power from far beyond Earth's solar system. For what reasons Cthulhu and its kind came to Earth countless aeons ago, none can say, nor why it has lain dormant in its domain of R'lyeh at the bottom of the sea. But now, the stars are in alignment for Cthulhu's reawakening.

Although the blasphemous rites of cultists and Deep Ones help to stir Cthulhu from its dreams, it is the conjunction of the stars and vast, unknowable cosmic forces that are truly responsible. Once the events of this apocalypse begin, there is no way to stop Cthulhu from rising, even if the authorities detect and take actions against cultists and Deep Ones. And even if they do, there are far too many hidden cultists and Deep One cities to find and deal with them all. In many ways, the increase in cult and Deep One activity is a harbinger of Cthulhu's arrival, not its cause.

Although Cthulhu unleashes untold destruction when it emerges from its death-sleep, the destruction of humanity does not seem to be its goal. If it were, the Great Old One could certainly accomplish it. Cthulhu's goals and motivations are utterly incomprehensible to human minds, and it ultimately leaves as mysteriously as it arrives. However, this is far from a good thing, as the utter extinction of humanity might be a fate preferable to that of enslavement at the hands of the Deep Ones and Star Spawn.

THE INITIAL (AND FUTILE) RESPONSE

The governments and militaries of the world can, at best, delay the inevitable. Although the United States quickly mobilizes against the threat—readying everything from tanks and infantry to jets and ballistic missiles—humanity's weapons are useless against Cthulhu. Those few attacks that are able to penetrate its rubbery hide do no lasting damage, as the impossible being reforms and instantly recovers from any damage. In fact, it cannot be wounded in any real sense of the word, for it has no body or organs as an earthly creature does.

Deep Ones, although resilient, can be harmed and killed. However, the numbers of Deep Ones still waiting in the seas are inconceivable, and they receive aid from hidden hybrids and cultists. At all levels of society, cultists and hybrids reveal themselves in surprise attacks or remain concealed while working to sabotage the country's defenses.

TIMELINE

Although they are countless millennia in the making, the events of humanity's undoing occur over the course of mere weeks. As these events transpire, those trying to cling to a logical view of the universe rapidly lose ground—and their minds.

00:00:00	A tremendous earthquake is detected at approximately 47 degrees south latitude, 126 degrees west longitude.
08:43:00	Sensitives and artists of all kinds around the world suffer horrible nightmares or brief waking visions of an impossible cyclopean city rising from the sea. Some dreams include tentacles, alien monstrosities, and inhuman words that most closely correspond to "R'lyeh" and "Cthulhu fhtagn."
17:21:00	Tsunamis and storms ravage coasts along the Pacific Rim; many ships are lost at sea.
DAY 1	Communities around the world, especially near the coast, report a drastic upsurge in mysterious disappearances.
DAY 2	A number of people in the PCs' community begin acting strangely.
DAY 3	The lone surviving crewman of an oceanic cargo ship returns to his homeland bearing disturbing tales of madness and terror.
DAY 4	The sailor's account of his experience spreads rapidly online via social media and content aggregator sites.
DAY 5	Reports of murders and rumored sightings of inhuman creatures begin to circulate in the PCs' community.
DAY 6	Mysterious deaths and disappearances affect a number of officials at all levels of government.
DAY 7	Cultists around the world reveal themselves in frenzied attacks and mass abductions. Police and other authorities would be overstretched even were it not for the sabotage by cultists within their own ranks.
DAY 8	Many of the PCs' friends and acquaintances disappear or reveal themselves to be cultists. Panic and confusion grip the community.
DAY 9	A popular hobby game company in southern Minnesota reports the mysterious disappearance of every copy of their Cthulhu Mythos board games.
DAY 9	Sabotage by cultists shuts down most civil services in the area.
DAY 9	Humanoid piscine creatures attack coastal and lakeside communities around the world.
DAY 9	The first videos and images of the Deep Ones go viral on social media.
DAY 9	The first confirmed attacks of the amphibious creatures occur in the PCs' area.
DAY 9	A towering monstrosity with a tentacled visage, massive wings, and fearsome claws comes ashore on the beaches of southern California.
DAY 9	The first shaky video of Cthulhu appears online. It quickly goes viral, although many viewers suffer cardiac arrest, others become catatonic at the sight, and many platforms (and governments) scramble to remove or ban it.
DAY 9	A U.S. Air Force attacks on the Elder God is ineffective. Weapons do no lasting harm to the monstrosity, and a number of pilots lose their senses and crash into the beast.
DAY 10	In the wake of the appearance of Deep Ones and Cthulhu, mass panic takes hold around the world.
DAY 11	Cthulhu leaves a trail of destruction as it begins its journey inland. The route is circuitous, and it sometimes doubles back on communities already devastated.
DAY 11	The branches of the U.S. military launch a combined defense and offense against Cthulhu. Both aspects prove ineffective, as weapons do next to nothing to slow the Old One, who is capable of crushing tanks and infantry formations alike with contemptuous ease.
DAY 11	Cultists prepare mass sacrifices in Cthulhu's predicted path. Special Forces, the Army Reserve, and local police attempt rescues, but they are barred by Deep Ones and Cthulhu itself.
DAY 12	Mandatory evacuations are declared across California, Nevada, and neighboring states.
DAY 13	Roughly human-sized creatures of horrifying appearance similar to that of Cthulhu itself come ashore around the world to attack humans. The Star Spawn of Cthulhu have emerged from R'lyeh in their master's wake.
DAY 15	Military forces around the world fight a losing battle against the combined forces of the eldritch horrors.
DAY 17	Star Spawn continue to appear without warning across the globe, attacking those who thought they were safe (for the moment) from Cthulhu and the Deep Ones.
DAY 19	With "acceptable" numbers of the civilian population yet to evacuate the area, a desperate United States government launches a nuclear strike on Cthulhu as it crosses the Midwest. The strike is not effective.
DAY 27	Cthulhu continues its trail of destruction across the Earth, as its followers further devastate humanity. Civilization continues to collapse, as all efforts to resist prove futile.
DAY 31	Cthulhu departs to the stars.

THE BEACH



BEACHES are some of the locations most vulnerable to the Deep Ones' assaults and to the terror of Cthulhu's first appearance. These normally tranquil relaxation spots quickly become areas of living nightmare as the inhuman inhabitants of the sea and the Great Old One itself emerge. Even after the initial onslaught, Star Spawn arrive in Cthulhu's wake at beaches around the world, and the inscrutable Great Old One might return to the sea, whether to travel to another continent or for no comprehensible reason.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Prior to the earthquake, people begin to go missing from beaches around the country.
- Having detected something large moving toward California, the U.S. government orders an evacuation of all beaches on the West Coast. Of course, thinking the evacuation is simply due to the weather, many beach-goers are eager to ignore the warning.
- The PCs see video online of Cthulhu emerging from the ocean and setting foot onto the beach.
- Those present at Cthulhu's initial emergence are irrevocably driven mad by the experience. Although many fall catatonic or otherwise helpless, some see the futility of resisting and instead seek to fulfill their own imagining of Cthulhu's unfathomable vision.
- Before events begin in earnest, one or more of the PCs feels an inexplicable urge to visit the beach or is overtaken by a sudden disgust or terror of the sea.
- News crews and citizen journalists visit the beach in the aftermath of Cthulhu's arrival, despite police and military orders not to. They find a scene of utter horror and devastation.

CITY STREETS



No city is safe in these times, but nowhere is more dangerous than those in the path of Cthulhu's rampage. Though the Great Old One hardly even seems to notice humans or their works, its footsteps nonetheless level entire cities in short order. It does not take long for the trappings of civil society to fall away. Emergency responders and local governments soon collapse under the weight of the chaos pressing down on them.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- As reports come in that Cthulhu is approaching the city, panicking residents on foot and in vehicles clog the streets.
- A cultist tries to lure the PCs into a trap by posing as a fellow survivor with knowledge of a nearby safe refuge.
- Deep Ones emerge from the sewers to attack the PCs.
- Cthulhu's footsteps and tail bring buildings toppling down all around the PCs.
- The PCs try to hide underground from Cthulhu's rampage, only to be threatened by Deep Ones and cultists already present.
- Cthulhu picks up a building in its claws or tentacles. Without knowing where it will drop or throw it, the PCs don't know how to evade the plummeting structure.
- Rioters and looters sow chaos in the streets, preventing an organized evacuation.
- The roads out of town are blocked by stalled traffic, leaving trapped motorists vulnerable to Cthulhu, cultists, and Deep Ones.

COASTAL TOWN

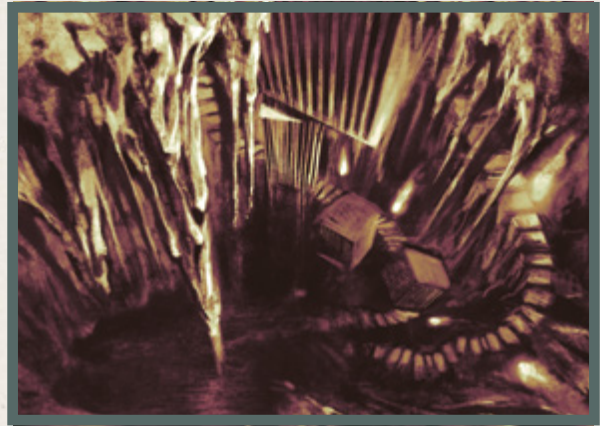


ALREADY heavily infiltrated by Deep One hybrids, most coastal towns fall easily to the inhuman attackers. Some are populated almost entirely by Deep One hybrids, with even purely human denizens indoctrinated into the blasphemous practices of secret societies and cults rooted in the worship of the Great Old Ones. Such coastal communities, in fact, already fell long before the rest of the world was aware of the threat. Consequently, they function as staging areas for the Deep Ones' invasion and a ready source of infiltrators to undermine neighboring communities.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ Before the deep sea earthquake even occurs, this coastal community begins taking measures as if preparing for something world-changing.
- ☼ The PCs arrive to find the town seemingly abandoned, as all of its residents have joined the Deep One army to invade nearby areas. Perhaps one or two human survivors can be found to provide some extra insight into the horrific events of the last few days.
- ☼ As night falls, strangely bulbous shadows can be seen emerging from some of the old houses.
- ☼ The PCs find a strange church that is home to something called the "Esoteric Order of Dagon."
- ☼ The PCs arrive with a group of refugees at a small town, only to realize the locals have something disturbingly fishy in their countenance.
- ☼ A relative of one of the PCs lives on the coast, but promises that their town has been untouched by the attacks.
- ☼ The PCs' vehicle breaks down near a small coastal community.

DEEP ONE REFUGE



THE Deep Ones have many refuges across the globe, from their undersea cities, such as Y'ha-nthlei, to smaller sanctuaries and staging posts along coasts, accessible by rivers, and at the bottom of lakes. From these numerous hidden settlements and bases, the Deep Ones can launch attacks almost anywhere on the planet, appearing without warning.

Although Deep One refuges are largely submerged, many—particularly those inland—are accessible primarily or solely by water but include areas of open air. Whether these are a concession to hybrids who are not yet ready for a fully aquatic existence or to allow for large numbers of human slaves—or both—is a disturbing question. They are universally damp, dark places, dimly lit by torches and strange luminescent fungi or sea creatures. Many are carved primarily from bare rock, while others are constructed of cyclopean and utterly alien stonework.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ One of the PCs somehow just knows where the closest Deep One refuge is, and how to get there. Is it a lucky guess, or is the PC actually a hybrid?
- ☼ The PCs are captured alive by Deep Ones and must somehow escape back to the surface.
- ☼ On the bank of a river or other body of water—perhaps near a site of recent disappearances—the PCs find a small item of strange jewelry.
- ☼ A friend or important personage has been taken by the Deep Ones, and the PCs need to stage a rescue, or at least figure out where the refuge is.
- ☼ In the refuge, the PCs meet a friend or relative. The friend claims to be a prisoner, but there's something fishy about the situation...

LAKE SHORE



ALTHOUGH most of their cities are found in the deep sea or near coastlines, some Deep One settlements are in lakes and other freshwater bodies. Whether these are home to a distinct type of Deep One, were founded as a prelude to invasion, or have some other reason for existence, none can say. Regardless, these hidden refuges pose a significant danger to human populations nearby.

As with coastal towns, Deep Ones target lakeside communities, offering good fishing and grotesquely beautiful jewelry in exchange for slaves and interbreeding. Some lake communities might be deeply indebted to and corrupted by Deep Ones, making them a threat to the surrounding area—and to any PCs who might live there.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- The PCs see Deep Ones leading a group of captive humans toward the lake.
- Learning of the presence of Deep Ones, the National Guard bombards the lake and—unfortunately—the surrounding area.
- The PCs' method of transport breaks down near a lake, or the road is blocked. While the PCs look for a solution, Deep Ones begin stalking them.
- On what appears to be an abandoned boat on the lake, the PCs spot a flickering light—spelling out S.O.S. Is it a cry for help from survivors, or a trap set by the Deep Ones who dwell under the lake?
- Residents of a nearby town form an armed posse to go looking for Deep Ones or their allies. They are not trusting of any strangers they happen across in the area.
- Terrified townsfolk report that people who disappeared or died years ago have been spotted near—or in—the lake.

MAINLAND TOWN



ALTHOUGH further removed from the threat, even inland areas are not safe from Deep Ones—or Cthulhu itself. Particularly during the initial stages of the end of the world, mainland towns are more likely to be victimized by cultists. However, Deep Ones emerging from lakes or rivers might attack cities and towns far from the coast. Likewise, the Deep Ones have had many long years to infiltrate their progeny across the county, and hybrids (whether knowingly so or not) can be found almost anywhere.

A mainland town might be where the PCs live, or somewhere they flee to in an attempt to escape the monsters rampaging on the coasts. Although the PCs might be temporarily safe from the physical threat of attack, the news or image of Cthulhu and the Deep Ones can damage the sanity of someone even far removed from the scene.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- Soon after the earthquake, the PCs see a large number of townspeople entering a basement or other isolated place. Within, the townspeople crowd around a small but disturbingly lifelike statue of a creature with an octopus-like head, wings, and fearsome claws.
- The town is riven with paranoia, as everyone suspects their neighbors of being cultists or even Deep One hybrids.
- A traveler asks for the PCs' assistance in finding a nearby town, offering to pay with strange jewelry.
- The PCs come across cultists preparing a mass sacrifice of living prisoners.
- The National Guard imposes a quarantine on the town in order to root out cultists and hybrids while preventing further contamination.

CTHULHU

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
7	7	7	7	7	7

Features: ++Beyond Mortal Minds, +Flight, +High Priest of R'lyeh, ++Unfathomable Enormity, +Untold Aeons.

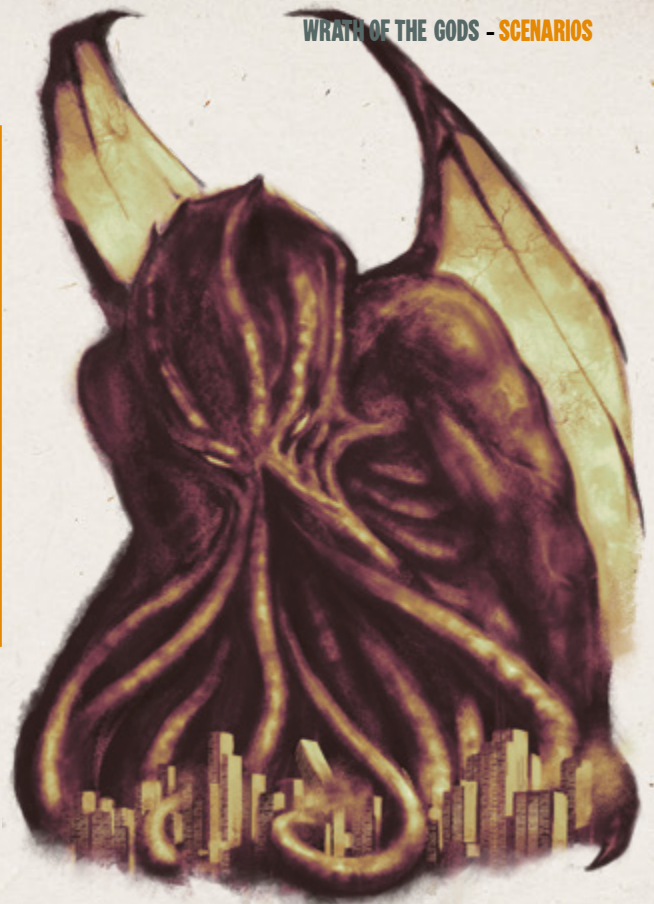
Equipment: N/A.

The Dreamer: Cthulhu can reach into the minds of particularly receptive individuals, altering their dreams and communicating with them through jarring emotional and mental images.

Mind-Shattering Terror: When first encountering Cthulhu, a character must make a Willpower test with 7 negative dice added to the pool. If this test is failed, the character suffers a severity 2 and a severity 3 mental trauma.

Regenerates Immediately: At the beginning of each round, clear all of Cthulhu's stress tracks.

Unfathomable Enormity: Each of Cthulhu's stress tracks has seven tiers of three boxes each. Once all twenty-one of these boxes are filled, Cthulhu dies.



HUMANOID DEEP ONE

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
2	3	2	3	2	2

Features: –Disconcerting, –Damp Smell.

Equipment: Street clothes, pocket change.

The Innsmouth Look: Humanoid Deep Ones can pass for human if they so choose. Alternatively, they can reveal their true nature and assume the Hybrid Deep One profile listed below.

HYBRID DEEP ONE

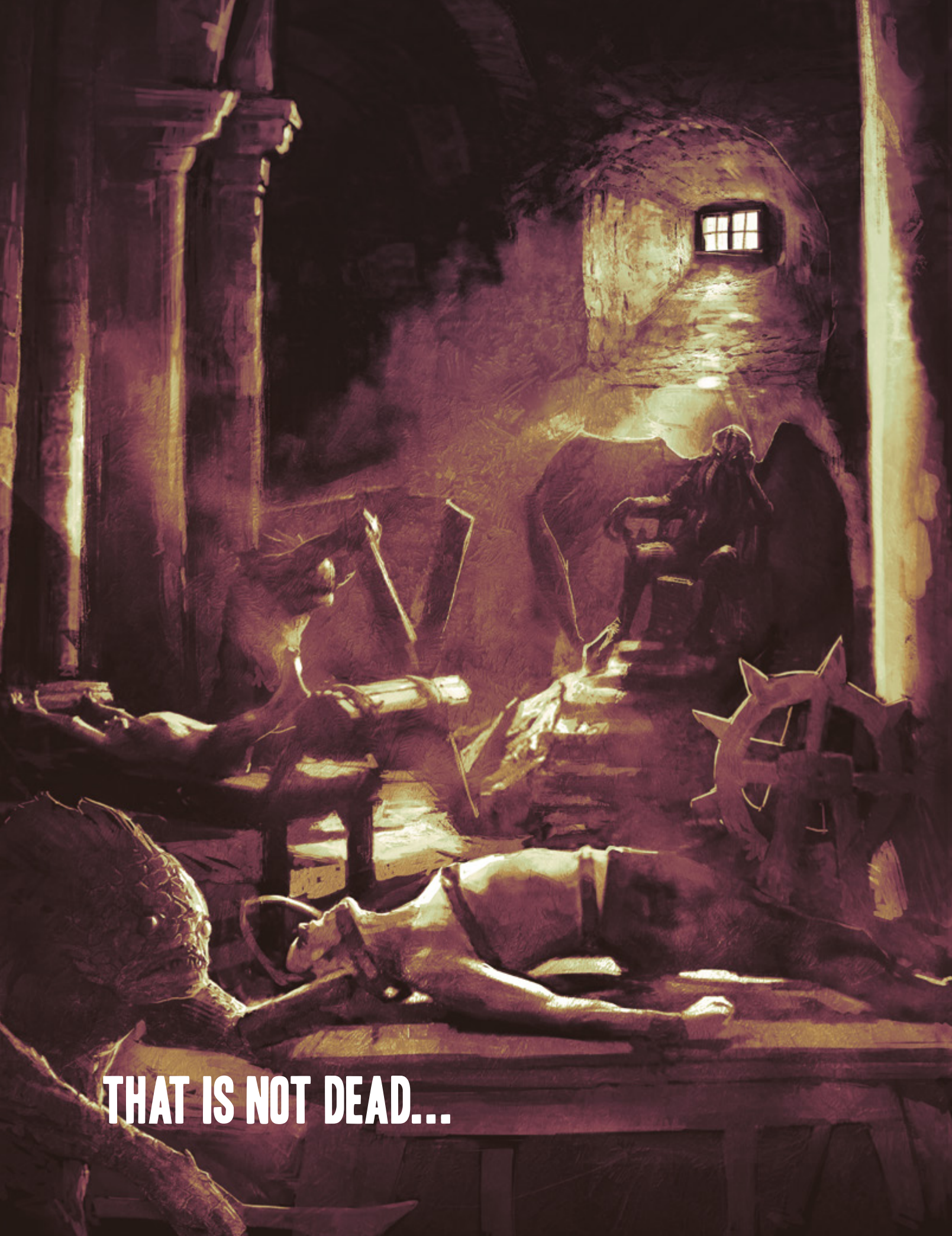
DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
3	3	3	2	1	2

Features: +Amphibious, +Terrifying, –Fishy Stench, –Servile.

Equipment: Fishy claws (1 positive die, +2 damage), odd gold jewelry.

Disturbing: When first encountering a Hybrid Deep One (this includes when a Humanoid Deep One changes form for the first time), a character must make a Willpower test with 1 negative die added to the pool. If this test is failed, the character suffers a severity 1 mental trauma.





THAT IS NOT DEAD...

THAT IS NOT DEAD...

POST-APOCALYPSE



I might say that no one could have imagined how things would end, but that is not quite true. At least one writer did imagine it. In hindsight, perhaps we should have seen the truth in Mr. Lovecraft's writings, but they all seemed so impossible. Besides, he never presented himself as a prophet. Did he even realize the truth? Or did even he think his ideas were spawned from mere nightmare?

We might never know if Great Cthulhu spent its countless years of slumber planning to destroy humanity, if it merely did so out of curiosity or amusement, or if we simply happened to be in its way. What is clear is that the Deep Ones had planned their conquest all along, ready to take advantage of the devastation to emerge from hiding and bring civilization to its knees. Only the Old Ones can truly say how long they waited in the depths, biding their time and plotting against us, slowly but surely laying the groundwork for our subjugation.

Even more mysterious are the so-called Star Spawn of Cthulhu. The resemblance is clear, but are these entities the great one's progeny, its servants, or something else entirely? What is all too evident is that, while Cthulhu was perhaps merely disdainful and neglectful of humanity's presence, the Star Spawn actively hunt us, working apparently in tandem with the Deep Ones to ensure no human survives free.

Perhaps most loathsome of all are the traitors within: the cultists who sabotaged us while welcoming our conquerors with open arms. The fact that they received scarcely better treatment is of little comfort in these nightmarish times. Truly, life is suffering, and I crave only the sweet release of death. For at least now I know, mercifully, that there is no life after death—no heaven and no hell—only endless oblivion.

TERRORS UNCONSCIONABLE

The end of human civilization comes, perhaps appropriately, at the claws of entities that far predate it. Although Cthulhu ultimately leaves Earth behind, returning to the stars from which it came, it has already destroyed human civilization—and without even expending any effort. Of course, a large part of humanity's fall owes to the involvement of the Deep Ones and the human cultists that madly follow Cthulhu. Not that Cthulhu seems aware of or interested in its worshipers.

Perhaps humanity could recover from the destruction wrought by Cthulhu were it not for the lesser beings involved in this apocalypse. But Deep Ones, hybrids, cultists, and even the Star Spawn all contribute to civilization's downfall, and to ensuring that it cannot ever rise up again.

THE DESTROYER OF WORLDS

Conventional weapons—and even the latest in experimental weaponry—were unable to as much as slow Cthulhu down. After many days of the monstrosity's devastating rampage across the western U.S., the federal government decided that it had to take drastic action to deal with the colossal entity from the sea. The President of the United States, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and top military brass agreed to the use of the nuclear option. They waited as long as they could for the population to evacuate, but in the end, they had to accept that whatever civilian deaths occurred, countless more would die if the Great Old One wasn't stopped.

After the nuclear detonations (in a location chosen by the GM), things actually looked hopeful for a moment. Radar and visual detection showed no signs of the colossus; only a fine, greyish mist. But celebrations were premature. After a few brief minutes, the heavy mist hanging in the air began to coalesce, reforming into the horrific, illogical form of Cthulhu. Having reshaped itself, Cthulhu emerged from the crater and continued its rampage, as if nothing had happened. Yet the U.S. had just destroyed a large chunk of itself, saving the Great Old One the trouble of doing so.

Now, in addition to the Deep Ones, cultists, Star Spawn, and Cthulhu itself, the world—and the United States in particular—had a massive cloud of nuclear fallout to worry about. The effects were—and are—far reaching. Combined with the devastation wrought by Cthulhu and its servants, vast expanses of Earth are left as barren wastelands.

FIENDS FROM BEYOND THE STARS

Emerging from R'lyeh in the weeks following the Great Old One's awakening, the Star Spawn are horrific cosmic beings bearing a strong resemblance to Cthulhu itself. But whereas Cthulhu shows little interest in humanity, its continued existence, or its destruction, the Star Spawn are bent on subjugation. After Cthulhu departs, the Star Spawn remain behind, although whether they are allies to the Deep Ones, their masters, or something else is unclear.

The Star Spawn are possessed of immense strength and senses far superior to those of humans. Indeed, to suggest that they are constrained by the same five senses as animals of our planet is folly. Sensing with their cranial tentacles, the Star Spawn sniff out humans wherever they try to hide, easily overpowering them and dragging them to the slave cages and Deep One refuges, or simply exterminating them.

The Star Spawn, unlike the Deep Ones, do not communicate in any way observable to humans. Whether they transmit messages to one another and to the Deep Ones telepathically, through scent, via ultrasonic vibrations, or in some other, incomprehensible manner, is impossible to say.

FROM WHENCE IT CAME

After a few short weeks—though they seem unceasing—Cthulhu departed Earth as mysteriously as it came. It seems that the laws of physics hold little bearing for the Great Old One, for gravity was no obstacle. Of course, there were few—if any—living witnesses to Cthulhu's departure, and whether it soared on its massive wings, re-located through teleportation, or even returned to R'lyeh is unclear. All that is known is that Cthulhu seems to have vanished. Sightings stopped, and those mad cultists who still obediently venerated it ceased celebrating its return and began mourning its departure.

Whether Cthulhu will return to Earth and when—or if our planet even continues to register on its cosmic mind—is impossible to know.

A NEW DOMINION

With Cthulhu's passing, a new order overtakes the planet. Civilization is in ruins, and the governments of the world are left impotent. Communication is difficult or impossible, and most surviving human communities have little concept of what is happening beyond their doors. Yet, everywhere it is much the same. The Deep Ones continue to press their relentless attack, enslaving and exterminating humans as it pleases them, with the aid of the Star Spawn.

Humanity's numbers are drastically reduced. Although any sort of accurate estimate is impossible, it is clear that the better part of the population died or was driven irrevocably mad during Cthulhu's brief reign of terror. Now, a new and unending nightmare begins, as the Deep Ones continue to round up survivors for unspeakable ends.

The Deep Ones, already much larger in number than anyone could have ever guessed, populate the world, swelling their numbers with new humanoid Deep Ones. Some weak-willed or craven individuals welcome their new overlords, praising them and begging for their lives. These traitors might even help their new masters subjugate additional humans, leading them to enclaves of survivors or leading survivors into ambushes.

Few such individuals win any lasting reprieve, however. The Deep Ones detest ordinary humans, and even cultists of Cthulhu suffer nearly as much as anyone else under this new regime. Only hybrids and humanoid Deep Ones are spared, living instead as royalty and as gods on the backs of their former species.

One of the many tasks the Deep Ones set their slaves to is the building of massive monuments to Cthulhu, Father Dagon, and Mother Hydra. These cyclopean edifices take many years to produce, built according to exacting and inhuman standards, using stones quarried from the depths of the ocean. Enslaved humans are also forced to participate in rites and rituals, often culminating in their deaths, or in worse fates.

FIGHTING THE INEVITABLE

Although it seems evident that a new era of Earth's history has begun, and that the age of humanity is over, some humans continue to struggle against the fate decreed for them. They hold out wherever they can, from military bases, to warehouses, to houses, to convoys roaming the wastelands that were once America. Each day, fewer survivors remain free, as they succumb to madness and despair, turn against one another, or fall prey to Deep Ones, Star Spawn, or hybrid infiltration.

As futile as it might seem, many humans continue fighting back. While Cthulhu is invulnerable to any weapon conceived by man, the same is not true of the Deep Ones, or even the Star Spawn. The Deep Ones are individually stronger and more resilient than humans, and their fish-like anatomy includes redundant organs, thick scales, and layers of protective fat, but they can be killed by guns, blades, or sufficient blunt force. The Star Spawn are even more difficult to harm, lacking organs like those of animals evolved on Earth. However, their flesh is not invulnerable: adequate damage can slow or incapacitate a Star Spawn. Eventually, they recover from even the most severe injuries, but this might take hours or even days.

The survivors wage a desperate struggle. They are constantly hunted and tormented, and their communities are rife with paranoia, for cultists and hybrids are an ever-present threat. With humanity's numbers so greatly reduced, and the ranks of the Deep Ones continuing to swell, it is only a matter of time before all living humans are slaves and chattel.

DEEP ONE REFUGE



IN the aftermath of Cthulhu's awakening, Deep Ones begin to establish new settlements on solid ground, ranging from small camps to slave pens to the foundations of cities. After so long dwelling in the depths, they are eager to reclaim the Earth's surface. As well as beginning construction of new cities with the labor of newly enslaved humans, Deep Ones repurpose human-built structures and even tools. Particularly with the help of hybrids, the Deep Ones learn to utilize modern technology, from vehicles to weapons, further increasing their power and threat they pose.

Many refuges serve as bases from which the Deep Ones can launch raids further inland. Others are used primarily to hold captive humans or are given over to the worship of the Great Old Ones. All such places are terrifying and highly disturbing, whether built from the ground up or adapted from existing human construction.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ Fighting and screaming prisoners enter a refuge, but cooperative servants leave. Why?
- ☼ The Deep Ones have overtaken a military base and are putting its vehicles and other hardware to use in their war against humanity.
- ☼ The PCs find a prisoner in the refuge from before Cthulhu's awakening. The prisoner has no idea what has transpired, but can offer insight into what the Deep Ones were doing before the apocalypse.
- ☼ The PCs find a Deep One settlement with massive pens for thousands of slaves. Perhaps if they can free the others, resistance will be possible.
- ☼ The PCs must pose as humanoid Deep Ones in order to infiltrate a Deep One refuge.

HUNTING STAR SPAWN



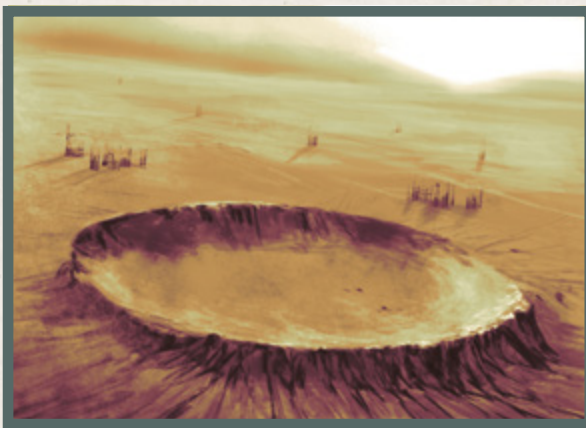
LIKE those of their master (and possible progenitor), the Star Spawn's true purpose and motivations are unknowable. However, they seem to place great emphasis on tormenting humans. In addition to helping the Deep Ones, the Star Spawn abduct humans to unknown places and for unknown ends. These impossible creatures hunt far and wide to ensure no living human remains free.

Avoiding or escaping the Star Spawn is difficult or impossible, for their minds are unfathomable, their actions unpredictable, and their methods of sensory input beyond understanding. Being hunted by Star Spawn is a singularly terrifying experience, and most people's minds quickly snap.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ The PCs have an opportunity to witness the Star Spawn's power up close, and they learn that running and hiding is a far better plan than fighting.
- ☼ The PCs see a group of survivors running or hiding from Star Spawn. Without the PCs' help, the group is doomed, but assisting risks the PCs' lives.
- ☼ After seeing Star Spawn in the area, the PCs come across a band of hiding survivors who refuse to abandon their current location.
- ☼ Star Spawn continue to arrive on the coast of California, and they often leave the same way, carrying prisoners. For what purpose are they taking humans to the city of R'lyeh?
- ☼ Star Spawn raid museums and private collections around the world, pilfering strange statues, jewelry, and space rocks.
- ☼ The PCs spot several Star Spawn soaring overhead and have little choice but to hide.
- ☼ The PCs must leave their hiding place to secure supplies, but doing so risks exposure to the Star Spawn.
- ☼ The PCs repeatedly spot a single Star Spawn. It seems to be hunting them but is not yet moving in for the attack.

SURFACE ZERO



THE area where the United States subjected Cthulhu to a nuclear attack is now a glowing crater miles across. No living thing could have survived, and perhaps none did—for does Cthulhu's nature hold to our notions of life and death? Of all the dangerous places on Earth, this irradiated and scorched landscape is among the most inhospitable. Being creatures beholden to the laws of physics and nature, the Deep Ones cannot survive here. This blasted and arid hell-scape is anathema to the amphibious invaders.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS:

- ☼ The nuclear bombardment dissolved Cthulhu's physical form, at least temporarily. Perhaps the location of that event holds clues to Cthulhu's nature.
- ☼ Deep Ones can't survive in the vicinity, which the PCs might use to their advantage.
- ☼ Cultists venerate surface zero as a holy site, the place where Cthulhu's body was destroyed and reborn.
- ☼ The PCs hear rumors of strange mutated creatures in the area: humans showing characteristics of Star Spawn.
- ☼ The PCs are being pursued by cultists, Deep Ones, or Star Spawn, and their only available path seems to be through the irradiated wasteland.
- ☼ There are rumors of a strange stone or crystal at the bottom of the crater that can repel or even destroy Star Spawn.
- ☼ The cloud of radioactive fallout drifts east, decimating areas that Cthulhu itself did not reach.
- ☼ Even years later, the Deep Ones use human slaves to test the safety of the surrounding area.
- ☼ The massive explosions exposed tunnels or ancient ruins deep beneath the surface, which seem to interest the Star Spawn.

DEEP ONE

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
3	3	3	3	1	1

Features: +Amphibious, +Manipulative, +Terrifying, -Fishy Stench, +/-Driven to Conquer.

Equipment: Fishy claws (1 positive die, +2 damage), odd gold jewelry.

Extremely Disturbing: When first encountering a Deep One, a character must make a Willpower test with 2 negative dice added to the pool. If this test is failed, the character suffers a severity 2 mental trauma.



STAR SPAWN

DEXTERITY	VITALITY	LOGIC	WILLPOWER	CHARISMA	EMPATHY
5	5	5	N/A	5	N/A

Features: +Beyond Mortal Minds, +Flight, +Terrifying, +Untold Aeons, +Variable Size.

Equipment: Claws (2 positive dice, +4 damage), rubbery hide (2 physical resistance).

Cosmic Horror: When first encountering a Star Spawn, a character must make a Willpower test with 3 negative dice added to the pool. If this test is failed, the character suffers a severity 3 mental trauma.

Elder Bulk: Each of a Star Spawn's stress tracks has four tiers of three boxes each. Once all twelve of these boxes are filled, the Star Spawn dies.

Regenerate: At the beginning of each round, clear 1 tier's worth of stress from each of the Star Spawn's stress tracks.



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NAME: _____

PHYSICAL

DEXTERITY

VITALITY



FEATURES

3		3
2		2
1		1

STRESS

MENTAL

LOGIC

WILLPOWER



FEATURES

3		3
2		2
1		1

STRESS

SOCIAL

CHARISMA

EMPATHY



FEATURES

3		3
2		2
1		1

STRESS

TRAUMAS

1D 1W 1M

3

1D 1W 1M

2

1D 1W 1M

1

1D 1W 1M

3

1D 1W 1M

2

1D 1W 1M

1

1D 1W 1M

3

1D 1W 1M

2

1D 1W 1M

1

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