

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

AGENDA

- Make Apocalypse World seem real.
- Make the players' characters' lives not boring.
- Play to find out what happens.

ALWAYS SAY

- What the principles demand.
- What the rules demand.
- What your prep demands.
- What honesty demands.

THE PRINCIPLES

- Barf forth apocalyptica.
- Address yourself to the characters, not the players.
- Make your move, but misdirect.
- Make your move, but never speak its name.
- Look through crosshairs.
- Name everyone, make everyone human.
- Ask provocative questions and build on the answers.
- Respond with fuckery and intermittent rewards.
- Be a fan of the players' characters.
- Think offscreen too.
- Sometimes, disclaim decision-making.

YOUR MOVES

- Separate them.
- Capture someone.
- Put someone in a spot.
- Trade harm for harm (*as established*).
- Announce off-screen badness.
- Announce future badness.
- Inflict harm (*as established*).
- Take away their stuff.
- Make them buy.
- Activate their stuff's downside.
- Tell them the possible consequences and ask.
- Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost.
- Turn their move back on them.
- Make a threat move (*from one of your threats*).
- After every move: "what do you do?"

ESSENTIAL THREATS

- Where the PCs are, create as a landscape.
- For any PC's gang, create as brutes.
- For any PC's other NPCs, create as brutes, plus a grotesque and/or a wannabe warlord.
- For any PCs' vehicles, create as vehicles.
- In any local populations, create an affliction.

A FEW MORE THINGS TO DO

- Make maps.
- Turn questions back on the asker or over to the group at large.
- Digress occasionally.
- Elide the action sometimes, and zoom in on its details other times.
- Go around the table.
- Take breaks and take your time.

DURING SESSION 1

- MC the game. Bring it.
- Describe. Barf forth apocalyptica.
- Springboard off character creation.
- Ask every question you think of.
- Leave yourself things to wonder about.
- Look for where they're not in control.
- Push there.
- Nudge the players to have their characters make moves.
- Give every character good screen time with other characters.
- Leap forward with named, human NPCs.
- Hell, have a fight.
- Start creating your threat map.

DECISION-MAKING

In order to play to find out what happens, you'll need to pass decision-making off sometimes. Whenever something comes up that you'd prefer not to decide by personal whim and will, *don't*. The game gives you four key tools you can use to disclaim responsibility. You can:

- Put it in your NPCs' hands.
- Put it in the players' hands.
- Create a countdown.
- Make it a stakes question.

THE 1ST SESSION

The players have it easy. They have these fun little procedures to go through and then they're ready to play. Your job is harder, you have a lot more to set up than they do. They each have one character to create, you have the whole bedamned world.

So let's be fair. You have the whole world to create, you get the whole first session to create it in. You're supposed to make their characters' lives not boring, you get a whole session to get to know them.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

While the players are making their characters, in between answering questions, you have a good opportunity to set expectations for the game to come. Here are some things I like to get out up-front:

- Your characters don't have to be *friends*, but they do have to know each other and see each other all the time. They should be allies. They might become enemies in play, but they shouldn't start out enemies.
- Your characters are unique in Apocalypse World. There are other medics, and they might even be called "angel" by their friends, but you're the only *angel*. There are other compound bosses and warlords who might be called "hardholders," but you're the only *hardholder*.
- Some of you get to choose armor. 1-armor can be whatever, it can be bulletproof vests, bike leathers, armored corsets, whatever. 2-armor, though, is serious body armor. Riot gear. I mean, it might be low-tech, it might be made out of a car or something, but the point is that you're walking around *in armor*.
- Hey, see where it says you have "oddments worth 3-barter" or whatever? Is there some medium of exchange you all use, or is it really one-time negotiated barter? Uncle, you're the hardholder, is there something you use for currency in the holding? Or else Rache, you're the maestro d', is there some particular currency your establishment recognizes?
- I'm not out to get you. If I were, you could just pack it in right now, right? I'd just be like "there's an earthquake. You all take 10-harm and die. The end." No, I'm here to find out what's going to happen with all your cool, hot, fucking kick-ass characters. Same as you!

THE THREAT MAP

During play, keep notes on the threats in the world by noting them on your threat map.

The innermost circle is for the PCs and their resources. There, list the PCs' gangs, followers, crews, vehicles, and everything else they own that you'll be responsible to play. Most of your essential threats go here.

The next circle out, "closer," is for the NPCs that surround them and their immediate landscape. The third circle, "farther," is for things that they would have to travel in order to encounter. Things that they have only heard rumors of, or ideas you have that you have not yet introduced, you can write outside the circle, as "notional."

List things in their appropriate octant. North, south, east and west for geography; up and down for above and below; and you can reserve out and in for the world's psychic maelstrom and the various characters' own internal landscapes.

THREAT TYPES

Warlords:

Slaver, hive queen, prophet, dictator, collector, alpha wolf

Grotesques:

Cannibal, mutant, pain addict, disease vector, mindfucker, perversion of birth

Brutes:

Hunting pack, sybarites, enforcers, cult, mob, family

Afflictions:

Disease, condition, custom, delusion, sacrifice, barrier

Landscapes:

Prison, breeding pit, furnace, mirage, maze, fortress

Terrain:

A precipice, a wall, an overhang, an exposed place, shifting ground, broken ground

Vehicles:

Relentless __ , cagey __ , wild __ , ferocious __ , vicious __ , bold __ .
Bastard, bitch, devil, fucker, beast.

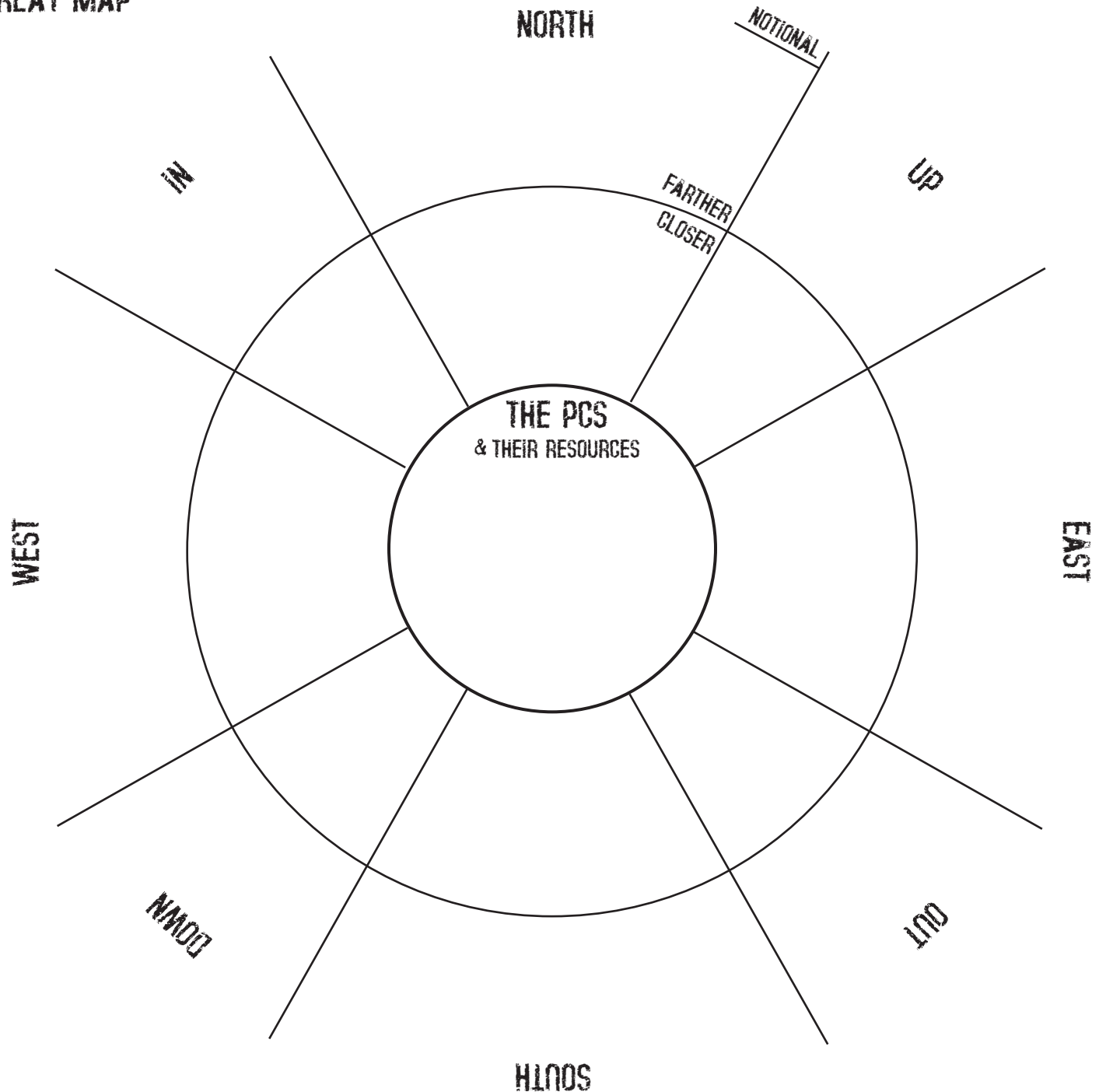
NAMES

Tum Tum, Gnarly, Fleece, White, Lala, Bill, Crine, Mercer, Preen, Ik, Shan, Isle, Ula, Joe's Girl, Dremmer, Balls, Amy, Rufe, Jackabacka, Ba, Mice, Dog head, Hugo, Roark, Monk, Pierre, Norvell, H, Omie Wise, Corbett, Jeanette, Rum, Peppering, Brain, Matilda, Rothschild, Wisher, Partridge, Brace Win, Bar, Krin, Parcher, Millions, Grome, Foster, Mill, Dustwich, Newton, Tao, Missed, III, Princy, East Harrow, Kettle, Putrid, Last, Twice, Clarion, Abondo, Mimi, Fianelly, Pellet, Li, Harridan, Rice, Do, Winkle, Fuse, Visage

RESOURCES

meat, salt, grain, fresh foods, staple foods, preserved foods, meat (don't ask), drinking water, hot water, shelter, liberty, leisure, fuel, heat, security, time, health, medical supplies, information, status, specialized goods, luxury goods, gasoline, weaponry, labor, skilled labor, acclaim, loyalty, blood kin, strategic position, drugs, work animals, livestock, know-how, walls, living space, storage space, machinery, connections, access, raw materials, books

THREAT MAP



KINDS OF THREATS

WARLORDS

- Slaver (to own and sell people)
- Hive queen (to consume and swarm)
- Prophet (to denounce and overthrow)
- Dictator (to control)
- Collector (to own)
- Alpha wolf (to hunt and dominate)

Threat moves for warlords:

- Push the battle moves.
- Outflank someone, corner someone, encircle someone.
- Attack someone suddenly, directly, and very hard.
- Attack someone cautiously, holding reserves.
- Seize someone or something, for leverage or information.
- Make a show of force.
- Make a show of discipline.
- Offer to negotiate. Demand concession or obedience.
- Claim territory: move into it, blockade it, assault it.
- Buy out someone's allies.
- Make a careful study of someone and attack where they're weak.

LANDSCAPES

- Prison (to contain, to deny egress)
- Breeding pit (to generate badness)
- Furnace (to consume things)
- Mirage (to entice and betray people)
- Maze (to trap, to frustrate passage)
- Fortress (to deny access)

Threat moves for landscapes:

- Push terrain.
- Reveal something to someone.
- Display something for all to see.
- Hide something.
- Bar the way.
- Open the way.
- Provide another way.
- Shift, move, rearrange.
- Offer a guide.
- Present a guardian.
- Disgorge something.
- Take something away: lost, used up, destroyed.

GROTESQUES

- Cannibal (craves satiety and plenty)
- Mutant (craves restitution, recompense)
- Pain addict (craves pain, its own or others')
- Disease vector (craves contact, intimate and/or anonymous)
- Mindfucker (craves mastery)
- Perversion of birth (craves overthrow, chaos, the ruination of all)

Threat moves for grotesques:

- Push reading a person.
- Display the nature of the world it inhabits.
- Display the contents of its heart.
- Attack someone from behind or otherwise by stealth.
- Attack someone face-on, but without threat or warning.
- Insult, affront, offend or provoke someone.
- Offer something to someone, or do something for someone, with strings attached.
- Put it in someone's path, part of someone's day or life.
- Threaten someone, directly or else by implication.
- Steal something from someone.
- Seize and hold someone.
- Ruin something. Befoul, rot, desecrate, corrupt, adulter it.

TERRAIN

- A precipice (to send someone over)
- A wall (to bring someone up short)
- An overhang (to bring danger down upon someone)
- An exposed place (to expose someone to danger)
- Shifting ground (to cost someone their bearing)
- Broken ground (to break what crosses)

Threat moves for terrain:

- Push dealing with bad terrain.
- Inflict harm (1-harm or v-harm).
- Stall someone.
- Isolate someone.
- Bring someone somewhere.
- Hide evidence.
- Give someone a vantage point.
- Give someone a secure position.

BRUTES

- Hunting pack (to victimize anyone vulnerable)
- Sybarites (to consume someone's resources)
- Enforcers (to victimize anyone who stands out)
- Cult (to victimize & incorporate people)
- Mob (to riot, burn, kill scapegoats)
- Family (to close ranks, protect their own)

Threat moves for brutes:

- Push reading a situation.
- Burst out in uncoordinated, undirected violence.
- Make a coordinated attack with a coherent objective.
- Tell stories (truth, lies, allegories, homilies).
- Demand consideration or indulgence.
- Rigidly follow or defy authority.
- Cling to or defy reason.
- Make a show of solidarity and power.
- Ask for help or for someone's participation.

VEHICLES

- Relentless __ (to keep moving)
- Cagey __ (to protect what it carries)
- Wild __ (to defy danger)
- Ferocious __ (to outrun)
- Vicious __ (to kill and destroy)
- Bold __ (to dominate the road)

bastard, bitch, devil, fucker, beast

Threat moves for vehicles:

- Leap off the road.
- Swerve across the road.
- Smash into an obstacle.
- Smash through an obstacle.
- Veer stupidly into danger.
- Tear past.
- Turn too early or too late.
- Shoulder another vehicle aggressively.
- Ram another vehicle from behind.
- T-bone another vehicle.
- Brake abruptly.

AFFLICTIONS

- Disease (to saturate a population)
- Condition (to expose people to danger)
- Custom (to promote and justify violence)
- Delusion (to dominate people's choices and actions)
- Sacrifice (to leave people bereft)
- Barrier (to impoverish people)

Threat moves for afflictions:

- Push reading a situation.
- Someone neglects duties, responsibilities, obligations.
- Someone flies into a rage.
- Someone takes self-destructive, fruitless, or hopeless action.
- Someone approaches, seeking help.
- Someone approaches, seeking comfort.
- Someone withdraws and seeks isolation.
- Someone proclaims the affliction to be a just punishment.
- Someone proclaims the affliction to be, in fact, a blessing.
- Someone refuses or fails to adapt to new circumstances.
- Someone brings friends or loved ones along.

CREATING A THREAT

To create a threat:

- Choose its kind, name it, and copy over its impulse. Describe it and list its cast.
- Place it on the threat map. If it's in motion, mark its direction with an arrow.
- List its stakes question(s).
- If it's connected to other threats, list them.
- If it calls for a custom move or a countdown, create it.

ESSENTIAL THREATS

- Where the PCs are, create as a landscape.
- For any PC's gang, create as brutes.
- For any PC's other NPCs, create as brutes, plus a grotesque and/or a wannabe warlord.
- For any PCs' vehicles, create as vehicles.
- In any local populations, create an affliction.

THREAT # _____

IS CALLED : _____

KIND : _____

IMPULSE : _____

DESCRIPTION & CAST : _____



CONNECTED THREATS

STAKES QUESTION(S): _____

CUSTOM MOVE/COUNTDOWN : _____



THREAT # _____

IS CALLED : _____

KIND : _____

IMPULSE : _____

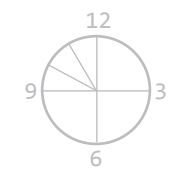
DESCRIPTION & CAST : _____



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STAKES QUESTION(S): _____

CUSTOM MOVE/COUNTDOWN : _____



THREAT # _____

IS CALLED : _____

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CONNECTED THREATS

STAKES QUESTION(S): _____

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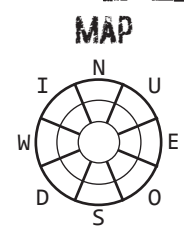
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CONNECTED THREATS

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CUSTOM MOVE/COUNTDOWN : _____

